Harry C. Uhler USAR #18
Nov. 27, 1984

Q: Mr. Uhler, where were you living on Dec. 7, 1941?

A: At Pearl City Peninsula on Oahu.

Q: So you were facing Ford Island, is that correct?

A: Correct.

Q: What was your occupation at the time?

A: I was an appraiser for the Territorial Tax Department.

Q: Were you at your home on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: About what time did you get up that morning?

A: About seven.

Q: Were other members of your household also up about that time?

A: Well, there was only two of us and yes, we were both up.

Q: Who was the other person?

A: My wife.

Q: And her name?

A: "Topper."

Q: Did you have anyone else living on the same property?

A: No.

Q: Did you have houses on either side of your house?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: Do you remember who occupied those houses?

A: Lt. John Probasco.

Q: Do you remember how to spell his name?

A: Jr. Officer and his wife lived on the other side of our home. I don't recall their names.

Q: Were Lt. Probasco and the other officer married?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Did they have children?

A: Yes, and pregnant wives.

Q: Both wives were pregnant?

A: Both, including mine.

Q: So, it was a full house then.

A: Full house.

Q: At what point did you become aware that an enemy attack was under way?

A: Just before 8:00 I was on the water side of our yard, watering some grass around a spit that we had constructed outside (tape slips)...heard the sound of this plane coming in (tape slips)... Knowledgeable about airplanes. I knew that it was a plane and it was diving towards the *Utah* which I knew was a (tape slips) My first thought was I was interested in yachting and (tape slips)...they are racing inside Pearl Harbor and the fact that I knew this was a target vessel and I saw what appeared to be a torpedo dropped from the plane. I (tape slips)...for heavens sakes the Navy's gone crazy. They are having manuevers in the bay and we're going to have a boat race. That shook me a little bit. Just then, there was a tremendous explosion on the side of the *Utah*.
About how far away were you from the *Utah*?

A: A quarter of a mile (tape slips) Then two more planes came down side by side and (tape slips) another torpedo into the *Utah* and (tape slips)... which was a heavy cruiser was moored ahead on the mauka side of the *Utah* (tape slips) Then I looked at the planes and identified the red ball the Rising Sun. I knew that war had arrived, which we had anticipated for some time.

Q: Can I ask you a little bit about the airplanes? What color were they?

A: As I remember, rather a dull gray.

Q: Which direction did they come in from?

A: They came in from the Waianae side these particular ones (tape slips) It was just a matter of moments before we were sending up antiaircraft fire. That's the last look I had at that particular point. I was gathering up women and dogs, and getting them into the car, and one child so we could get out of the area.

Q: What was your wife's reaction?

A: She had been a principal of a school on Ford Island and had

been trained in what to do in an emergency such as this. So she wasn't too upset. I turned around and she had come out on our front lanai water side (tape slips). I saw her down. She had been taught to lie down; but she was only kneeling and I thought she was praying. Fact was, she was trying to watch what was going on also.

Q: What about Mrs. Probasaco and the other Navy wife?

A: I gathered those two into the car.

Q: How were they taking things?

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Q: What about Mrs. Probasaco and the other Navy wife?

A: I gathered those two into the car.

Q: How were they taking things?

A: They were a little stunned at first and then of course (ts) their husbands ships were out to sea that particular morning so then (ts) action out there and they didn't know what to expect. They were a little disturbed like all the rest of us.

Q: How about the child?

A: He was just a little guy. He didn't know too much about anything. I carried him around in the cane fields.

Q: Where did you take your group?

A: I went up a cane haul road and went directly up the hill toward Waimano Home, which is a hospital for retarded people. I went partially up that road and got out of the car and went over to the (ts) a ditch and sat in the bank of that.

Q: Do you remember what time it was when you got up there?

A: I would judge, detouring around the other side and warning one of my friends over there, it was 20 to 30 minutes after 8:00.

Q: Why don't you tell me about your detour where you went over to warn your friend.

A: Well, I first went to the yacht club.

Q: Where was the yacht club located?

A: It was on the Ewa side of the Peninsula and (ts) nice club house that had been an old home (ts) land and (ts) fall out area, bringing the boats ashore (ts) a little shanty (ts) pier (ts) every night. She was just coming out of the house, putting on her gloves (ts) church, and I told her that we were at war and she'd better get up in the hills and then the (ts) manager of Pan Am station and American station (ts) from her house came out in his dressing gown and (ts) and I told him and he said, "Oh my goodness! We got a plane coming in from the mainland!" So he disappeared and went back and promptly warned them (ts).

Q: Do you recall the managers name?

A: No.

Q: Did you talk to anybody else at that time to warn them about what was happening?

A: No. Those were the only people that I recall talking to.

Q: When you were taking your wife, and the other women and the little boy up to the hills, why did you feel it would be safer up in the hill?

A: Well, the sky was pretty full of antiaircraft; you could see the black puffs which were directly overhead and (ts) figured no one would bother attacking just an old plain cane field, and (ts)

pretty much out of sight anyhow.

Q: How long did you wait up at the top by Waimano Home?

A: Well, we weren't quite up at the top now, don't misunderstand me; maybe halfway up the hill. We stayed there until about ten. Things kind of stopped and quieted down and planes (ts)

Q: While you were up there were you watching the attack in progress?

A: Oh certainly!

Q: What were some of the things you remember seeing?

A: We saw two planes at different times, shot out of the air and (ts) common knowledge one man mini submarine got in the harbor (ts) cruising along (ts) over in the channel between Ford Island and Waipio Peninsula, which was all cane field then. Somebody detected it, I don't recall. Anyway, they dropped a depth charge on it (ts) blown out of the water and it came out like a broken log. It looked pretty much like a huge log and was broken in the middle. It came up (ts) and dropped back into the water. Of course we didn't know about these one man subs, but we knew it was some kind of underwater vessel.

Q: Did you see any of the American ships maneuvering during the attack?

A: Oh yes, we saw, I believe it was the *Nevada*, trying to get out of the harbor and then (ts) starboard and grounded herself on (ts) tip of Waipio Peninsula (ts) other ships moving around, most of them were already in trouble and they deliberately grounded themselves so they wouldn't sink (ts) but the *Nevada* was the only battleship I remember in it.

Q: What about any of the smaller ships?

A: The smaller ships, they were moving around and some of them were headed out to sea. I couldn't tell you (ts) or sizes of them, but a lot of them deliberately grounded themselves (ts) on it to hang on.

Q: When you were back at your house before you left and you saw the *Utah* being attacked, how many torpedoes did you see strike the *Utah*?

A: Two. If there were more I don't know.

Q: Did you remember what you saw happen to the *Utah* after the torpedoes hit?

A: No, there was certainly nothing happening at that time.

Q: Was the *Utah* still upright when you left your house?

A: Yes, remember this was only a matter of about 10 minutes

before we left home.

Q: When you were up on Waimano Rd. and you waited for things to calm down, what did you do at that point?

A: We decided after waiting a reasonable length of time that we'd come back down and go back home and the police stopped us at Pearl City village.

Q: Where was that located?

A: The best landmark would be the Pearl City Inn because that was right on the corner and it was just a wide spot in the road; but there was a little police station there and the police stopped us.

Q: These were civilian police?

A: Yes (ts) . They told us that we couldn't go through at that time and I happened to know one of the officers and I said, "Well shucks, we got a little baby here and we left with nothing. We need some clothes; we need some food." He said, "You can go back but the women may not." And when he agreed to allow me to go back, two ladies came over to me and said, (one of them said) "My father, Admiral (ts) he's still out there. We live in the Tyler House." And she asked me if I knew where that was (ts) mind bringing him back. And (ts) sure. And the other lady said, "My little boy is at the next door house. Would you bring him back?" Of course. So I drove directly to our house. But in the mean time, during the morning, a _____ antiaircraft (ts) company or something who had been on maneuvers the previous week had gone back on (ts). By the time I got back out there (ts) set up again, soldier stepped out with a gun and bayonet and things, stopped me and wanted to know where I was going, and I said, "My home." and he said, "Well, you can't do that." and I said, "Well you go get your boss. I gotta get down there." (ts) called his sergeant. The sergeant came out and I told him my story and (ts) OK you go ahead but I'll go with you. In those days our cars had running boards on them, so he stood on the running board and rode around the corner to our house and went into the driveway. I rushed in and grabbed some clothes, emptied some dresser drawers to use to carry the gear in and (ts) next door to the Probasco home and got some baby food in the kitchen, put that in the dresser drawer (ts) on around to the other house and gathered up some clothing. All the time this Sergeant was running right behind me with his gun and a bayonet. When I'd back out of the closet I'd bump into the gun and he'd let me pass (ts). About the time I got through picking up "dear", a heavy barrage of antiaircraft stuff started going up and he said, "You get out of here. I've gotta go back to my post." So, he took off across the field. Then I remembered the Admiral, so I drove over to the Tyler house and the doors were open and I (ts) in and I could see this fellow out on the lanai that was right on the edge of the water, and within 50 yards was a great big ship on fire. And he was sitting in a swing, (one of those old fashioned swings with the chain) (ts) and I said, "Admiral, your daughter wants you to come with me out to the Junction." and he said,"What for?" and I

said, "Well, I don't know why. Just will you please come?" So OK he got up. We (ts) out to the car and then I remembered the child. I ran next door. That house was built up off the ground like many of our Hawaiian homes (ts) I ran to the house calling. No answer. I looked under the house and couldn't find the child. Mean time all this shooting was going on; made me a little nervous, and I went back to the car no Admiral. I rushed into the house and I said, "Admiral, what in the world are you doing? You're supposed to come with me!" And he said, "Oh, I forgot my tobacco." (for his pipe). So we got the tobacco, got him back into the car and were driving out off the Peninsula and out to Pearl City Junction. I didn't know what to say, so I said, "Quite a day!" and he said, "Oh, it's all in a days work." Kind of brushed it off. I figured he seemed like a very old man to me and I was quite reasonably young. I thought maybe he was a little bit senile. Anyway we got out there and unloaded him, told the woman that I couldn't find her child. There was of course tears and troubles (ts). Well then (ts) heard the sound of motors way off towards Haleiwa, Waialua area. Pretty soon we could see coming over the hill a (ts) 10 to 15 planes (ts) right over the top of us. All the people standing around there began to climb under cars, and lie on the ground and one thing or another. They were the last planes that we actually saw. By this time it was almost 12:00.

Q: Do you remember what happened then?

A: Well, we kind of went into a huddle, and I took all of my refugees and went out to Ewa Plantation where my wife's sister lived (ts) and had a big old fashioned plantation house.(ts) pulled up there.

Q: Did you spend the rest of the day there?

A: And night. In fact, we spent a couple days there.

Q: What was the general feeling of the people you were with? Were they apprehensive?

A: Oh very. We didn't know whether there would be an invasion of troops. Well, there was all kinds of wild guesses and rumors and that sort of thing which is typical of a situation like that.

Q: What sort of rumors were floating around?

A: That there were troops trying to get ashore and troop ships. Somebody said they saw a troop ship out to sea. It was probably one of our own Navy vessels.(ts) In order to black out of course, the military governor took over, as I remember, that afternoon. So he was the Senior General that was an army operations (ts) governor. (ts) radio, we got all kinds of orders; one of them was to black out.

Q: When did you finally get back home?

A: (ts) maybe a week or two. We left Ewa Plantation and went to town. My wife's aunt lived up on Halawa Heights. (ts) moved in

her house which was too small (ts) for family. A lot of sleeping on the floor and that sort of thing. (ts) did go back about a week afterwards. Of course, the first thing was to look for damage to the house. (ts) couple of wooden shingles that were split where anti aircraft stuff had come down. The yard, you couldn't run a lawnmower on it because it would ruin the blade. The yard was full of it.

Q: Is there anything else about Dec. 7th that sticks in your mind?

A: No, not anything (ts). A lot of things happened of course, but as the years go by you kind of cast those to the side.

Q: Thank you very much for sharing this with me. It's very interesting and of course it's very helpful too. I was wondering if you can recall anyone else who is still here in Hawaii, who had other interesting experiences

A: (ts) Well, I don't (ts) people in town that had different experiences (ts). One thing, (this is kind of a side) Masaji, my close Japanese friend whom I'd gone to warn at the yacht club, he was the boatwright. I didn't see him for almost a month and (ts) the Navy was pretty bitter against Japanese people. But somehow or other, one of our hot shots in the club talked the Navy into allowing Masaji to... the club immediately became the PT boat headquarters and (ts) this had been planned 3 or 4 years prior to the outbreak (ts) allowed him to stay there. So we greeted and I said, "Masaji, when I told you to go to the mountains, you turned around and went the opposite way down towards the pier." He said,"Oh, I went down to lock up my shop." It was just this little wooden 9 x 12 shack and (ts) did have one boat get a bullet that went through the mast. It was a hollow wooden mast. Those were new and quite the thing in those days (ts) than that. It was shrapnel or maybe a bullet, I don't know.

Q: Do you recall Masaji's last name?

A: Tamura.

Q: Well again, thank you. It has been very, very helpful talking to you.

Frank Solomon #19
December 5, 1984

Q: Rev. Solomon, when did you first join the Army?

A: I joined the Army on July 7th, 1941, as a draftee.

Q: Where had you been living when you were drafted?

A: Cleveland, Ohio, on the west side.

Q: Where did you take your basic training?

A: Fort Belvoir, Virginia, the Corps of Engineers.

Q: About when did you finish your basic training?

A: On October 5th we were completely finished with basic and at that time we boarded a train heading for unknown places... troop train that was. It took us 7 days to get across the country, I believe it was. We left on the 5th of October and landed in San Francisco after going across the Country, on October 12th. And from the point we got on the *St. Mihiel*, a troop ship, and headed for places unknown. We found out about 5 days later that we were headed for Hawaii at Schofield Barracks.

Q: Were you shipped as a unit or did you go over as replacements?

A: No, we were shipped as a unit.

Q: And what unit was that?

A: The 34th Engineers. At that time we were called the Hawaiian Department Engineers. It was a basic engineering operation and we moved into the upper post at Schofield Barracks where we had to finish the barracks that we moved into in order to really enjoy the barracks to their fullest capacity.

Q: What was your regular duty as a member of the 34th Engineers?

A: At the time that I was there, I was the First Cook... at the time of Pearl. You might wonder why I ever got in the kitchen being an engineer, but I'm an Austro-Hungarian by birth and I've been cooking since I was a young chap. And I said, no, I'd never get into the GI kitchen, but I knew I could do better at that particular point in time than the cooks that were in my basic training outfit. I know I could have done better with my eyes closed. So I volunteered for the kitchen because I loved it and
I still do here at almost age 67. It's a hobby of mine and I love to do it.

Q: What rank were you by the time December rolled around?

A: Just a private. We had only been there about 5 weeks or

so...5 or 6 weeks, and I was still a Pvt. 1st Class. Didn't have the same ranks or ratings in those days as they have today.

Q: What did you do the night before the attack, Dec. 6th?

A: I was on duty in the kitchen at that time and our shifts were from 12 noon to 12 noon. And I was preparing things for the following day... for Dec. 7th.

Q: Remember what food you were making?

A: No, I don't remember at this point in time what it was.

Q: Do you remember what you were doing on the morning of Dec. 7th before the attack?

A: Yes, I was...before the attack we had a lot of rumble out there and we heard a lot of planes and a lot of noises. We didn't know what they were. It was a pay day weekend so we thought in our minds, we said, "Gee, they're just a bunch of drunken `fly boys' from Wheeler Field." We saw planes and we were throwing stones at the planes. The planes were flying above us maybe hundred, two hundred feet. They weren't camouflaged. We didn't know what camouflage was in those days. We also didn't know what the "rising star" was...uh, the "rising sun" rather was in those days, and we just thought they were the "fly boys" from Wheeler Field which was next door. Of course, when the Japanese came over Kolekole Pass and were flying over Schofield Barracks, they had complete freedom. There was no opposition whatsoever of any kind. We didn't have guns. We didn't have ammunition. We wouldn't have known what to do with them if we had them.

Q: Did you see the planes come through Kolekole?

A: Saw them come some from that area. We saw a lot of planes fly. We didn't actually see them come over Kolekole. We saw them come down from the northern range of mountains and we just had a feeling that they were coming over Kolekole because we weren't concerned about anything. But there were just a lot of planes flying with a lot of freedom to buzz our buildings and our barracks, and so forth.

Q: Were they strafing your area?

A: Not at that particular point. We heard the noise at Wheeler, and we heard the noise from Pearl, and Hickam. But they weren't strafing our buildings at that particular point; not until a few minutes later after they.... I would estimate that 5 to 10 minutes they had complete freedom of the air. We were waving at them and they were waving back at us, and we could see them up there... the Japanese pilots. It was just a matter of a few minutes later that they started dropping bombs. They tried to bomb a million gallon water tank and they missed that. Oh they were only maybe 20 or 30 feet above it... maybe 40 feet. They missed that and then after a few more minutes they started strafing the buildings or the barracks where we lived.

Q: Did they make any hits on the buildings?

A: With strafing they did; with bombs in that area, no.

Q: Did you see any men hit at that time? (tape slips) Were there any men on the ground?

A: Yes, there were three of them in my particular area.

Q: So at that point what did you do?

A: We all ran for cover in the building. See at that particular point in time we had a chow line outside the door where the men were coming in for eggs, however they wanted them cooked. Everything was cooked to order . We were in the headquarters company and we had a good kitchen and everything was cooked to order as they came through for breakfast. We were cooking them pancakes and eggs to order, and so they were in the "chow line" coming in the door at that particular moment.

Q: Were the buildings that you took shelter in concrete or wooden?

A: No, they were wooden... typical wooden barracks.

Q: And how long did you stay in the building?

A: Probably 10 to 15 minutes.

Q: What made you leave?

A: Just the fact that there wasn't any more action out there. It was just quiet.

Q: What did you do at that point?

A: Went back to... well everybody went to talk...a lot of talking about what was going on. We were just talking to each other and we asked the guys... the troops to come in and get their breakfast if they wanted to eat that pa
rticular morning.

Q: And what did they do, did they come in ?

A: Oh yes, they did... they did.

Q: Imagine there was a lot of excited conversation there.

A: I don't think the boys ate too much that particular morning, there was so much excitement there.

Q: After breakfast what happened then? Did any of the officers come to take charge of things?

A: Yes, there was a lot of confusion, and they said everybody is going to have to come down and get ammunition, or get assigned

ammunition and assigned weapons. And being the 1st Cook, I was assigned a 45(c)caliber pistol that I carried on my hip for over a year.

Q: Did they keep you at Schofield at that point or did they send you to another place (tape slips).

A: No, I was kept at Schofield. I had received an injury from a concussion; at that point I was thrown up against a building where we were watching the planes when they tried to hit that million gallon water tank...water storage tank and my back was hurt and I was taken to the hospital 2 or 3 days later just for a look, some x-rays, some short wave diathermy(?) and for some other analysis to find out if there was anything wrong with my back. And I spent a little more than a year after that at Schofield right in my same Company area... a year and about 3 months before I came back to the states on a cadre. My back did start to give my a lot of problems and we found out later that it was a split disk; that it was caused by the concussion. But it took a long time to be able to find that particular thing with the method that they used in those days. Today you could put it under x-ray or some other fine things and find it immediately, but mine, it was just a herniated disk and it pushed my nerves out.

Q: Was it hurting you on the 7th, later on that day?

A: Just a little sore. Just sore...nothing dramatic like more than a year and a half later.

Q: What did you do that afternoon?

A: We pulled duty, was off at noon, and we went and got assigned our weapons. We took the rest of the afternoon off but there was a lot of confusion as to what to do and who was really in command at that particular point in time.

Q: Sounds like they weren't really to quick about giving out assignments.

A: Yes, we were a relatively new outfit and see we were Headquarters Company. We were generally in our own particular area. The other companies of the battalion were immediately moved out to the various places throughout the Island. But as a Headquarters Company we stayed right there at Schofield to administer to the needs of the battalion.

Q: Did you have guard duty that night?

A: No, I didn't have guard duty. I just had to be ready and available to serve more in my capacity than my one day on and one day off, noon to noon work and noon to noon off. I just had to be ready every day at that particular point in time.

Q: Did the attack result in any kind of changes (tape slips)?

A: Yes, we did because we fed a lot of civilians too in the next few days after that, that they brought on base to work with our engineers, for our bull dozers and our heavy equipment operators.

Q: About how many of these civilians did (tape slips)

A: I think we had somewhere around a hundred and then within a months time we inherited (for lack of a better word... inherited) a group of men called the "Varsity Victory Volunteers" the "VVV". These were all Japanese boys who were students at the University of Hawaii, who were assigned to our 34th engineering group. And they were in the next company to us and they became engineers. They were all volunteers...fine young Japanese college students who volunteered their services to the Government of the United States, m any who eventually left and became the cadre for the 442nd that fought in Italy and elsewhere...a very highly decorated infantry organization.

Q: What was the feeling of the men in your company and the other men in the 34th Engineers about these fellows from the "Varsity Victory Volunteers"? Was there any kind of suspicion of them or hostility?

A: No. For some reason there never was to my recollection any questioning of that particular function that they performed. Everyone seemed to understand these young college boys and were appreciative of them unlike in the United States itself, where we had a specific problem. I think this is probably man's inhumanity to man in the United States, because, on the California coast we had specific problems where people were interred, and on the East coast in the Boston area or New York area they were left free to roam and do whatever they wanted to do.

Q: How long were they with you?

A: They were with my organization until after I left in March, 1943, to come back to come back to the United States on a cadre of my own, getting ready to train troops to go to Europe.
On that particular cadre I received my promotion as the mess sergeant for Headquarters Company.
Q: Is there any one particular incident or scene that really stands out vividly in your memory about the Pearl Harbor Attack?
A: Are you referring to at the time of the Attack?

Q: Yes.

A: There is something very vivid in my mind but not as a physical sight. The sound of those particular airplanes that the Japanese used; the Zero. I can recall just a few years ago in Houston, for one of our National Conventions of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, I think it was called the Southern Confederate Air Force, or something, recreated the Battle of Pearl Harbor. They had the same American and Japanese planes. Not only with me but with the thousands of others who were at this particular showing down in Texas, you could just see swelling of the eyes and the tears, just in a split second that particular sound coming back to all those who were at Pearl, at Schofield,

Wheeler Field, Hickam Field and so forth... that particular sound that emanated from those Japanese airplanes, coming back to us many, many years later, and it was just though it had been seconds before. That is something after the War that is very dominant feeling and knowing in my life. I remember those particular sounds and remember the bombing and whenever I hear something that is like that, and incidently with many of the movies that have been produced about Pearl bring back that kind of sound, and it just brings back memories of that particular day. It's really interesting to me to know that you can recollect from your memory that sound on a split second in time.

Q: Thank you very much. I really appreciate you taking the time to come up here.

A: Thank you. I'm glad to have been here.

Clyde Hudson USAR #20
December 5, 1984

Q: Mr. Hudson, when did you first join the Navy?

A: I joined the Navy in June, 1939.

Q: And, what was the first ship you were assigned to?

A: The USS *San Francisco*, a Navy cruiser.

Q: And, where did you join up on the ship?

A: I went though the Navy boot camp in Norfolk, VA, and on Sept. 12 when the War got bad in Europe, they cleaned out the Naval Training Center of people who had ample training and put them aboard ships.

Q: That was Sept. 1940?

A: 1939.

Q: When did you go to Pearl Harbor with the *San Francisco*?

A: In March of 1940 when the fleet manuevers were held at Lahaina Roads . The San Francisco was dispatched to the Hawaiian detachment.

Q: What was your regular duty on the ship?

A: At the time I was a mess cook. Mess cooking paid extra money, $5.00 a month from the Navy. And each man that ate at your table (which I had 20 people eating at those tables) would put a dollar in a bowl each payday. So that was instantly $45.00 a month raise for me.

Q: That was quite a bit back in those days.

A: I could afford anything.

Q: What did you do the night before the attack, that is Dec. 6th?

A: Well the night before the attack I had gotten out of the "deck force" and had gotten into the Commissary Department. That was the cooks and bakers. My reason for getting into the group of cooks and bakers was for the main reason that each night that we were in port, the cooks could go ashore and every other weekend you had liberty guaranteed if you weren't at sea. That is my sole reason for becoming a Navy cook.

Q: So how did you spend the evening then?

A: Well before the evening of Dec. 6th, I had the duty. Four cooks would be on duty and we would relieve the watch on Friday

around noon and we were on duty for the remaining preparation of the meals until the lunch Monday. We had secured the galley in San Francisco in a relaxing situation.

Q: On the morning of the 7th, what was the first indication that you had and where were you at the time, when you realized that something out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well on the morning of Dec. 7th, again, it was my assignment to be on duty in the galley, and we had prepared hotcakes and bacon for the crew that was aboard (those that didn't rate liberty.) The galley on the *San Francisco* was topside. We could see everything. And the first planes I really had a look at, in that we were tied up in the Navy yard were those bombing the Ford Island Naval Air Station.

Q: What did that look like to you?

A: At first it was a total unbelief. I could not fathom the fact that any country would have attacked Pearl Harbor, especially with the location where we were, and to my knowledge, no one was mad the at United States.

Q: What did you do then after that first moment of shock and recognition?

A: Well, as soon as the people there on the ship and the officer of the day realized we were under attack, he sounded battle stations. My battle station was in a 3-inch gun turret at the rear of the ship. We had no ammunition aboard. We were getting power and water from the Navy Yard, and we were in the Navy yard for an over haul period. We had no ammunition aboard.

Q: So what did you do there?

A: I went to the turret as natural instinct would demand me to do, knowing full well that we were not going to shoot at anybody.

Q: What did you do once you were there?

A: We were there for maybe 20 or 30 minutes and someone from the crew (the turret captain I would imagine) said we might as well leave here. We were only protected here from the most horrible whatever it may be. So we went back to the galley and made coffee and that kind of stuff for whoever might want it.

Q: Did you spend the rest of the attack there in the galley?

A: Yes. Of course I had the "watch" as we called it until noon Monday. Of course, we had a (as I would have said in those days) a fabulous menu planned for Sunday. That menu was scrapped and not until very, very late in the afternoon and early evening of Dec. the 7th did we prepare anything, and only sandwiches and canned fruits then.

Q: Do you remember what was on your fabulous menu that you had planned?

A: Well, In these years that have passed I wouldn't absolutely quote it but I would imagine fried chicken and whatever. Sunday was always a fabulous meal in the making.

Q: How long did you stay there in the galley working?

A: Well, the remainder of the night I stayed on duty, making coffee and sandwiches for whatever Navy yard workers that would come aboard or whoever. I had one experience that remains in my mind and really sticks out in that we were along side a dock, and on the other side of this dock was a heavy cruiser, the USS *New Orleans*, a sister ship of the *San Francisco*. Rumor got out that ater from the Navy Yard from where we had been getting our water had been poisoned. You know all the rumors that got started. Immediately, someone said well now the *New Orleans* has still got plenty of water that they have in their tanks that is potable. We took two tremendous containers, went across the dock through all this tangle of lines, up gangways, and filled up these two pots of water; three of us, coming back aboard the *San Francisco*, spilling most of it as we travelled along. We got back aboard the *San Francisco* and got the word that the *New Orleans* had the same water we did. So it was total useless on that.

Q: Were people pretty apprehensive then, about things in general, not just the water?

A: Absolutely. Rumors were running rampant about what could have taken place if the Japanese had landed and all that kind of stuff. Of course, we were all scared within an inch of our lives. If you weren't you were pretty stupid.

Q: What did you do on Monday?

A: Well, Monday morning we were able to start and have a breakfast, which I don't remember what the menu consisted of that Monday morning; but we did fix a breakfast for the crew and a lunch. Then when we got through with the lunch and cleaned the galley up, I was off for 24 hours. That doesn't mean I had the right to go in to Honolulu. I did not. No liberty.

Q: What did you do with your time?

A: Well, the Frisco was making plans (of course every ship there that could move was making preparations) to get back to sea. I helped as best I could, in any way, to get ammunition and guns and that kind of stuff returned to sea duty order.

Q: Activity was pretty hectic then?

A: Activity was absolutely unbelievable.

Q: When did the *San Francisco* finally leave Pearl Harbor?

A: We stayed in Pearl Harbor maybe, it took us (I can't quote the definite time) but only a matter of just about a week, and everything was restored. Of course, our over haul period went

down the drain. We were supposed to have been in dock... dry dock, where the *Pennsylvania* was. The *Pennsylvania* had a few more things to be done and we were supposed to have gone into dry dock on Friday. We were very likely to have been where the *Cassin* and the *Downes* were blown to bits. Luck.

Q: Yeah, that plays a big factor.

A: There were a lot of "ifs".

Q: Were you on the *San Francisco* in some of those later actions, around Guadalcanal?

A: I didn't get to Guadalcanal as such. I got off and had to have an appendix operation and was sent ashore to a Navy mobile hospital to have my appendix out, and the *San Francisco* left there and left me. And I went back to the States for new construction.

Q: What stands out in your mind, in terms of your memory, about more than any other single thing, about the Attack on Dec. 7th?

A: The total surprise and the total mind-boggling situation that we were attacked. I could not believe that it would happen there in that remote area.

Q: Anything else you want to add?

A: No.

Q: Well, thank you very much. It's really kind of you to take the time off to talk to me.

A: My pleasure.

Robert Johnson USAR #21
December 5, 1984

Q: Mr. Johnson, when did you join the Navy?

A: I joined the Navy in 1940; the early part of 1940.

Q: Why did you decide to join the Navy?

A: Well, at that particular time, it was during the depression and I had started to college and dropped out; went to Kansas City, tried to find a job, couldn't find a job and decided to join the service.

Q: And what made you chose the Navy over say, the Army?

A: Well, I guess because I thought I would like boats better than I'd like land.

Q: What was the first ship you were assigned to?

A: USS *Utah*.

Q: When did you go to Hawaii with the *Utah*?

A: Well, I went aboard the U*tah*, if I remember right, in April, 1940, and we were only aboard ship a few days when we left for the Hawaiian Islands, for our first tour of duty there.

Q: Between the time you joined the *Utah* in April of 1940 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, what rank had you advanced to?

A: I was only a Seaman First Class.

Q: So you were a Seaman First Class on Dec. 7th?

A: Yes. I had taken the exam for Third Class but I had only taken it 3 days before the War started, and therefore there were no records of it, so when the War started, I was a Seaman First.

Q: What was your regular duty?

A: I was a coxswain of a motor launch aboard the *Utah*.

Q: What sort of work did you normally do?

A: Just general deck work, but after I was assigned to the coxswain of the motor launch, (I started our in the boat crew and advanced to coxswain) it mainly was maintenance of our boat; keeping it in good shape.

Q: What did you do on Sat., night, Dec. 6th?

A: Saturday night, Dec., 6th, I went ashore and went into Honolulu.

Q: Remember what you did then?

A: Basically not too much, except walked around downtown. I was with another friend, we went to a restaurant and had dinner that evening. In fact, I believe it was the famous Wo [*Fat*] where we had a sandwich and something to drink.

Q: About what time did you get back to the ship?

A: About 11:00.

Q: Where were you berthed? Where was your bunk?

A: I was in the 3rd Division. It was about 3/4 of the way in the rear of the ship (what we called the rear.)

Q: How many decks down were you?

A: Two decks down.

Q: What time did you get up on Dec. 7th?

A: Well, I had the duty that day and my first duty was to be at precisely 8:00 or just before 8:00, we were to take a church party ashore. So, I had got up at about 6:30 and we had breakfast and I had dressed in my sneakers, and white pants, and outfit that we wore on the boat, and was waiting to be called away, playing cards (Pitch or something) with a good buddy of mine.

Q: Which side of the ship?

A: As we were sitting, I was on the port side.

Q: So you were on the port side?

A: I was on the Harbor side, so to speak, away from Ford Island.

Q: How did you first notice that anything out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well, the first thing we heard or felt, was really a tremendous "thud" and shudder of the ship. The whole ship just shuddered and my friend D.I., who was calmly sitting across from me had been in the Navy quite a bit longer than I had, and (tape slips) "Well, let's go up and see what crazy so and so rammed us." He thought that maybe a ship coming into port that morning had tried to tie up alongside of, or maybe it had gotten away from the Skipper or from a tug and had just bumped into us real hard. Soon (I don't know how many it seems like really seconds at that particular point) we had just started to get up. We were sitting on a bench type seat and we started to get up when the next one hit. It turned out to be a torpedo.

Q: What did it feel like?

A: It just really felt like a tremendous vibration of the Ship really, more than an explosion. But I guess being where the

first one was located and under the water line and so forth, it just shook everything, just tremendously. Then when the next one hit, it felt like it was almost in the compartment above us...I mean in front of us to the bow side of the Ship, and at that particular time we knew something was amiss, other than somebody just running into us.

Q: What did you do then?

A: Well, like I said, we started to go to the ladder to go topside and when the second one hit, we had some temporary lockers sitting in there, that hadn't been bolted down yet, because we had some new crew members come aboard, and these lockers fell over; that's how tremendous the shudder was. Just about that time over the loud speaker came the word to man our battle stations; that it was a Japanese air attack. Well, every body rushed to the ladder, particularly the new crew members, and my friend D.I., calmly said, "Let's wait or we'll get trampled to death. We'll get out." And then just following that they come over and said abandon ship. And we were already starting to roll at that particular time.

Q: Did you proceed to abandon ship?

A: Yes, we waited until the scramble was a little bit over with and went up last up the ladder. And when we got to the first deck, water was coming in the portholes. And we went on up the 2nd ladder to topside and by this time the ship was on an angle. The first thing we saw when we came up from the hatch, looked over towards Pearl City, was a Japanese plane just as it came in and banked, and we saw the big red balls. That was really the first time that it really hit me that it could really be a Japanese air attack. Up to that point it just seemed impossible that they could be there.

Q: What were your gut feelings then when you saw that?

A: My gut feeling was I was scared, and my next gut feeling was this just can't be happening to us. And like I say, this buddy D.I., calmly that had been in the Navy a good while; he'd been out in the China Fleet, and he'd been under attack once before in the Yangtze River when they had a little skirmish out there.

Q: Had he been on the *Panay*?

A: He was on a ship in the Yangtze River, called the USS *Gold Star*. And he was looking all around. I, myself, was not really paying much attention. I was scared and had never been in this situation before. We started to go down to the gun turret and he almost tackled me and knocked me down, and right in front of us went the strafing; they were strafing. He had been smart enough to be looking. We got up from there and started around the gun turret, over towards the side of the Ship. My first inclination was that I was going to jump off the port side which was the way the Ship was rolling towards. And he said of course it's going to roll over on us. I mean we'll be sucked under. We'll go up and jump off the other side. We were by that time

almost crawling on our hands and knees, because the ship was at such an angle. We got up to the railing, and I looked down, and of course the big belly of the Ship was sticking up by that time and I said, "We can't jump, we'll hit the side of the ship!" and he said, "We'll jump anyway!" So we jumped and we did of course hit the blister of the Ship, and scraped our legs up a little bit. But we had kicked off our, (I had on tennis shoes, he had on regular shoes) kicked off our tennis shoes as we got to the railing, and we jumped in the water, and swam to Ford Island.

Q: Did you have to swim around the Ship to get over to Ford Island?

A: No, we jumped off and swam directly to Ford Island. There were some trenches; they were doing some kind of either sewer work or some kind of work in front of the officers homes there on Ford Island. And these trenches were there, I guess they were about 5 feet, 6 feet deep. It appeared to be that deep anyway. And a Lieutenant Halk who had been one of the Division Officers aboard ship, was in our group as we got there, and he told us all to jump into this ditch. We went down in there and he told us to stay in there and he'd be back in a little bit, and he left. We didn't know where he was going; he didn't say. But he crawled out of the trench. My recollection of time, which was kind of tough at that time, it seems he was gone about ten minutes maybe, and he had a jug of wine and some cigarettes. He had gone over to the Officer's homes and went in one of the homes and got these cigarettes and wine and brought it back. And he said, "Everybody light up a cigarette and take one swallow of wine." They passed the bottle down and we did that, and he talked to us then, and said the safest place for us was to stay where we were because there was nothing we could do if we crawled our anyway; so don't go running all over Ford Island.

Q: About how many men were there in the trench with you?

A: I would say there were about 25 of us in that particular trench.

Q: Were they all from the *Utah*?

A: All from the Utah... every one.

Q: Did oil leak out of the Ship onto the water?

A: No, to my knowledge we had no oil leakage at all. We had no explosions or anything. It just completely just rolled over... and we stayed in there until the Attack was over. My only recollection of seeing planes after that was a few of them that flew over still strafing or coming from one side or the other. Then when the high flying bombers came in, you could see them up above you. Of course, your first thought was they're right above us; a bomb is going to come right down and drop into this trench. But of course they weren't interested in that particular side of the Island any more, because basically they were after the battleships and so forth. So nothing came close to us.

Q: What did you do after the Attack was over?

A: Well after the Attack was over, we got out and we marched across Ford Island to the docks, over by now where the Chief of Naval Operations is. It was in that vicinity, and they took quite a few of us on boats and we then went across to the other side. I would say probably 25 or 30 of us they put on the *Argonne* for the night, and told us that they would feed us and they would try and find any clothes or anything. Of course we were bare footed by that time; they'd try to find something for us. At least we might be able to get a sandwich and we would stay on watch that night. So we spent the night on the *Argonne*. We were on there that night and I was standing in a gun crew when our own planes came over that night. We proceeded to do a pretty good job on them, because everybody was pretty touchy and somebody didn't follow procedures. Some of them said the planes didn't do right, some of them said we didn't do right, but anyway, we proceeded to shoot down quite a bit of our own planes.

Then the next day they came and took us off and put us in a barracks. We spent the day in the barracks. They then found us some shoes and a couple of other change of clothes, and put us on a burying party.

Q: What was that like?

A: Well, the first day it was not too bad. They took us up and I'm not sure of the area, they later told us it was Red Hill they took us to. Our job mainly was to try and identify the bodies that they had there. If we could find identification, we got it and we logged it. There was a man there logging it. We put a tongue depressor on the man's big toe with some information on it; then put them in a bag; then put them in a box; then they had the boxes shut. I was on it for about three days I guess, and by the 3rd day it was getting very, very rough because of the temperatures out there. The bodies were beginning to decompose and swell up. By this time they were bringing in fragments and pieces; they brought them out on a dump truck... I'll never forget that. They would just pull the chain on the dump truck just like it was a load of dirt and dump them out. And we had to try and sort them and find enough of what went with what to make an identification.

Q: It must have been pretty stressful.

A: It was the worst part, I believe, of my Navy career...was that day.

Q: How many days did you work on that burial detail?

A: I was on four days and on the morning of the fifth day they lined us up for our assignments again, and I assumed we'd be back on the burying party because there was still some more to go. But the boatswain mate and I don't even know to this day what ship he was from or anything, he announced that they wanted 50 volunteers. The minute he said 50 volunteers, there was a mad scramble to change from the group we were in to get to be one of

the 50, because I knew anything was better than the burying party. It turned out we were volunteering for the USS *Detroit*. So, it was all (except for I think just a few) the whole 50 was *Utah* sailors that went on the *Detroit*. As soon as they could get us together and get our names they marched us down and we took a motor launch and went to the *Detroit*, and became a member of their crew. They had already been underway, of course, and come back in. The minute we got on there they were loading more ammunition. Only thing we knew, they had a report we were going into sea and we were going to be escorting some ships. We loaded ammunition and the following day went to sea. The escorting that we were doing turned out to be terrific, because we were escorting one of the passenger liners plus a couple of troopships with women and children, and we were coming back to the U.S. It seemed to me it was Christmas Eve or a couple days before. It seemed to me it was Christmas Eve but I know at the time we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco. They left us; each side got to go on liberty and then we were back to sea again.

Q: Is there any particular incident, or any particular memory that stands out more than any other in your mind about Dec. 7th?

A: I just guess the incredibility of the fact that this could happen. Now I was on the *Utah*, and the *Utah* has been called various things from experimental ship, to a target ship, to whatever. And we were a little all of these things; we were a target ship, we were an experimental ship, we would get the first thing of anything the Navy wanted to try. So we had been out on maneuvers, we had been bombed by the miniature bombs, we had submarine detecting gear, we had been out with the fleet. And there was just these little things we'd hear from time to time that they were detecting sounds that weren't supposed to be there like a submarine that wasn't supposed to be in that area. And there were reports that the Japanese were sending ships into Honolulu, or on the way from the States to Honolulu, and a lot of the old Japanese were leaving. And there were these little things that made you feel like something was happening, but I guess the incredible thing was that it did happen; that they could possibly get there without us knowing it. It just didn't seem possible. That to me was the outstanding thing.

Q: Well, thank you. Appreciate you taking the time to come up here and talk to me.

A: I appreciate the chance.

John Kuzma USAR #22
December 5, 1984

Q: Mr. Kuzma, when did you first join the Service?

A: I joined the Service in (tape slips).

Q: What made you choose the Navy over say the Army?

A: Oh I think maybe a lot had to do with (ts). I think maybe (ts) the ultimate goal (ts).

Q: Where did you go to boot camp?

A: Newport, Rhode Island.

Q: How long did boot camp take in those days?

A: Well, let's see (ts) it was two at boot camp and September and then when we got back from a weeks leave and went back to boot camp, stayed aboard the USS *Constellation*, and old wooden ship that was a sister ship to "Old Ironsides" the *Constitution*.

Q: What was your first assignment?

A: Well, of course I really didn't get assigned to anything. We were waiting for traveling orders while we stayed aboard the old wooden ship, and we shipped on the USS *Pyro* which is ammunition ship, which we caught at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We were passengers that were being transported, well, we didn't know where we were going at the time but we ended up at Pearl Harbor.

Q: When was that?

A: That was October of 1940.

Q: What Unit were you assigned to?

A: Well, like I say, we were just passengers on her. We weren't assigned to anything until we arrived within a days docking in Pearl Harbor. We were asked to pick; I think they gave us a choice of about six different ships, or shore duty. My first choice was shore duty, because I got seasick pretty much across the whole trip there, so shore duty looked pretty good to me then.

Q: Where did they send you?

A: They sent me to the Naval Air Station at Pearl Harbor, and I was assigned to the Fire Dept.

Q: Was that on Ford Island?

A: Right on Ford Island, yes. The Naval Air Station is part of

Ford Island.

Q: Were you assigned to a particular squadron then?

A: No, I was at that time assigned to the Fire Dept. as a firefighter. Of course we had a few fire trucks, and we also manned a crash truck for duty on the strip of the airfield in case of any accidental crashes. Why the result was to not only extinguish the fires but to rescue the personnel aboard the aircraft.

Q: Were you in the Fire Dept. there on the morning of the Attack?

A: I was at the Fire Dept. that morning, yes.

Q: What did you do the night before?

A: The night before, the fellow I mentioned, his name was Frances Burke, he and I went on a double date in Honolulu. He went out with a girl called Vicky and I went out with Vicky's cousin. I stayed over that night in Honolulu and he went back to his duty; it was aboard a tugboat. The morning of the 7th I was on my way back to Ford Island and the bombing already was in progress as I was passing Hickam Field.

Q: Is that when you first noticed it?

A: Just about near Hickam Field. By that time some of the explosions were very audible and the smoke was arising from some of the damage.

Q: Could you see the planes?

A: Oh definitely! You could see the aircraft, yeah; especially once we were dropped off before we got to the Naval Yard gates. They kept all the automobiles away from there and we had to do the rest on foot. By that time you could see the aircraft coming down from it seemed like all directions.

Q: How did you make your way from the gate over to the landing?

A: Well, it was a long time from my getting to the gate and before I got back to get a boat back to Ford Island and there was a lot of things that happened. And I'm not sure of the sequence of them, but during that period of time I helped fight the fires on the battleship *Pennsylvania*, the destroyers *Cassin* and *Downes*, which all three were in the large dry dock. Besides that, I did help take some of the injured that were coming in off the whale boats, and helping them to the Naval medical center there. I,m not sure, it was just a Navy sick bay on the shore side of Ford Island.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the fire fighting that you did over at the dry dock where the Pennsylvania, and the *Cassin*, and the *Downes* were?

A: Well, quite a few of the lines were already being stretched when I began to help, and I helped advance the lines, helped aim the streams on the source of the fire. But their was so much fire that you needed a lot of water charged lines to really do any real good extinguishment.

Q: How was the water pressure?

A: Well, it wasn't that good, possibly because there was so much water being used at the time. But what was worse, when I finally did get back to Ford Island, and got the trucks out, we had no water pressure. Our hydrants were all dead because one of the bombs had broken the water main on Ford Island there. So we were drafting sea water through our pumps, and discharging sea water.

Q: Was the Attack still in progress when you got back to Ford Island?

A: Well, I don't really know because there was so much going on and the firing was going on. In fact they were firing at anything that moved, so I lost all track of time. I presumed it was but I'm not sure. They kept firing well into the night. We were still firing guns later that night. I think a squadron of fighters were coming in from the Enterprise and mistakenly they opened up. It seemed like every gun in the world opened up on them and they shot down a few.

Q: What part of Ford Island seemed the most damaged of all the parts of the Island that you worked on that day.

A: Well, of course the seaplane hangar that was directly across from the landing where I caught the boat, they had been hit first. I guess one of the first bombs went through the hangar and ignited the aircraft in there. That to me was probably the most noticeable damage. Of course, there was other damage. Bombs were dropped in various places. In fact some of the bombs didn't go off; they planted themselves in the ground there. One of the bombs at the sick bay on Ford Island there. It must be they were trying to hit the *California* but the bomb went and buried itself under one of the large slabs, and when it went off and when it exploded it raised it completely off its base. In fact if it wasn't for that I think there would have been a lot of lives lost because there was a lot of people that were brought to the hospital there.

Q: Were any of the fuel tanks on Ford Island hit.

A: No, we took our fire trucks there and had one of them standing by in case there was any that got hit or fire reached them. Of course one of the problems was, we took one of the other fire trucks that we had and we played our streams on the BOQ [*Bachelor Officers Quarters*] that was on the shore side away from the *Arizona*, and the heat was so intense that we had to play our stream on it to keep the wooden building from igniting and of course that burned for a considerable amount of time, the *Arizona*. I'm not sure just when it finally died down, but I know it was still burning Tuesday.

Q: Were there survivors from the *Arizona* and the other ships coming ashore onto Ford Island?

A: There wasn't too many from the *Arizona*, because the devastation there was almost complete. To my knowledge, I think there were only something like 200 survivors from the *Arizona*. I'm not sure of the original compliment, someplace around 1300 I think.

Q: What sort of shape were the survivors in that were coming ashore?

A: There were all degrees of injuries from swimming ashore, and some were burned, some were injured and bleeding. Well, there were so many ships involved the there were all kinds of injuries. Some of the men weren't injured but they had to go through the water. I do know we formed a line of men from the firehouse to the battleship *California*, and we kept recharging the fire extinguishers from our side and using that to extinguish or keep the fire from spreading. And the tugboats around the other side were pouring water on there. It was a long day. See one of the problems we had was because the water pressure was gone, we had to use the water from the swimming pool across from the fire station to recharge the extinguishers. They were mostly salt and acid (??) and foam extinguishers.

Q: Must have been pretty tough trying to fight a fire on a battleship with just fire extinguishers.

A: Absolutely. It was almost nil. You don't fight that type of fire with hand tanks. You need volumes of water. But anything is better than nothing I guess, at that time.

Q: What was the atmosphere on Ford Island then? Did there seem to be panic or...

A: No, there was no panic. Everybody seemed to know their job and everybody was doing something constructive and working with rescue or firing the guns. Everybody was doing the job. I didn't see any panic.

Q: How soon after the Attack do you remember seeing the first plane get off of Ford Island?

A: I didn't really see the planed but I could hear them revving up the engines there. I couldn't tell you, gosh, like I say I lost all track of time. That's something that you're not even concerned about... at least I wasn't.

Q: What memory sticks in your mind more than any other from Dec. 7th, 1941?

A: In what way, you mean dramatically or just routine...

Q: Either.

A: I would say, in 1968, I was asked to give advice and work with 20th Century Fox on the movie, "Tora, Tora, Tora" and I did that for about two years and they had me at their studios, and I met various people making the movie, and I did some PR work for them, and this sticks in my mind over that period of time and before then. I had the pleasure of being on national television. I met people like Kitty Carlisle, Tom Polson(?), Orson Bean. Phyllis Newman, Ed Sullivan. I was able to get on hid program one time. I met people like Arthur Godfrey, a lot of people I was fortunate enough... I was on the set when they were making a movie called "Chie"(?) with Omar Sharif and Jack Palance and Caesar Divano. I met people like Katherine Ross, very interesting.

Q: How long did it take you, getting back to Dec. 7th, before the fire department had the fires on Ford Island under control?

A: Well, the fires on Ford Island, we had them under control ...well it wasn't too long. The fires aboard the battleships were extensive. Actually it's very difficult to fight a fire like that when you have so many battleships that were leaking oil from the ruptured ... from the bow hits and the torpedo explosions. So you had water that was constantly being fed by leaking oil and it just kept burning as it came to the surface. It was next to impossible to extinguish just trying to put it out with hose streams.

Of course that was not the end of my fire fighting career. I spent 32 years as a firefighter for the city of Binghamton(?). I retired a fire captain, filled in as a fire marshall, training instructor, assistant chief. So over the years I've seen a lot of fires

Q: So those started your career then.

A: Yes, although when I first came out of the service I went on the police department for a period of time before I went on the fire department.

Q: After the fires got out and things sort of settled down at Ford Island, what did they have you doing at that point?

A: Well, of course that very night we were awful busy because there was rumors that we were being invaded and it seemed that every noise or sound, you felt that they were coming across the channel...the Japanese. And the gunfire, sporadic gunfire all night with the exception of when they opened up with every ship and gun in the harbor when the planes were coming in from the *Enterprise*. But of course the next day was spent, for us in the fire department, getting our equipment back in fire fighting shape again, and that was no easy task, because we ran those engines continuously for hours and hours, and you had your hoses to pick up and recharging extinguishers, and of course some of the damage we had to overhaul and make sure that weren't any sparks, or leaking oil, or gas. It was a lot to do for days after.

Q: Did you do any kind of salvage work on any of the wrecked vessels there?

A: No, not aboard the vessels. I didn't get involved in that type of work but we did help, right in front of the fire station, one of the planes that was shot down was right alongside the dock underwater and had to be hoisted out with cables and brought up winched up on shore. The pilot was still in the cockpit when they brought that up. That was about the only salvage work that was in the area where I was at, although there was a lot going on. But that was mostly being done by people in that expertise end of it.

Q: It's an interesting story and especially to get the fire department angle on it. Anything else you think you'd like to add?

A: No. My mind right now is not thinking fast enough, but I'm sure in a few minutes I'll think of a few things that I could have projected here for the sake of history.

Well of course, one of the things I was concerned about was my friends you know, that were in different parts of the Island. I had many friends many friends that were in the army, that belonged to Schofield, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, and I used to go visit them before the Attack. So naturally when things returned to normal (well they never did return to normal but when it returned to where you could stop and view what was happening) I wondered how about this one, how about that one. That's on your mind and that's a worry because I'm sure you know they're worried about you. Then of course my family back home, I was worried about what they would think. What they had us do a few days later or I don't know just how long, was they had us all sign postcards that didn't identify where we were, just that we were safe at that time.

Q: How long did it take before that postcard finally got home to your family? Do you remember?

A: No I don't. I don't really know. I honestly couldn't tell you. I imagine it probably took a little while because they probably sent most of it (I'm just guessing) by ship transport. I'm not sure they would tie up all the room on aircraft. I'm sure that everything that was going back to the states was of vital importance, so they probably sent it back by ship. I imagine it took (well it depends on the speed of the ship) 7 or 8 days; sometimes less. I know I made one crossing later in 1943 on the aircraft carrier, the USS *Yorktown*, and I think we made it in less than 72 hours. That's pretty good speed, because when I originally came out to Hawaii on the *Pyro* (the ammunition ship), it took us about 10 days I think. We had engine trouble and seemed like forever and a day before we ever sighted land again.

Q: Well thank you. I really appreciate your coming up here, taking the time to.

A: I thank you for being interested enough to preserve history as it was.

Q: Well, that's what I enjoy.

Lester Hartley #23
December 5, 1984

Q: Mr. Hartley, when did you first join the Navy?

A: On September the 6th, 1940, in San Francisco.

Q: Where did you go to boot camp?

A: In San Diego.

Q: How long was boot camp roughly?

A: Six weeks I believe it was at that time.

Q: What was the first ship you were assigned to after boot camp?

A: USS *Jarvis*.

Q: At that time, where was the *Jarvis* stationed?

A: At that particular time it was at the Pudget Sound Navy Yard.

Q: So you joined her there?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you first go to Hawaii on the *Jarvis*?

A: We went to Hawaii, early December 1940. I might add that the day I went aboard the *Jarvis* was on November 11th at 5:00 in the evening.

Q: What were your regular duties on the ship?

A: Well, after I was aboard for awhile I was in the fire room. That's where I was first assigned (ts). I was in the fire room until the first of the year, and then I got transferred into the artillery gang. They had the equipment aboard that the other divisions didn't have.

Q: What was your rank by the time December, 1941, came around?

A: Fireman 1st Class.

Q: What would a typical working day be like for you?

A: Well, the ones that I can remember the most because we had most of that was when I was in the auxiliary gang, which I was boat engineer all that summer and shortly after I was assigned to the gang I was assigned to boats. (ts) There was only about 6 or 7 in that gang (ts) you need a lot of them. This was my primary duties so far as daytime work. Now when the boats weren't running then I had other jobs of cleaning station, learning how to run a lathe, and different things like this. (ts) equipment that we had to take care. Of course studying for my (ts)

Q: What was the *Jarvis*'s operating schedule like late 1941?

A: Quite busy. We had time in port too but we had a lot of sea duty. We would be out usually a week to 10 days a one time. We would go out on maneuvers different groups. Maybe we'd be out with carriers or maybe submarines. We fired torpedoes quite often, of course to me this was quite an (ts) the boat engineer of course after the torpedo was followed we chased it down, put our boat over the side and go out and retrieve the torpedo. At the cost of those things in those days they didn't like to loose them. (ts) The would have a lot of questions to answer if they lost one.
We were busy, we had a lot of anti aircraft practice, a lot of night time maneuvers in which I might add, I didn't know until after the War was over what it was to operate at night with a lighted ship. All my experiences before and during the War of course, (ts)

Q: What did you do the evening before the attack, the night of Dec. 6th?

A: O.K. on December the 6th, I was being transferred that day back to Virginia... Norfolk, Virginia. I was going to diesel school. Along that day in the afternoon, I had my sea bag all packed and everything (ts) USS *Ramapo* for transportation back to the states, back to the mainland. (ts) Ramapo would not take any passengers aboard. They were sending them all back. (ts)There was a lot of sailors going over for transportation. No explanations, no nothing. That's it. (ts)back to ship and the duty yeoman said, "Well we'll see what we can find for tomorrow. You stay aboard until tomorrow." (ts) See, I really had been detached from the ship. I don't know how they get around this, but I slept aboard. I stayed aboard that night and my normal sleeping place, I had a bunk in the machine shop. Hot weather... and I stayed (ts).

Q: About what time did you get up on Sunday morning?

A: Well, I was still on my bunk when the attack started, but the funny thing where Ford Island was just by looking out the door. And I heard the drone of planes, you know, like diving planes and I was wakened up but I just automatically looked out the door. And I saw, I'm sure, what was the first bomb dropped on Ford Island, and there were others falling down. So I was about awake at that time.

Q: What was your first reaction?

A: I don't know, you know really.... I got up, put my shoes on, pulled my shorts on (see these shorts were the uniform of the day out there), and went out on deck. Of course by that time, general quarters was sounded and everybody went to their battle stations.

Q: Where was your battle station?

A: My battle station was on the number four main battery aft. That was the one on the stern. We had (ts) anti-aircraft main batteries (ts).

Q: What caliber of gun was that?

A: They were 5-inch, .38 caliber, dual purpose, for a main battery (ts).

Q: What was your job on the gun there?

A: I was hot shellman at that particular..those particular times. And it wasn't too long, I wasn't there too long until I was (ts) low. We were in the Navy yard at that particular time, and we were partially disabled, fireroom-wise and engineroom-wise.

Q: Was the ship getting power and water from the yard?

A: It was getting power and water from the dock and of course everything immediately starts in as to get the ship ready to get underway. We had a fireman who cut the power off, and restored power as soon as the power to the ship could be maintained. They cut the power off, and cut off the water over there and we got under way, which was really 20 minutes after ten.

Q: Under normal routine circumstances, how long would it have taken?

A: Oh, in this particular routine type of thing, that would have taken probably four to six hours, or maybe more because they had some valves. I know one in particular valve that they had out of the line which normally two men would be putting in and taking out, but (ts) a little fellow by the name of Sare stuck that exhaust line up in the valve all by himself. We didn't have a full crew that morning, so everybody had a job to do, you know.

Q: Do you remember how to spell Sare's name?

A: S-A-R-E. I don't know his first name. He was from Laramie, Wyoming; a little short fellow... real interesting.

Q: So, what deck were on when you were helping to get the ship ready?

A: I was down in the fire room at this particular time. Now our class of ships carried 16 torpedoes in quad twos on the main deck. So we had 4 quads and they were all discharged so you had to have a compressed air system (ts) all discharged and I was in the fireroom, got the air compressors running, and I stood watch on those air compressors until we had all 16 of those torpedoes charged up, which came (ts) as I remember, 7 or 8:00 in the evening before we got them all done. It was (ts).

Q: During the progress of the attack while you were down in the fire room, did you get reports about what was happening topside?

A: No, I didn't, and I don't know whether any of other firemen and water tenders in the fireroom really knew what was going on down there, you know, at that time. The only thing we seemed like we could feel down there was that we was going at a pretty good speed. Of course, you knew by how hot it was in the fireroom and all this you know. The faster the ship went, the cooler it was in the fireroom. This was because it had a blower that had to force air to the boilers. As far as really knowing what was going on topside, I don't think any of us did, too much, because we were in pretty heavy seas a lot and you could tell that it was rough. (ts) I can't remember hearing anything.

Q: What stands out as your most vivid memory of that day; the day of the attack?

A: Well, there's two things that really stand out more than anything to me. This is before I went below decks; this is while I was still topside.

Q: At the gun?

A: Yes. The first thing was seeing in the second... well, the first attack really I guess, after that was over I saw all the boats coming in. There were all kinds of boats, whaleboats and motor launches out in the water, and they were picking up survivors from the battleships. We weren't really a long ways from the battleships; we could see real well, and they were bringing survivors in that some of those guys, their clothing was well you might say about all gone. They were oil soaked, they were wounded, and black, you know, with the oil and stuff. So this stands out real well.

And the second thing that I remember so well was, apparently when the second attack began, was the high flying bombers. I stood there, and everything was quiet around us, and watched those bombers come along over and they dropped their bombs, and they're headed right where I'm standing. I can see it today yet.

Q: How far away did they land?

A: Over on the battleship row. We were, I don't know, I guess it'd be 500 yards or maybe 700 yards from the battleship row.

Q: Did you happen to see the *Arizona* blow up?

A: Not that I can recollect, no. There was too many things going on and I think if you weren't particularly looking in that direction (ts) torpedo planes come around right off our stern and went right down the battleship row. Those were real planes to see... the pilots... and they was close to us, you know. The old story about how some of the sailors threw spuds at them, well, I wouldn't be surprised. That sounds a little strange but I wouldn't be surprised because they were pretty dog-gone close. (ts) real interesting in a way. I wouldn't give anything for that experience now, but at that time I wished I was anywhere else.

Q: When did you leave the *Jarvis*?

A: I left the *Jarvis* late the last day or two of January, l942(ts). My orders were recut to go to Norfolk to be in some school. So but those orders still stood (ts). In the mean time in December, we were part of the task force that was going supposedly to relieve Wake Island.

Q: Oh really?

A: But we didn't get there in time. I don't know what we were doing really. We were out at sea that's all I know (ts) out toward Midway and then we went back (ts) tanker, escorted a tanker back to Pearl Harbor. (ts) and sometime during January we were dispatched to Hilo. A submarine had been sighted down in Hilo, so we was out with another destroyer and apparently we got a kill, at least all reports were (ts) Navy transports, we came back. I came into San Diego.

Q: Anything else you recall about the attack?

A: Well, I don't think too much (ts) because little things... Oh, I remember one thing... a little funny story in a way, going around. We had a young fellow, well, he was a little older than I was really, he was from Texas...no, he was from Colorado, and he talked real slow. And him and a third class electrician were down in the aft steering room. They were loading machine gun belts. See, we had .50 caliber machine guns, a couple of them. And they were loading machine gun belts, and the electrician said every once in a while you could feel the ship bounce a little bit... the stern come up a little. And he couldn't figure out what that was, and all the noise and so forth. And old Rosty, the fellow from Colorado sticks his head up out of the hole back there and he looked around a little bit and said, "Huh..." He says, "That's just number four gun going off." He didn't get excited, it didn't seem like, but he was a real nice fellow. In fact, all of them were, everybody aboard ship was. They (ts) I don't reckon anybody was outstanding in what they did that day but everybody chipped in together and all did their jobs. That's the way I look at it.

Q: Well, I appreciate your taking the time to come up here to talk to me.

A: Well, it was interesting. I thank you.

Q: Thank you.

Allan Thompson #24
December 6, 1984

Q: Where are you from originally, Mr. Thompson?

A: I'm from Hoboken, New Jersey. I was born there, raised there.

Q: When did you join the Army?

A: Well, I was drafted in April, '41.

Q: In April of '41?

A: That's right.

Q: What was the first unit you were assigned to?

A: I went to Fort Dix to be inducted. Then I went to Fort Eustis for my Basic. After my basic training, I was put on a train and went to Fort McDowell, and from there we waited for transportation to where we were going. I really didn't know. So we got on a ship and it was heading to someplace in the Pacific, I imagine, and we wound up in Hawaii, was the first stop. I understand is how, why, still I'll never know. Let's see, my name is Thompson. I imagine they took the last half of the alphabet, and we got off the boat and we were put on Hawaii there. And I understand the first half of the alphabet, I imagine, went to Philippines.

Q: When you got to Hawaii, what Unit were you assigned to there?

A: Well, then I was assigned to 251st CA RGT.

Q: Where were they stationed?

A: In Camp Malakole.

Q: What was Camp Malakole like when you got there? What do you remember about the place?

A: The place inland there is, as I said before, never used to the Army life at all, but it was really something new to me. Now it's a stay in a beautiful place, nice climate and everything else. You know I had to make myself do stuff like that. I mean as far as experience in the Army life goes, I really started enjoying it in Hawaii. No, see, the best part of the thing was your basic training, because they kept you busy for so many days. You were coming and going.

Q: When you were at Camp Malakole, what was you regular duty?

A: Well, I was assigned to Headquarters Battery.

Q: What did you do there?

A: And then from there I went into the communication, and the poles...you have to wire the poles and stuff like that. And I wound up on the switchboard.

Q: What did you do on the night of Dec. 6th, 1941; the night before the attack? Do you remember?

A: Well, on Dec. the 6th, I had a weekend pass. It was Saturday morning and I went to Honolulu with a few of my buddies there. We walked around and after we started looking around, we had a few beers and we come out. And that weekend pass, that meant I could have stayed overnight. But I come home, oh I figure about 8:00 that evening, and I was going back on Sunday. I went to this church service and I went and had my breakfast. This is on Dec. the 7th, I went to church, and had my breakfast, got my paper. I was in my bed reading the paper when the attack started, which I really didn't know about the attack until a lot of rumors. And we ran out.

Q: What was the first thing you saw or heard that made you think something out of the ordinary was going on?

A: Well, one of the Sergeants come into the barracks and he told everybody to fall out; the fellows, were in the barracks. And we went out there, and as we looked up in the air, and to tell you the truth I really couldn't make nothing out because they were so high, the so-called planes. Then we were told to go back in and get all our gear, and fall out in our order again, which we did. Then we got in trucks and went to a place we have is a Marine airbase there. It's located in the sugar cane field. They call that the Ewa, [*E*]-W-A. Now I don't know whether that's right or wrong. And we was in there; we was situated around the camps where we're located. I said before, I was in Headquarters.

Q: Was Camp Malakole bombed or strafed at all?

A: Well, my way of thinking is I don't think so. It might have been, see. Because I was down in like a dungeon operating the switchboard, see what I mean. Then after that, got duties assigned there, guard duty. And there was like a tower there. I call it a crows nest; it was that high up. That day we walked up you know, and spent so many hours there looking toward the Pearl Harbor surface. It was like blown away to me, the way it was all lit up with the flames and everything. Naturally the people working there, getting rid of stuff for the shipyard workers. And then we heard rumors about the land here being else, and the place we were in, cornfields, x-amount of feet so high and all, and the wind would start blowing... NAZI! You gotta be nervous and it was really new to me, let's put it that way. And I was really scared to tell you the truth. But with the war on, we got used to it. But as far as firing any rounds at anybody, I don't recall doing it. But you know, a lot of warning stuff like that; you hear them flying in the air, you know. But the main thing we were looking for was planes coming in. And then we had our duty

there until our next orders and I really don't know how long we were out to tell you the truth. But the next place out was Guadalcanal; wasn't too bad there.

Q: How long did you spend on Guadalcanal?

A: Often, as I said before, I really don't know about the time. There wasn't too much action there. Then it got slowed down. From there we went to Fiji. It was a beautiful island. We loaded ships and stuff like that. There was no action there. Guess you want to say where was my next call. The next call was Bougainville. There wasn't too much; there was a little action around north of Bougainville too. But as far as action was the other men, I read in the paper and saw on newsreels. I didn't see all that but I say we were lucky to tell you the truth. That's all I can say.

Q: Well, I appreciate your coming up here and sharing your reminiscences with us.

A: Yeah well, happened to be a long time and thank God I got out of it. My cure is of all this, the men that we really left on the *Arizona*. The way people are today, I don't think they really realize about the men who lost their lives there; especially the young generation. What you emphasize puts that way, because with the so-called building different bombs and stuff like that. People don't really know what happened. If Japan had the bomb, what would happen to California. And also, the way they talk was they could have walked into Hawaii too, as far as the destruction they know they had done.

Q: When you were there, after Pearl Harbor, What did most of the men in your outfit think about the possibility of invasion? Did they think that if the Japanese invaded that they could have taken Hawaii?

A: Well, my way, as I said before, the way the rules were going, my way of thinking is I didn't actually know what damage they did until we heard it from the true facts. But the Navy and all their stuff, and they damaged the airfields. Of they had a fairly decent amount of men, they could have come in and taken Hawaii. And I said before, these people today, you got your congressmen and senate guys like that. I mean they're probably doing a good job but they're all against this bomb bit and stuff like that. I can see their reasons; they cost a lot of money but if we don't get something like that, because the way the Country is today. I don't know...it's in bad shape because, I personally think, I mean, but no political reasons, stuff like that, I think President Reagan is trying to do a good job. They might think he's wrong, well, that's their opinion too. Which I appreciate their opinion; I can be wrong too.

Q: Well, thank you for giving us your opinion and your memories.

A: Thank you very much.

Carl Kaupp #25
December 6, 1984

Q: Mr. Kaupp, when did you first join the Navy?

A: I joined the Navy the 18th of May in 1938.

Q: What guided your choice to join the Navy as opposed to, say, the Army?

A: Well, I signed up for the Marine Corps and the Navy, but at that time they were only taking twelve out of the New York district, and the Navy called me before the Marine Corps, and that's how I happened to get in the Navy.

Q: What was the first ship you were assigned to?

A: It was the USS *Hull*.

Q: Where did you join her?

A: In San Diego, in March of 1939.

Q: When did you sail to Hawaii?

A: We sailed to Hawaii in 1939 with a Hawaiian Detachment.

Q: So, were you stationed in Hawaii before the main body of the fleet got out there?

A: We proceeded the Main fleet. We were known as part of the Hawaiian Detachment.

Q: What was the ship's operating schedule like in those days, when you first went out to Hawaii?

A: Well, we would operate for a week or two weeks, and have maneuvers and do tactics, and then come back in , you know, for a weekend, or what have you. Or if we spent a number of weeks at sea, we would come in and then go alongside the tender for maintenance, or just swing around the buoy if it was our turn to.

Q: And what would you normally do on time off that you had...liberty?

A: Well, I spent a lot of time on the ship. I was the gunners mate and when I did go ashore I generally went around the area, toured the Islands. I did a lot of shells; picked up shells on the beaches. I went to another machine gun school out at one of the Army bases and it was located along the shore. And as I say, I was not a great shore man. I spent a good deal of my time and I did a good deal of time studying.

Q: What was the duty to which you were normally assigned on the ship?

A: I was a gunners mate. I went aboard the ship as a 2nd Class Seaman. After having attended ordinance school, I was honor man in this ordinance school, and sent to this destroyer for sea duty. I had number two gun on the ship and then I was transferred to number three gun, where a had a 5-inch .38 gun, and a loading machine that was my responsibility to maintain.

Q: Was that your assignment on Dec. 7th?

A: That was my assignment on Dec. 7th, yes.

Q: What did you do the night before the attack? Do you recall?

A: I had duty so I was aboard and my duty was as the Officer, not the Officer of the day, but I had the day watch; supervised the day watch with the seamen as an escort.

Q: What were doing when the attack opened?

A: When the attack opened, I had just finished washing my clothes, and I was taking a shower, intending to go to church on the beach.

Q: What was the first sight or sound that alerted you to the fact that there was something out of the ordinary that was happening?

A: Explosions. When I was taking my shower, as I said, and I heard these explosions, and just wondering what had happened. So I looked out at the porthole, or to the entrance rather, where we came in the hatch, and I saw these fires on the airbase, on Ford Island. And I just assumed that someone was loading aircraft with gasoline and they exploded. And then I heard a "Tat-tat-tat-tat-tat" and I don't mean to be profane, but somebody hollered, "Flaming assholes!" And I put on my shorts and went to my gun station.

Q: Did the rest of the gun crew assemble there too?

A: The rest of the... it was a liberty weekend, as I said earlier, and so the entire ship was not aboard. Some, most of the men were and everyone went to their station. I was not able to fire my weapon because of the transverse and of its location. So I went down to help them on gun five, cut the canvas down. We had a canvas over the back end of the gun.

Q: Gun five was a ...?

A: Was a 5-inch .38. We had a canvas over the gun deck to shade the area where the men would go back, you know, to sit and relax. So we chopped that down, and then leaving there, then I went up and manned the .50 caliber machine gun by the bridge; up forward of the bridge.

Q: Was this a water cooled machine gun?

A: It was a water-cooled .50 caliber Browning machine gun, yes.

Q: How many men would normally be on a crew for that kind of gun?

A: Generally, three men. You'd have your gunner, and an attendant, and then a man to get your ammunition.

Q: How many were you working with?

A: We were working with three or four men at that time, because we had just...I sent my men around to help other people where they were needed.

Q: Did you have an adequate supply of ammunition there?

A: Yes we did. We would go to sea, if I may say, each week and maintain gun watches. We'd stand a gun watch on two weapons, on number two gun and number four gun and when we'd come in on the weekend, we'd put our ammunition down in the magazines and then secure our gun watches. But we did maintain gun watches while we were at sea... like a stand by.

Q: How soon after you got to that machine gun did you open fire on Japanese planes.

A: Well, I would say, as soon as ... the machine gun had been manned by a seaman and then I relieved the seaman and took over as gunner. But it was, I would say, within a matter of possibly 5 minutes, or maybe 7 minutes, that we got ammunition up to the ready lockers and that we were able to commence firing.

Q: Did you score any hits on any of the planes?

A: I am not going to say that I scored hits. I had traces going in that area and with everyone firing I assume that we all, you know, contributed toward the... In fact, I was told to stop shooting because I was shooting over the *Dobbin* and then the guy wires, and the Admiral says, "Leave him alone, he's doing a good job."

Q: Was the Admiral on the *Dobbin*?

A: The Admiral was on the Dobbin, yes sir.

Q: How close were the planes to the *Hull*?

A: Oh goodness, I would say they weren't more than possibly 300 feet to 400 feet, because they swung around making the run over the Island. And I'd say they were possibly the same amount of distance, probably 400 yards to 500 yards away, some of them. Some of them were higher and some were at a greater distance depending upon when they veered from their attack.

Q: Were any of the other anti-aircraft weapons on your ship also firing.

A: Some of the 5-inch had fired and we had three machine guns that could fire; the fourth couldn't because we were inboard ship against the USS *Dobbin* which was a tender.

Q: What about any of the guns on the Dobbin or any of the other nearby destroyers?

A: That I can't answer for, but on the other ships, yes, they were all firing. We were four destroyers and our squadron leader in the nest, and we were firing over one another, you know, we'd fire over and you'd kind of knock the men from their gun positions and they would do the same to us when they'd swing around and fire their 5-inch; a hazardous operation really.

Q: Sounds like cutting it pretty close in some of this.

A: Yes, we did cut it pretty close. It's a wonder we didn't shoot one another.

Q: You mentioned that you had tracers in your gun. Do you remember what the count was, how many tracers per round of ball?

A: I really don't. I think we had two or three ball, and armor piercing, and incendiary, and tracer, but I really can't relate to how many there were. But it gave you a good field to follow, a tracer to follow; you had a good stream to follow right out to where you were.

Q: So, how long did you man that machine gun?

A: Well, I manned it until they secured from the general quarters situation and then we finally went to sea and got on our gun watches and stood gun watches all the while. But we went out around 11:30 I believe, or sometime in that area. We picked up some survivors on the way out, incidently; men that were in the water, men that were in whale boats that had been picked up, and brought them aboard our ship.

Q: What sort of shape were they in?

A: They were wet and they were shaky, and every one was crying.

Q: Did you join a task force out at sea?

A: Yes we did. We had a group. Our destroyer was manned by the captain of the *Farragut* I believe, because our captain had to be ashore. And he came aboard and took command of our ship under orders from whoever CINCPAC was and our Hawaiian detachment was. And he took the *Hull* to sea and we came in the next day and then our group came aboard our ship.

Q: And so do you remember how long you were out at sea roughly?

A: I think we came in the following afternoon. I'm sure that's about what we did. We joined up with the *Enterprise*, I believe, at night. In fact, we were under a torpedo run, but then we found out it was the *Enterprise*. We thought we had come across some of the enemy, but it was our own ships that were coming into Pearl.

Q: What one thing, or several things, are most vivid in your memory about the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Oh, I think, just realizing what had happened. It uh..... I get emotional..... I'm sorry.

Q: It's alright.

A: Just to see the extent of the damage... and what had happened, and realizing really, the full extent of what had gone on. And when we would go to sea, incidently, and have maneuvers and what, no matter where we went, there were always Japanese sampans around. I don't give a damn if we steamed two days or three days. We'd have a maneuver; you do some bit of an operation, and there always a sampan there, everywhere. We used to have to ride the fleet, the red fleet, and the regular fleet, and one would go north and one would go south, and darn, every time we came together, boy, they'd be right out there. I don't know how they ever knew where we were. But then reading, if I may say, there were a couple of books that I read later, "Ramparts of the Pacific" and "Pacific Charter" by Hamlet Aiken(??), was a correspondent with the New York Times. And you realize some of the things that he said in there, you know, they allowed more Japanese Buddha priests to come to the Island, and yet the Shinto religion, you know, was on the decline. And all these people turned out, not all of them but a number of them turned out to be either officers in the Army or the Navy, or part of the 5th column of spy work that they had set up on the Islands.

Q: What was the feeling of you and the other men on your ship about local Japanese at the time?

A: Everyone was very pleasant and they were nice to get along with. I never had any trouble anywhere I went. They were just to me, surprising, that this would happen, and you know, we had no indication. We knew that something was imminent because of the War in Europe and it just was a total shock to everyone, you know. We kind of felt, some of them, that they were let down. You know, you read these things later on; you don't believe everything that you read, but a lot of facts have come out and it was just a horrendous thing.

Q: In the wake of the attack, in the days after the attack, what was the general atmosphere among the men in the fleet in terms of morale and speculation?

A: Morale couldn't have been higher. The morale couldn't have been higher, really. Everyone just wanted to go and knock the tar out of them. We didn't care really, about time at sea, or how

long it took, or what the outcome would be. We knew that we had a job to do, and everyone did it. Really, there was no dissention, or no quabbling. Of course, this was an entirely different situation that we had later on, as you know.

Q: How about rumors that were going around. Were there a lot of rumors?

A: No, no rumor. That I can't relate to, no sir. I don't know of any rumors or what have you. But I know that everyone that came aboard, or that we brought... we had some men that were survivors off some of the battleships, and they were just as eager to stay right on the ship than to go. And we did maintain and keep some of them. Some of them went back to help clean up their own problem that they had. But really, the morale and the spirit couldn't have been higher.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A: No. I loved the Navy. I thought it was great. I left the *Hull*, incidently, and went to school in Washington D.C. They have a gun factory, and I was top man in the class, and they took me out of the 5-inch and put me in the 8-inch, and I had an 8ªinch turret on the *Boston* (number two turret). And I was commissioned on the Boston, the Kwajalein. I went from 1st Class Gunners Mate to Ensign, and then left the *Boston* after my commission, a short while later, and I had the 1st Division on the USS *Savannah*. And we spent our time in the Med and we escorted Roosevelt on his trip to Yalta, through the Med. And then we also escorted Truman when he went to Potsdam. But I finished my Navy career in 1946. I was a Lt.(jg.) and then I resigned my commission and I went in the Marine Corps.

Q: Oh, did you?

A: I was in the Marine Reserve for awhile and then I was an ordinance officer with a fighter squadron. I trained pilots in California and down in El Centro, and then I was discharged in '51.

Q: Sounds like an interesting career, a lot of variety there.

A: I lost a brother, if I may say so. He was on the USS *Jacob Jones*. It was a destroyer that was sunk off the coast of New Jersey, when they'd come back from convoying ships to Europe. But he followed me into the Navy six months later.

Q: I guess a lot people don't realize how close to U.S. shores some of that action was.

A: That's right, they were on the coast. I had another brother, incidently, in the Marine Corps. He was with the 3rd Marine Division and he spent over a year and half in the hospital from Iwo. But he's doing well. He's fine and no problems.

Q: Good.

A: So, that's the extent of our service.

Q: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Kaupp.

A: I thank you kindly. It was nice to be selected.

William Ermolovich #26
December 6th, 1984

Q: Mr. Ermolovich, when did you first join the Navy?

A: September 23rd, 1940.

Q: Where did you go to boot camp?

A: Newport, Rhode Island.

Q: How long was boot camp in those days?

A: 8 weeks.

Q: What was your assignment after you finished boot camp?

A: My first assignment a cross-country trip to the Naval base at San Diego, California.

Q: What did you do when you got there?

A: When I got there, I chipped paint and whatever, on old four stack destroyers. An momentarily, or almost immediately, I was assigned to the USS *Whitney*, a destroyer tender. And the ship had just left San Diego, and eventually we were guests aboard a destroyer, the USS *Helm*, 388, and they transported us to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where I boarded the USS *Whitney*. That was my first duty station.

Q: When was that?

A: I would guess it's almost exactly a year, like December 7th, 1940.

Q: To what duty were you assigned?

A: Well, originally, being a new recruit, I was first designated an apprentice seaman, and my duties were primarily chipping paint, washing the decks. We used in washing the decks, why uh, what would happen would be, we'd get up at 6:00 in the morning. We were awakened and immediately there were some individuals that hooked up the hoses; they wet down the decks which were made out of wood, I believe 4-inch planking. And then, we'd have another individual that had a bucket filled with sand which they would sprinkle over the deck. And my duty was, primarily, to "holy stone" the deck, which means we had a piece of granite, roughly six inches square, with an indented hole in the center, and we had a mop handle as you would call it, and we would put the handle into this indentation. It wasn't permanent; we would kind of go back and forth down it. It acted as an abrasive on the wood.

Q: What was the purpose of "holy stoning" the deck?

A: Well, to keep it clean and neat, evidently, and to keep us busy I'm sure. And with the salt water, eventually, as it dried, it would bleach the decks and they were beautiful. You could almost eat off the decks.

Q: How did you and the other seamen feel about that kind of duty? Was it your favorite duty?

A: Well, it was great at the time, being in Hawaii, a young boy from the hills, a coal mining area of Pennsylvania, to go out to Hawaii was just the greatest. I'd probably still be there if it wasn't for the War, probably.

Q: So you really enjoyed being there.

A: We enjoyed it terrifically...tremendously.

Q: And how did you feel about "holy stoning" the decks?

A: Well, I thought that was pretty good. It was a very good experience. At least we got to eat early. Usually, I think we had breakfast at approximately 0700.

Q: Was the deck "holy stoned" every day?

A: Every day. Whether we were in port or out at sea, and evidently it was probably to keep us busy, because it could be boring after you're out to sea for weeks at a time.

Q: What other sorts of things did you do?

A: Well, I was very fortunate. I did some baseball playing back there in Pennsylvania and of course the Whitney had one of the better ball clubs, what I thought was in the Hawaiian fleet. And when they made the announcement to the recruits, if anyone was interested in playing baseball for the *Whitney*, to assemble at such and such a place. They issued some uniforms and we went out for a practice session. And incidently, Capt. Corn, who was our Skipper...

Q: Do you remember how to spell his last name?

A: C-O-R-N. In fact, he would attend our practice sessions, and I would think, from my own opinion, that sports was a great thing in peace time. It was competitive and what not, and I'm sure the officers had their little side bets or whatever. Well anyway, we'd get out to the practice field. I watched the ball team work out. Immediately I says, "There's no way I can make this ball club. These guys are fantastic!"

After the team had practiced their hitting and whatever else, they asked for the recruits, like myself to go to the position which I'm, you know, attempting to make the ball club. So I went out to shortstop, and they hit so many balls to me, back, forth, this way and that way. And after that session, I was approached by the manager and a few of the other people...the coaches. And the first thing they asked me, was I a professional baseball player.

And I was stunned. I had no idea what they were driving at. I says, "No." The next one was, was I a college baseball player. I says, "No." Third one was, "What did you play?" I says,"Well, I played high school baseball." And back in those days, which was the late 30's, during the latter part of the Depression, we played on what you call... we never played on sand, I mean grass infields. We played on what you call almost hard pebbles, on the thing. Well, anyway, I explained that to them, and of course then they says, well... at least then I found out that the shortstops name was Dougherty. He was from Massachusetts. And as I learned subsequently, he did play professional baseball, and he was the captain of the team, so there was no way that I could dislodge him. So they said, "Well, how about third base?" And I said, "I played a little bit of that." So they worked my fanny off, to get accustomed to 3rd; hitting slow rollers, right, left, this, that and the other thing. And finally they says, "Well, looks like maybe you got the position."

I had a competitor. I think his name was Amatto, from Philadelphia, and he had played college baseball. And he tried out for that, third base, but they selected me, and at that time I didn't know. When they first asked me about, you know, things like that, I figured they were trying to pull my leg or something. But anyway, I did make the team. We played in the Honolulu League, two or three nights a week. We beat practically every ship out there. We might have lost one or two games. We lost one to the USS *Hull*, which was a submarine tender.

Q: Sounds like sports was pretty competitive and a major part of life in the fleet there before the War.

A: Oh, was it! Oh, yes. It was, it was. Evidently, there wasn't too much more going on. We would spend time at Waikiki beach swimming, and being kind of young, there was no such thing as drinking or carousing at that time.

Q: Sounds like all in all, it was a pretty good life.

A: Oh, I loved it. Oh, I almost said I'll never leave this place.

Q: What were you doing that weekend of the attack?

A: Well, that was Sunday morning. O.K., I usually slept down in the fore part of the ship, down one deck below the main deck. And normally, being Sunday, was kind of a leisurely day. Now we evidently would probably go out and play baseball which would be like 1:00 or so. We would get up late in the morning on Sunday, and go in and have some breakfast, and then go topside if we didn't have anything to do, and kind of lounge around.

Well anyway, we were awakened by this clanging noise. And so my first response was, "What the heck's going on!" And what I got from whoever it was, says, "They're bombing the shit out of us!", and I says, "Who?", and he says, "We don't know!". But what they were doing see, we were sleeping above the ammunition locker and they didn't have the key to get in, so they secured a sledge hammer to break the lock.

Q: So the first news you had of the attack was the sound of the ammunition locker breaking?

A: The lock. They were trying to break into the ammo locker to get the ammunition. So, immediately, we went topside, and my battle station was a 5-inch, .51 caliber gun.

Q: Is that on the port side or starboard side?

A: It was on the port side boat deck. And what had happened, being a destroyer tender, which was the USS *Whitney*, we had five destroyers alongside, which we were servicing. And therefore, so we went to our battle station and we couldn't use the gun because I believe it was a surface gun and we couldn't train it too much anyway. So what we had to do is just stay there. In other words, so we could not obstruct the other people on the other guns and what not, see. That was our battle station. O.K., so this was still quite a surprise. So I could remember relating in our discussions and the one big thing was this, we started to get a little fear subsequently. And the only thing on our minds was this, if a bomb hit, we were almost hoping that we would get killed immediately because we had fears of the splinters from the wooden deck, you know, entering our bodies... and that was the only thing we were fearful of.
Well anyway, since we could not actually do much of anything...

Q: Were you watching the attack during this time?

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: What did you see? What was the scene like?

A: Well, the first thing was this, when we first went topside, we had to go up the port side because in the Navy it was up starboard, down port, see.

Q: Traffic rules.

A: Yes. And just recently, it came to mind, I could not figure out why I went up the starboard side, up the starboard ladder. Then it dawned on me, up starboard, down port. We couldn't go up the port ladder, see. So we went up the starboard ladder and got off on the starboard side and the first thing we saw was this, we saw what was going on around battleship row because we were like at 11:00 toward the USS Arizona was. And till this day, I swear that we saw the bomb drop on the Arizona, and at the time we all felt that the bomb went into the stack. But now there's a controversy because the ammunition locker blew up on the Arizona, right? So, alright, we saw that, and then of course we were looking up there, the Japanese planes are flying every which way. Alright, well the fact that we could not use our gun, we kind of... well, we didn't get bored, but we said, "Well, what are we going to do?" If we were able to keep busy it would have been fine; we'd be occupied. So what we started to do was this, when the Japanese planes, when they would strafe on the port side, we

would run clear around to the starboard side, because we were protected above. We had a deck above the boat deck. And this is what we did, we would kind of go back and forth. Well anyway, at that time, we weren't scared. It was just one of these things, we couldn't figure out why or what. Alright, so the first wave of planes come in and they left. And then about, I forget how long, maybe a half hour or so the second wave come in, but then we couldn't do much of anything and we just kind of stayed at our battle stations, or kind of run from the port to the starboard side, O.K? Well alright, then as things settled down a little bit, we were quite scared. There were rumors that the Japanese were landing of the Island, plus a lot of other things. So anyway, so during the day we kind of stayed at our battle stations, or close by. And the reason why we stayed above, either on the main deck or above was, by this time we found out, or got word that there were Japanese submarines in the Harbor. So unless you had to be below decks, you didn't dare go down there. So this went on, oh well I forget for how long. Well subsequently, we got in motor launches, certain people, work parties or whatever, and we kind of headed for battleship row. But you couldn't get near the place because the oil on the surface was burning, so we couldn't do much of anything, O.K? And so finally we went back to the ship.

The next morning we got up and being in the shipfitter division, we went over to the dry dock where the *Cassin* and the *Downes*, and USS *Pennsylvania* were located. So we went over there to see if we could do something. So we get down into the dry dock; there's no water in it, and the *Cassin* and *Downes*, our destroyers are capsized and what not. And by that time they already had cleared most of the individuals that got killed, this, that, and the other thing. Well, there's nothing that we could have done, so what we did, we went over to the morgue.

Q: Where was the morgue located?

A: The morgue was located pretty close there, I'm not sure. And the reason we went over there, we thought that perhaps they'd have a list of the casualties of the men who had died or had been severely injured. And there wasn't much again. We didn't see anybody. O.K., now as far as time goes, it's difficult to explain how long it took, but it must have been moving either...well, I can't figure...slow or fast or whatever, right?

So we went back to the ship. And so, well by this time being December the 8th, the five destroyers alongside had already left that night, see. When they come in for repairs or service, they would cut all power off. We would furnish destroyers with their water and their fuel, and what not. And this is like a comical scene now, then we had men coming over to the Whitney grabbing valves and just about anything, taking back to the ships so they could cast off. Well, they did that, but for the following day we went over to the birth where the carriers would tie up. The carriers are out to sea. And we tied up behind the USS *Raleigh* that had taken a bomb and maybe a torpedo; to go over there to see if we could assist them.

Subsequently, it got dark, and as soon as it got dark, we could visualize a ship in Pearl Harbor(it was awfully dark) and not knowing for sure what it was, all the guns were trained on

it. So they were almost ready to fire on it and finally they turned a spotlight on it and it was one of our heavy tugboats.

Q: Sounds like a close call.

A: Oh, that's true! Now to go back to Dec. 7th, as the Enterprise or which ever carrier was that was coming in, there were three, four, or five of their airplanes come in, just about the time it got dark. And supposedly, from what we heard, the air station was going to give us the signal if they were enemies or whether they were ours. Well, being jumpy and whatever, it only took one shot. Everything opened up and we blasted our own airplanes. So I mean, that's a matter of record I think.

Well anyway, that was the 7th and the 8th. O.K., immediately we were blacked out. We could not mail any letters home, or what not, for a whole month or so. But something else... well, not knowing this, we were issued what I thought were WWI gas masks, immediately. So we carried them with us. And well those were the first two days. After that it was just helping out on the damaged ships and what not. And well right now I can't, you know, this is as much as I can relate now, without really going back and making notes or whatever.

Q: Sounds very interesting.

A: So that's my, you know, my story on this thing or whatever. You know, there's a lot of other things, but it might be repetitious, this, that, and the other thing.

Q: What stands out in your mind more than any other single thing about December 7th, 1941? Your most vivid memory.

A: O.K.,now the most vivid, even though we could see where the *Arizona* was, we were in east lock. We were tied to a buoy and I can't say how far away we were from it. And with all this excitement, it's hard to say whether we heard any booms or what not, as the Arizona blew up. But one thing is this, and I still haven't found anybody that could explain it, there were 29 Japanese planes shot down, I believe. And this one airplane, it was a Japanese, and being assigned to the port gun which we couldn't use, alright, well we could see these Japanese planes. So this plane either, I don't know if it was a dive bomber, or a fighter, or whatever, and we had assumed that it dove down on the Naval Air Station which was an island right in the center of Pearl Harbor. And as it crossed over there, then it swung around through the channel, strafing. And this is unbelievable, the Japanese plane, it's like it stopped in the air. It might have got hit by one of the 5-inch-.38 caliber's off the destroyer. And you could see the Japanese pilot just either roll out or whatever. But then, we never could see him hit the water, because we were obstructed by these five destroyers.

Q: Do you mean he fell right out of the plane?

A: Well, when he got hit, he either fell or jumped or something. And that in particular is the one thing that seemed, you know, like it was a fairy tale or something. And there were numerous

other ones there, and to this day, I only heard of one instance where a Japanese pilot, he went down around battleship row. He was alive. He swam to shore. And the word I got the other day here, that one of the chief petty officers on Ford Island or somebody, had a .45 and he immediately shot him. And that was the first, the only one I heard of, where they had either located or whatever, either a dead Japanese pilot or a... well, the submarine people. See these two-man subs were in the Harbor and there again, we never heard anything.

Now another thing about those two-man subs, see, that's what got us scared after the attack. We had this fear. And then, during the day, (as I keep talking here things come to mind), we had torpedo boats, and they're kind of locating the two-man subs.
And the *Solace*, which was between the *Whitney* and the *Arizona*, which was our hospital ship, well anyway, with the *Solace* being there, the torpedo boat kind of honed in on this two-man sub. And to show you that the Japs either had everything down pat, was this two-man sub snuggled underneath the *Solace*, being a hospital ship they knew they weren't going to drop any depth charges.

And let me see... well really, you know, that, plus the *Arizona* blowing up, but that was from a distance, maybe two miles let's say, something like that. But with that airplane, that was the thing, that to this day, I can't figure out exactly what happened.

Q: That's amazing....

A: Let me tell you, that night, as soon as it got dark, we were just so scared, oh you don't know. We were all... and another thing, that night, well when we shot our own planes, which were off of the Enterprise. That night I had either the 8 to 12 watch. And of course in peace time, you know, there's no .45s on the officers, maybe the officers, they carried one. Well we got up there and I don't know who this officer was, whether he was a Ensign, a Lt.(jg.), full Lt., or what, and he had his .45 strapped to him. And I relate this to many people, and I kind of laughed, I said, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, when you're in peace time and you get up there and he gives you the word. He says, "Look, you better do your job. Don't shirk. Or if you do anything wrong you could be cited or whatever." But we were so scared and so we just stayed there. And when we opened up on the airplanes, God knows, maybe we had a part in shooting them down or whatever. Now what else there might be, it's hard, you know at this point, I mean things come to mind. I could sit here all day, you know, and I'd hear about this, and this, and this.

Now, well I could relate to something that happened in March, and I didn't know about when. At first, I thought it was a dream but then my son had bought me a subscription to "The Proceedings" from the Naval Institute. And there was an article on that about the Japanese bombing Honolulu, or the Island of Oahu. And I never dreamed that it was true. I thought maybe this was something I concocted in my mind or whatever. And there was a article in "The Proceedings" about this specific date and it happened on March 4th, 1942.

So, just about everyone, the higher ups or whatever information we could get, they couldn't figure out what had happened. Well, the way these planes got in though, there were

two big patrol planes, or whatever. They flew from either the Marshall Islands or somewhere, and they were refueled by submarines about a thousand miles outside, and they flew in there. They dropped their bombs, cause I know that night we were just scared to death. We figured uh oh, what's happening again.

Q: Did you have an alert that night?

A: Oh yes! Definitely! We had that but there again, it's one of these things that came about. Still, you know, we didn't know what to do. We were using old equipment and what not. We were using .50 caliber machine guns, probably WWI vintage. We had 3ªinch anti-aircraft guns. And as the planes were flying over, we had no way of knowing whether our range finders or the trainers on the guns, you know, would know exactly how many miles up they were.

One of the other things I gotta relate to, cause just about every story I read they talk about a sunny morning. There wasn't a sunny morning. It was overcast, see. So, there was no way, I'm not good on distances even till today. I had no idea how far they were up there. But you could see our projectiles exploding in the air. So they could have probably been up there anywhere from 5000 to 10000 feet, maybe not that high, but you know, it's a possibility.

Q: Are you talking now about the March raid or December 7th?

A: This is December 7th. See the March raid took place at midnight or there abouts, see? But here again, this is on December 7th during the second wave of the attack, because I believe the first wave were torpedo planes and dive bombers. Then the second wave, I assumed they were going to come in and wipe us out. But when they come in the second time, we were like prepared for them as well as we could. And talking to several of the survivors, we... well anyway, they had figured that the USS *Phoenix* did a lot to save us, because the *Phoenix* was tied up close to Aiea Heights, in that general area, and this wave was coming that way. And the reason I say they could have saved our hides was that Lloyd Johnson, a warrant officer, who was married, he lived in Honolulu and he was coming back to the *Whitney* aboard a motor launch. And he said there were so many empty casings out there that he assumed, or whatever it was, that they must have did a fantastic job. Because I think it was a light cruiser and they were better equipped and what not.

And another thing, we kind of reminisce and talk about things. If the Japanese had wiped out all our tenders, we'd have been in trouble. Because we were actually like a city aboard the *Whitney*. I believe we had like 800 enlisted men and...

Q: Would have made it pretty difficult for the destroyers to Operate.

A: Oh, it would!

Q: And if the destroyers couldn't be available to escort the carrier, the carriers would have had a tough job.

A: Definitely. See, because being a destroyer tender, we did everything. We had our machine shops, we had our foundries, we had ship fitter shops, carpenter shops, and you name it. And we would actually construct equipment, or what not, because actually, everything had to be like, tailor made, because the destroyers, they originally , they were built, they had diagrams, they had blue prints and everything. But somebody would come out with an idea and let's do it. And that's why to this day, I don't underestimate our young military people. Here we were, 17,18,19,20 years old, and here we are, doing these things. And our torpedoes, we had a torpedo shop. So when the destroyers come in, and hadn't used their torpedoes after a certain time, they would bring the torpedoes, and they would over haul them, and what not. And then we also carried extra torpedoes plus depth charges I believe. In other words, we would have everything for them. When they tied up alongside, the power was shut off and everything. You would see all kind of hoses and what not leading to the destroyers.

Oh, let me see now.... I could be mixing things up here, and I don't want to jump from one day to the other.

Q: Why don't we pause here for a minute.

A: O.K. (pause to replace cassette)... You know, I was just thinking here, if we had a group of people here... but maybe it's better this way see, so you don't have any influence. Because a friend of mine here, a survivor, he tried to reconstruct a lot of things, and he didn't read anything that was published that had to do with the attack on Pearl Harbor. In other words, he researched everything and what not, so that he would be able to have, you know, something original and not be influenced. And when he first talked to me, he asked me questions like, "How many planes did we shoot down." Well, that's very difficult to say, because you might have had every ship in there, plus land based AA guns, and the what, firing. So, it's very difficult as to who would get the credit for, you know, what was shot down. And being young, we were not familiar with a lot of these things. We were all a bunch of young kids like I said, 17, 18, 19, 20 years old. So we just followed orders. It was strictly military and we obeyed all the laws. We never questioned anything. But the life was nice before the attack, especially being in Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. It was fantastic.

Q: Have you ever been back there since?

A: I went back in 1981 for the 40th year and I went to Pearl Harbor. We went over to the Memorial and the strangest feeling came over me, and my wife and our other friends were with us. They went beck to the visitors building, or whatever. So I just stayed there for I'd say an hour maybe, just kind of looking out there. It was like being subdued in a way, and just trying to visualize now, you know, about certain things; what could have been if it was different. And the thing is that struck me at the time it was strange, there was many Japanese to visit, and in my own mind, you know, I would say to myself, gee this is, you know, how do you justify this? Well, I talked to my son who is a Navy pilot right now - flies the F-14 Tomcat, and my son I guess he's

pretty sharp; so he says to me when I mention this, you know, that it kind of disturbed me. He says, "Dad, don't let it bother you. They're spending money." In other words, you know, really! You know, it makes sense doesn't it? And this is what he said see.

But, of course, there were a lot of Japanese in Honolulu before the War, but that never disturbed us. You know, being young, we just accepted things. It was a nice life... especially playing baseball which was my love at the time. Of course, it had its drawbacks too, since some of the older...the old sauce as they call them, like the Chief Master at Arms, and what not, figuring that I was shirking my duty because I was playing baseball. So I ended up with more mid watches from 12 to 4 in the morning. You name it I had it.

Q: So, they cut you any slack then?

A: They gave you nothing...strictly military. In fact, there was a time I was detailed to work in the scullery, and we had a very important baseball game that day. Well, the ball team was about ready to leave the ship and there's no Bill around! So finally, somebody found out I was in the scullery. So immediately the Officer of the Day, or whoever it was, the word come through, passed down, hey, you better release him. And I guess this kind of upset some of these chiefs, or whatever, you know, figure that well why should you be able to skip your duties, while the other ones have to take your place.

But as I said, I was assigned for example, I was bow hook on the officers motor boat. So all night long, we would go in and pick up the officers, bring them back to the ship. I was also messenger for the Officer of the Deck. Well, anything that you could name, I did, but it never bothered me. I knew I had to do it and of course I came from a family where my father was the boss, and right or wrong, you know, my father was right. So I never answered back or whatever. I just accepted what I had to do. We were strong willed and everything. Whatever was kind of handed down from him to us was just accepted, and says hey, there's probably a reason why we're doing this. So we never questioned it, right or wrong. We used to have a saying aboard ship; there was two ways to do it, the wrong way and the Navy way. You probably heard that maybe. But uh...let me see, what else could I tell.

On our way from the ship, now I'm going back to Dec. 7th and the 8th, as we left the *Whitney*, the motor launch drove us over to the dry dock to go aboard the *Cassin* and *Downes*. And at that time, it was only recently when I read about the *Pennsylvania*, at one time we had the feeling, or we never really knew that the *Pennsylvania* got hit while it was in dry dock. And I think they did lose a goodly sum of men. And we went over to the sub base. We went over to where the *Oglala* had capsized. Of course the Shaw blew up so we didn't go over there. Well, the after effects was we were just scared to death. But during the attack, it was such a surprise, we didn't know what was going on. And that's why I say, when I relate to the young kids today in the Service [a]they're dedicated. They're very dedicated.

Now, of course subsequently, we left for the South Pacific, but that again, that's another story.

Q: O.K. Well, I appreciate your sitting down and talking to me about Dec. 7th. It's been a good interview.

A: Well, I hope so... Well, I get kind of hung up on this thing In fact, back home we have a Navy Club. It has nothing to do with Pearl Harbor. It was just members that were in the Navy. We have submariners from way back right after WWI, and we just have, it's just like a social club and we kind of kick things around. We talk about where we were during the war or what's that saying about the kid says to his dad, "What did you do in the War?", something like that? But, well I don't know, I feel like what I've said, if you can make something out of it fine, if not, why..

Q: Well, it's going to be available for anybody who wants to do some research and I'm sure there are things you've given us that can be useful to somebody.

A: Well, let's hope so.

Jack Roedel #28
December 7th, 1984

Q: Mr. Roedel, when did you first join the Army?

A: March 9th, 1940.

Q: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

A: I enlisted.

Q: Where did you go to boot camp?

A: I signed up for overseas service so I took my basic training at Schofield Barracks.

Q: How did you get to Hawaii?

A: Aboard the United States Army Transport *Leonard Wood*.

Q: When did you arrive there?

A: May 7th, 1940.

Q: What was basic training at Schofield like?

A: Well it was kind of tough really, for a young guy just away from home. It seemed like it was kind of tough but I knew the Army was going to be tough until you got used to it, so it really was not all that bad.

Q: Now after you finished basic training, what unit were you assigned to?

A: I was with the 35th Infantry Division. At that time they were... or excuse me, I was with the 35th Infantry. It was part of the Hawaiian Division at the time, and later became the 25th Infantry Division.

Q: What were your duties?

A: At first I was an ordinary line soldier, and after being in quite a while I decided there was better ways getting along, so there was a chance to go to radio school and take a test to become a radio operator. So I became a radio operator, which I remained the rest of my career in the Army, which was five years.

Q: Do you remember about when you became a radio operator?

A: Oh no, I'd have to guess, but it was probably 6 months later.

Q: What was life like as a radio operator in the 35th Infantry?

A: It was very interesting. We had our very own little radio

shack where we went to school instead of doing close order drill. We did our share of close order drill, but we went to school and earned an International Morse Code and we learned how to use signal lights, and at night we could go down and practice all we wanted to. So we used to sit there and with some of the better operators at the time, listen to the news being transmitted from (I forget the name of the station) in California to the Honolulu Star Bulletin, which became the next days news. And our men could copy that; it was coming in 30-35 words a minute and we had men good enough to copy it, which later on in my career, I could copy up to 30. But at that time I was a beginner and it all sounded Greek to me.

Q: What did you normally do when you were off duty?

A: Well, after you were there a while you were issued a Class A Pass, so you could go off the Post, and we used to go down to Wahiawa which was the closest city to the Post at the time. And on pay day, we'd go to Honolulu by taxi. Otherwise we just stayed on the Post, where there was plenty of entertainment. We had a boxing bowl where we boxed. There was all kinds of sports at Schofield Barracks and we had awful good athletes too. And I tried out for a few of them myself which didn't turn out too successful.

Q: What did you do the weekend before the attack... the weekend of the attack before the attack took place?

A: Well, believe it or not, being the 7th it was the first weekend after pay day, so we had a little bit of money. So on Saturday night we were down in Honolulu and just raising heck, just like soldiers would, or sailors, or anybody, and probably drank a lot and come home early in the morning. So when we were aroused at 7:55 it was kind of early.

Q: Were you asleep when the attack began?

A: Yes I was. I was awakened by a loud explosion, which they told me later on, one of the first bombs dropped hit an ammunition dump at Wheeler Field, which was oh maybe a block away, a block or two blocks away from my barracks. And it really rattled the building pretty good, so I think that woke everybody up.

Q: What did you think it was?

A: Well, at first, I didn't, I didn't think anything of it. But being Sunday morning if you could get to the mess hall at a certain time you could eat. So I decided as long as I was awake I would go eat. So I went into the latrine and I was brushing my teeth and looking out the window when I looked up and seen an airplane come down, and I could see smoke drifting behind it but I couldn't hear nothing, and later I could hear the machine gun fire. And the guy standing next to me looked up and says, "Boy, this looks kind of real ain't it?", and I said, "Well you goddamn fool it is real!" I said, "Let's hurry up and eat because we may not get to eat anymore today, you know?" So we got dressed and

started running over to the mess hall which was 100 yards away, across what was known as the quadrangle. And we got half way across when they blew alert, and naturally, soldiers, when they blow alert get to get back and pack their field stuff and get ready to go out into the field. And I turned out to be right, we didn't eat that whole day and we didn't eat until sometime the next day.

Q: What did you do? Do you know where you went when you went out in the field? What part of the Island?

A: Well, we had a CP down in the Ewa area, and I was put on a telegraph, and well amid all the confusion nobody really knew what they were going to do. And I just sat there with the telegraph and there was no messages coming or going, so I just stayed there. And I was on duty until the next day. In fact, I probably went to sleep that night.
Q: What was the atmosphere among the men, the general feeling among the men? Was there confusion? apprehension?

A: Yes, there was a lot of confusion. Everybody was running around and not knowing what to do. But it was amazing, nobody seemed to be afraid even after they realized what was going on. Nobody seemed to be afraid, and the only thing, I don't know how they felt, but I felt like, where do we go from here?

Q: When you went down from Schofield, down to your CP, how did you get down there?

A: By truck.

Q: On that journey, could you see the damage at Wheeler and Pearl Harbor?

A: We never paid any attention. In fact I doubt if we went past Wheeler Field. We probably went out in a different direction. But when we got to the hills of Ewa, (there's hills overlooking Ewa and we had our CP [*Command Post*] there) I could look down and see all Pearl Harbor, which was all ablaze and smoking then. And by then you realized that something terrible had happened.

Q: Could you see the fires at night?

A: I don't remember. I don't remember if they burned that long or not. But the smoke was there and I don't really think we saw the fire, not at night.

Q: Did the Officers seem to be confident and in charge or did they seem confused too?

A: Well, they.... pretty much we were all in about the same boat. Them being Officers, were a little smarter than we were, but they didn't know any more than we did. In the confusion I don't think nobody really knew exactly what to do yet... even though we were trained for it.

Q: Was there much discussion, or rumors about the possibility of

a Japanese invasion?

A: Yes, there was and security was heavy that night. In fact, with some of the cattle grazing out there, a few of them got shot with people who got a little excited. And like everything else, rumors were that the Japanese were landing by paratroop, by parachute. But that didn't mature, and after when the morning came of the 7th and 8th, we realized that we were trained pretty good and if they were coming they had missed their chance.

Q: So by the time the 8th rolled around, did you and some of the others in the 35th Infantry feel pretty confident that if the Japanese did invade, that you'd be able to hold the Island?

A: Oh yes. We had maneuvers in that area for two years, and they had the artillery, and everything was zeroed in on certain sections of the beach. And our sector and every sector I'm sure it was the same, and if they had come they would have, (I can't say that they wouldn't have got ashore), they would have paid a terrific price to come ashore. And the chances are, being so far from their homeland and supplies, that I think we could have repulsed the landing, the next day for sure.

Q: How long did you remain out in the field?

A: Well, it's kind of hard to say. Uh, we stayed there quite a while and then we'd go back to Schofield for a little while, and back out in the field, and we stayed on the Island of Oahu for 11 months before we were sent on to the South, Southwest Pacific.

Q: Was there any kind of talk about possible 5th column activity having anything to do with the attack?

A: Oh when something like that, rumors run rampant. There was talk that that night all the Japanese on the Island were supposed to take up arms against us and so security was as tight as you could get it, you know? I think that under those feelings, might have had something to do with why the Japanese on the West Coast might have been put in concentration camps. I don't know why it happened, but what we did know was we couldn't trust them at that time.

Q: What incident, or event, or just scene, stands out in your memory most vividly about the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Well, I don't know. I think the whole thing in general will never be forgotten. I can sit down and visualize the whole thing. There was... well one of them was we did get some machine guns on the roof of the barracks of the infantry and one of our P-40's flew over, and I think we shot the tail off it. But I don't think any one thing stands out except the fact that I think I knew then that I wasn't coming home. I was due to come home in two months and I knew then I wasn't coming home in two months.

Q: I guess you figured you may as well forget it, huh?

A: That's right. That I was in for the duration.

Q: Well, thank you very much.

A: O.K.

Q: Really appreciate your coming up here and taking the time to help us with our oral history program.

A: Uh huh.

Anna Urda Busby #29 December 7,1984

Q: Ms. Busby, let me start off by asking, where did you go to nursing school?

A: I went to Hackensack Hospital School of Nursing in Hackensack, New Jersey.

Q: When did you finish Nursing School?

A: I graduated in 1939, and I worked at Hackensack Hospital for two years and then I went into the Army Nurse Corps in August, 1939. Wait a minute, I graduated in 1937. That's incorrect.

Q: O.K., well just make the statement.

A: I graduated in '37, worked for two years, and went into the Army Nurse Corps in 1939.

Q: Once you went into the Army Nurse Corps in 1939, did you receive any additional training?

A: No, I did not.

Q: So it was straight in from civilian nurse and civilian life to an army nurse then, was it?

A: Right.

Q: What rank were you given when you went in?

A: 2nd Lieutenant.

Q: You were a commissioned officer then?

A: No, we were not commissioned as officers at that time. That did not come until later on during the war time.

Q: O.K., but you were a 2nd Lieutenant. What was your first assignment as an army nurse?

A: My first assignment was at Governors Island, New York. And I was on the medical and surgical ward for awhile, and because I liked obstetrics very much, I was on obstetrics. And in the short time that I was there, I had transport duty to the Panama Canal Zone in May, 1940...'39?...'40. 1940. And in September, 1940 again, I was a ships nurse. The first time it was on the *Chateau Thierry*, and the second time it was on the *Hunter Liggett*. One time we were transporting the family and the military, and the next time we were just transporting the troops. And the second time, the stewardess and I were the only females aboard ship and I was having a very good time.

Q: Uh huh... was an active social life was it?

A: Oh...very. I enjoyed my seven years very much in the Army Nurse Corps. Then from Ft. Jay, Governors Island, I was transferred to Newport, Rhode Island. I was there from November of '40 to June 1941, when I was transferred to Tripler [*General*] Hospital, Hawaii.

Q: Was the transfer voluntary? Did you ask for it? Or did they just simply tell you, you were going to Hawaii.

A: No, they just told me it was time to transfer me. But we had three choices at that time of where we wanted to be transferred, and Hawaii was one of them, and I got what I wanted.

Q: Why did you choose Hawaii?

A: Oh, because all the older nurses were telling you about Hawaii and what a wonderful time they had there, and they also talked about the Philippine Islands. And so that was why I chose Hawaii. I wanted to see Hawaii.

Q: Tell me a little bit about what Tripler [*General*] Hospital was like in
those days?

A: What was Tripler.....

Q: What kind of building was it?

A: Oh it was an old, old building. The old building had two stories and then were a lot of barracks types of buildings that were constructed and were there when I got there. So my first assignment at Tripler was..... well, I was on a medical ward, I was on the ear, nose, and throat ward, and I was on the obstetrical ward when I got a facial infection of the right cheek, several weeks before December 7th. And I was a patient on December the 7th because of that infection.

Q: Were you actually hospitalized when the attack began?

A: Oh yes. I was up and around but ...

Q: An ambulatory patient were you?

A: Oh I was ambulatory, but my right cheek was inflamed; the entire cheek. And this began to get worse and then finally they had, before December the 7th, they had sent me to a civilian doctor to see what he might do for me. But I suggested could they do that, because they were trying other treatments and I just felt like we weren't getting anywhere. So I was a patient that day and I had just placed my breakfast tray on the floor, when we heard all these sounds. And the head nurse was....

Q: What kind of sounds?

A: Oh, they sounded horrible! It was the bombing, but I didn't

know it was the bombing, except something was happening out there. And when the head nurse ran down the hall, the nurses didn't run. So I ran after her and when we got to the back porch, you could see all this smoke at Pearl Harbor. And pretty soon, I don't know, we were there one, two, three minutes, but something flashed in front of us and the oil barrel at the pineapple cannery went up into a flame, and that of course scared us more. And we ran back into the corridor, into the nurses office, and she called an officer at Hickam Field, and I heard her say, "My God! The Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor!" And I said, "Well, we will all be needed on duty."

So I changed my patient garb to my nurses uniform and I picked the little radio that I had with a Victorola combined, and I was coming down the stair way from the second floor, the womens ward, and I looked into the window where another nurse was preparing baby formula (this was the obstetrical ward). And Verla Thompson was on duty (and we called Verla, "Tommie", beautiful nurse from California) and I said, "Tommie, the Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor!" And she said, "Oh, go away Anna! You're always kidding!" And on I went into the nurses quarters and when I got there I met another nurse and her name was Peggy McKay, and she had a basket on her arm, and she said, "Anna, we're celebrating my boyfriends birthday today. We're going out on a picnic." I said, "No one is going anywhere!" I said, "The Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor!" and we will all be needed on duty.

With that I... I don't remember whether I went up to my room to put the radio down or whether I walked right into the chief nurses office. I think I went right into the chief nurses office which was maybe about 20 or 30 feet down the hallway. And Edna Rockefeller was the chief nurse and as soon as she looked at me she said, "Where do you think you're going with that red face?" And I said,"On duty where ever you need me." So she said, "You can't go anywhere with that red face. You better take charge of the womens ward." And ...oh I can't think of the nurses name now who was in charge up there at the time, and she sent her elsewhere.

So I changed my garb and I reported on duty, took the report, and now I was in charge of the womens ward, where I was a patient in the last hour. And when the second bombing took place, I was on duty. Now if you ask me about the rest of the day, I cannot remember except that it was a very busy day then and for days after. But I do remember a couple of incidents.

Q: Well, why don't you share them with us.

A: Alright, the couple of incidents are: There was one very very ill patient who had cancer and who required morphine every four hours it seemed. And I remember the patients were scared too, because those who had radios heard what was happening. And she did not seem to require morphine as often for the next few days.

Q: Was she aware of what was going on?

A: Oh, sure. And I can't even tell you now how many patients were on that ward. But the one other patient that I remember

very much is because she was a beautiful elderly woman with white hair, and she was like a China doll...tiny. And I heard somebody yelling uh..."There's a fire across the hall!" and I ran down to the hall and the sweet, elderly, China(like doll, had reached for her cigarettes and was trying to light a cigarette, and the handkerchief was on fire on the bedside table. So I got the pitcher of water and I put the fire out, and I knew I was angry, and I took the cigarette away from her hand and I said, "You cannot smoke unless there's somebody with you, and I don't have time to stay with you!" And I took the cigarettes and the matches and I put them inside the table so she could not get to them, and I went about my business.

And then, I don't remember now whether it was a day or two later, but she was being discharged, and I don't remember now whether she was going out on a litter or whether she was going in a wheel chair, but I... usually you say good-bye to your patients, but I do remember what she said to me, "I know that you are glad that I am going." And I can't remember right now what my reply was but naturally she remembered that incident and she remembered that the nurse was angry, and so that was then.

Q: Were you glad that she was going?

A: No, because I had no more trouble so that didn't matter but you see I didn't need any more trouble. All I needed to do was take care of my patients. I don't even remember who was on with me; whether there was a corps man on or anyone else. I don't remember that at all.

Q: Do you remember, was there any civilian volunteers who came in to help the hospital?

A: Oh, they did in the other parts. Yeah, they did in the other parts. And the reason I know that is because that evening, we were on duty in those days like from 7 to 7 and we'd have a few hours off and then someone else would relieve us, and then we would come back like from 2 to 7. Uh, but this evening at 7:00 the night nurse came on and her name was Alma Aison.

Q: Do you remember how to spell the last name?

A: A-S-S-O-N. And her married name is... is it Russell? DeShane... capital DE, capital SHANE. Uh, so Alma came on duty and I gave her the report. But I was so frightened. I was so terrified to walk 50 yards, or whatever it was, from the hospital over to the nurses quarters, because by now it was dark. It was 7:00. And I had the feeling that if the military police said to me, "Halt! Who goes there!" that I would be speechless; that I would not be able to reply, and he would surely shoot me. So rather than go to the nurses quarters, I remained on the board and slept in the same bed that night.

And sometime during the wee hours of the morning, I don't remember if it was midnight, 1:00, or whatever, but the night supervisor was making rounds and of course she saw that I was in my night gown. I was in the office with Alma, and she said, "Well, since you're up you take charge of the nurses ward and I'll take Miss Asson to another ward to relieve for supper." (or

whatever.) So this is what happened, and when she came back I went back to bed.

And then of course, I was up in time in the morning, to uh.....go back to the nurses quarters to get a fresh uniform. And Alma Asson and I were standing on the porch, or lanai, as we called it, just chatting. And she gave me the report and this must have been about 6:00 in the morning, or thereabouts. We were chatting, when an enemy plane flew over Tripler Hospital, fired on the dental clinic, and when we heard that, we both opened the screen door to the hallway, and we threw ourselves on the floor. And there we were on the floor talking to one another, and I remember exactly what she said to me, because this was so important. She said, "Have you heard from your boyfriend in the mainland?" and I said,"Yes." and told her about the letter that he had sent. And I said, "Since you speak Spanish, tell me what does 'Uno te auvilla' (???) mean?" She said, "Oh, that means you will never be forgotten." And then she also said, "Did you have that rosary blessed that he had given you?" and I said, "No." She was Catholic and she was a very devote Catholic. She said, "Let me have it. I'll have it blessed and give it back to you." which she did. So that was our conversation while we were lying down on the corridor floor.

Now I don't know how long we were there, whether 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, I don't know. But I went into the nurses quarters and I changed my uniform again and then I came on duty, back to the womens ward. However, I did see patients on the 7th, all the whole porch lined up with patients. I would say maybe within two hours and later on in the day. All I know it was a busy place, and when we went to the nurses quarters for dinner, then you heard these various stories.

And also, the next night and thereafter, I went back to the nurses quarters. I guess maybe I wasn't that afraid, or maybe I went with someone. I don't remember that. But I do remember that when we were in the nurses quarters, we had to put the dark blankets on the windows to keep the lights out. And any time we opened a door to go out in the corridor, we had to turn the light out. And we had flashlights with blue paper around it.

And I don't remember right now whether it was that night, the second, or when, but up on the hill overlooking any of the windows, we say this great big fire and a cross burning. And as we later learned, it was the Ku Klux Clan that were burning this cross up there. Uh... this is how the story went; the cross was being burned by the Ku Klux Clan. So this was another frightening experience. Uh, what else do you want to ask me?

Q: Oh, just anything you remember about the period.

A: Well, uh, that takes you into...

Q: Let me ask you this. There were I suppose, after the attack, a lot of rumors going around about what was going to happen next, and speculation about ...

A: Invasion.

Q: So, why don't you tell me about some of the rumors that were going around, and how people felt about it, and some of the

preparations that were being made if you can remember any.

A: Right at this moment, I don't believe that I can tell you, except that there were rumors. And I do know that we were expecting the Japanese to return. But when you're with a group of people, and no matter how frightened you are, it just seems the fact that you have all your buddies around you sort of helps. You're not alone. All I know is that I was very very... uh...frightened. I was petrified... but I did my duties. I carried on.

Q: Despite the circumstances.

A: mm hmm.

Q: What one thing more than any other, stands out in your mind about the Pearl Harbor attack. Just any incident at all.

A: About the Pearl Harbor attack...

Q: Or about the day of December 7th, 1941.

A: Now, after all these years, I really don't know. I guess I'd have to give it some more thought. I really don't know, except that we were busy, that there was a job to do, and I did whatever had to be done. And the best thing that happened was that six months later, when we knew we were at Midway that this was the turning point, and I began to feel better. And another thing, the infection on my face was of course getting better all the time, but for a good while there I couldn't wear any makeup outside of lipstick. And after six months or so, dating was resumed, and I was an outdoor girl, which meant that I did a lot of dancing, and swimming, and golfing, and it just seemed like life was made up of not only work but a lot of good times.

Q: What would you say was the ratio of men to women in the service was then?

A: Oh my goodness, you had all the dates you wanted! (laughter) You had many many choices! ... before the War and of course during the War.

Q: Well, it sounds like you've enjoyed life through all of the difficult times as well as the good times.

A: Right.

Q: Okay. Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure talking to you.

A: Well thank you. So now we....are you off??

Ray Bergmann #31
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Bergmann, let me start by asking you where you grew up?

A: Chicago, Illinois.

Q: And how did you join the Army?
A: I enlisted in the Army, December 1, 1936, in San Pedro,California.

Q: Where did you do your basic training?

A: I was one the few people who never got basic training.

Q: You never got basic training?

A: No. We went to Angel Island and then we shifted to Hawaiian Department. And when I say basic training - we did get regimental basic training. We were assigned to a battery in the regiment and given six weeks of basic training at the battery level.

Q: Which regiment was that?

A: 64th Coast Artillery. AA.

Q: And where was the 64th stationed?

A: Fort Shafter.

Q: What was your first duty after taking that training?

A: I guess you would say that I was a carrier of a .50-caliber machine gun. That was what our Battery was, was a .50-caliber machine gun battery, and I worked in the arms room, and the motor pool, as all good recruits do.

Q: How long did that duty last?

A: I would say possibly two years. And at that time my Battery Commander looked at my records and found out that I was a golfer. So a job came open; he happened to be president or treasurer of the officers club and golf club. So he came in one night and asked me if I would like to take over. And of course in those days that paid $20 a month more than your privates pay. So actually I was making more than a sergeant in those days I think I made $60 a month with my $20 a month extra pay.

Q: Did you work at the Shafter Golf Course?

A: Fort Shafter Golf Course, yes.

Q: Why don't you tell me a little bit about how things worked there at the Fort Shafter Golf Course.

A: Well, I was called the Club Steward and it was my job to take care of the grounds, the operation of the grounds, and the Club (the parties, etc. etc.)

Q: Sounds like some of your duties were what would be called the Golf Pro today.

A: Yes, one step below that.

Q: Did you often play golf with many of the officers?

A: Quite often, if they didn't have a foursome, or they needed somebody, or wanted company, why they'd arrange for me to go and play with them.

Q: Did you ever play golf with the Commanding General?

A: Quite often.

Q: Why don't you tell us a little bit about what things were like at Fort Shafter - just the general atmosphere just before Pearl Harbor.

A: I would say it was very peaceful and tranquil. Just exactly before Pearl Harbor, we had been out on maneuvers (most of the troops had been out on maneuvers.) I did not go on maneuvers. I was excused to continue my duties at the Club. Did you want me to go into the morning of December 7th?

Q: Yes.

A: Just prior to December 7th, maybe it was the 6th, my superior, Major Ronald Henderson, asked me if I would like to join he, and General Short, and Captain Truman, who is now Lt. Gen. Truman, Louis Truman, who was General Shorts aide, to play golf Sunday morning. So naturally I accepted and we proceeded to the golf course at 5 minutes or 10 minutes to 8, on December 7th. This is the whole crux of my story is we're on the first tee. The General is getting ready to shoot and we see these planes coming in. And the General turned around to Major Henderson and he said, "Roland, look at the goddamn Navy! They haven't got sense enough to quit on Sunday." This was our thoughts in everybody's mind. We didn't have any thoughts about what was actually transpiring. So within moments...seconds, we saw the first oil tank, reserve tank, go up. And then General Short turned around and said, "Truman, let's get over to the office right now." And basically, that's the whole story, but it..... Go ahead sir.

Q: Did General Short realize that they were Japanese planes or did he think they were American planes which had had an accident?

A: Uh, by implication, he seemed to know what it was.

Q: Did you play golf with General Short often?

A: Not too often, but well enough to know him very closely. In fact in (I don't know... you're going to cut this anyhow aren't you, where you don't want....), there was as instance where two nights later a brand new Lieutenant was called to active duty and he was put in charge of the place. And he happened to walk down the corridors where myself and six enlisted men were sleeping about a quarter to nine in the evening, and he was slamming some doors. And in the barracks vernacular I said, "I wish some of you 'so and soes' would make a little more 'so and so' noise. Maybe we can get some sleep around here!" And this bright shiny 2nd Lt. walks in the room and he says, "You know you're talking to an officer! Stand at attention!" And stubborn as I was, I says, "Sir, a senior enlisted man does not get out of bed and stand at attention when an officer walks into his private room." I said, "Now, if you want to be treated as an officer, you should have sent a runner down to alert the troops." And his remark to me was, "Get up! You're fired!"

And (laughter) so the next day, coincidentally, the General, mean time, had sent his golf clubs home. He knew he was, you know, being relieved and he had his household goods packed. So he stopped me on the street and said, "Son, could I borrow your clubs today? I've sent mine home." I said, "Yes sir, but you'll have to go down to the orderly room and pick them up." He said, "What in the hell are they doing down there! You're up here!" I said, "I was fired last night." and he laughingly turned to Capt. Truman and he said, "Truman, look into this. Any hiring or firing that'll be done around here, I'll do it or Major Henderson will do it. And conversely, I was put back to work the next day and the Lieutenant left. That's just a side story.

Q: Would you give me your general impressions of General Short? What you thought of him? Just your opinion in other words.

A: My opinion was based on the opinion of career soldiers who had much more time in the service. I'm talking about sergeants who had maybe ten or fifteen years service. General Short had a reputation of being a field soldier, meaning he believed in training. I had an awful lot of respect for General Short. He seemed to be an honest but firm individual. I can't say any more than I did have a lot of respect for him.

Q: After the Pearl Harbor attack, how long did you continue on at the golf club at Fort Shafter?

A: I stayed there for two years.

Q: Two years? What was the immediate aftermath of the raid? In other words, how did the attack affect you personally, your duties and your activities?

A: Uh, it increased my duties, because naturally they weren't putting a lot of people on that duty and they kept those who had this duty on if they possibly could, because they couldn't just get replacements for us. In fact we increased the size of the Club tremendously. You're from Hawaii aren't you?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, the Round House was the whole Club at the time I was initially there.

Q: Oh really.

A: That little round block building. Then we built the big building that Joe tells me that it burned down. I haven't been back there since '44.

Q: What was the general atmosphere there? Were there a lot of rumors floating around? speculation?

A: Oh I guess I would say... I have a little saying that any body gives you a story that's over 30 minutes long about Pearl Harbor, they're lying to you! Because any person in any particular position didn't see any more than 30 minutes, and the rest, emotion, yes emotion was rampant. I guess we had 20 attacks if you listen to the rumor mill. We were down on King St., down where the (What the hell did they call it?) the Fish Ponds, where they raised fish?

Q: Oh yeah.

A: And uh, my immediate week after Pearl Harbor, I was put in charge of a communications post that ran from Middle St. to Tripler Hospital (the old Tripler [*General*] Hospital.) And our troops up
on the mountains would open up on us at night, thinking they'd see shadows and so forth. And there was a railroad track that we had to walk back and forth there on.

I would say that we thought there were all sorts of Japs landing and this and that. My own personal feeling is if they had landed two battalions, they'd have taken the whole 'dang' Island, because we didn't even get a weapon until 5:00 that afternoon. Then I got a six shooter, that you had adapter clips to adapt to automatic ammunition. You'd be able to get six rounds off and then after that, (laughter) I can visualize losing these little adapters, you know, because your revolvers used rim cartridges, you know, so they could flick them out. Whereas the automatics were rimless and these adapters actually placed a rim on the shells.

But, I think that people just really didn't know what was happening. I remember running into the barracks, maybe an hour after our experience on the first tee at the golf course, trying to wake some of the fellas up. And I said, "We're at war!" Frankly as a young, young man, I didn't even know what the definition of war was...what I mean is ACTUALLY. It didn't penetrate. It was just something that.... well it was just another foreign word. You talked about it on your maneuvers but I don't think the young fellas knew what it really was.

Q: Is there any one incident or any one memory that stays with you all these years connected with that event?

A: No, it's a.... remember the one man that was killed when...I've heard two stories and they seem to believe that it was one of our shells that came down, I think it was in A Battery...came right through the roof.

Q: Is that A Battery of the 64th?
A: Of the 64th... and hit this man who was sitting in his bunk and killed him. But I have no personal verification of this. I did go to Hickam Field and at Tripler... let me back up. We went to Hickam. We didn't see too much there and we came back to Tripler. And they had a morgue laid out there, and we saw the people that were killed that they brought in there. But I have no strong remembrances of anything combative.

I remember that the Honolulu Police had to have a GI with them whenever they investigated anything. And because of my proximity on this communications post, they would come over to me if they were investigating something in that area, and either take myself or one of our men with them to .... Like they'd get a call that somebody was sending signals to the Japanese, and when we investigated we found out that it was just a bunch of people listening to Tokyo Rose trying to hear what they could hear over the radio. And these signals were them sneaking the light of this cigarette and it would hit a glass pane and somebody would think they were signaling. But uh...nothing...what would I say that... is exciting.

Q: Well, thank you. I appreciate you taking the time to come up.

A: Well if... add a little humor to the... either way you want to look at it.

Q: Well, it's a valuable contribution.

A: Teasingly, I was up in Milwaukee last year at our Convention that we had in the 5th District, and we all went into Millers brewery. And there were some college kids there and one of them happened to sit down with us and I explained to him that everybody with a white hat on was a Pearl Harbor survivor. And he mentioned that his history prof. was an advisor on “Tora! Tora! [*Tora*!]” And I said, "Well, you tell him that I'm going to sue him." Because did you see “Tora! Tora! [*Tora*!]”?

Q: Yeah, I did.

A: Where General Short walked out of his house? Kiddingly, I said, "Well, you should have got a picture of me along with that because I was going to play golf with him (laughter.) But he said that he was very pleased to hear... he didn't realize how many people were there at Pearl Harbor. I guess we've got 10,000 members here...just short of 10,000.

Q: 10,000 members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association?

A: Right. 9,750 or...

Q: That's quite a group.

A: It is, and considering 43 years...

Q: Sure.

A: I know I could never have believed 40 years ago that I'd be sitting here today. Think a lot of water's passed over the dam.

Q: Well, sounds like a full life. Thank you.

A: Well, thank you for your courtesy.

Joseph Voce #32
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Voce, where did you grow up? What's your home town?

A: Utica, New York.

Q: When did you first join the Army?

A: In 1936.

Q: What made you want to join the Army then?

A: Well I was with the CCC's and I say a newsreel about the May Day parade in Hawaii and I wanted to see it and be there. That's why I joined it.

Q: So a little bit of the public relations is what got you in there.

A: Right. It worked real good.

Q: Where did you take your basic training?

A: Actually, my basic training was right in Hawaii. The two months that took me from enlistment to get to Hawaii, 30 days of that was spent aboard ships, from New York, through the Panama Canal, San Francisco, then to Hawaii. The first month was spent at Fort Slocum. We did a little marching but that was not any basic training. The real basic training came at Fort Shafter, out of B-Battery, 64th Coast Artillery.

Q: What was your duties there in the 64th?

A: After I quit cooking in '37, I was with a #4 anti-aircraft gun. I had to take the shell out after they cut the fuse, and put it in the breech to be fired.

Q: What size gun was that?

A: It was a 3-inch anti-aircraft gun.

Q: How long did you continue as a gunner in the 64th?

A: Up until '39. That's when I went to work at the Officers Club.
Q: What did you do there at the Officers Club?

A: I was the bartender at the Officers Club at the time.

Q: Must have been a pretty good job.

A: It was very good.

Q: Probably had a lot of the other guys envy you.

A: Well they all did. Everybody wanted it but few of them could do the job. The only other man up there who could do anything was Ray Bergman. I ran the bar and he ran the dinner, which had to be catered at the time, when we first started. And the officer in charge, he actually didn't do too much. He left everything up to us. But this Captain Powell that came in there from the Philippines, he was there approximately one month when he made Major, and just before the war broke out he made Lt. Col. Then he made Colonel right after that and he was a full star General before he died on us.

Q: During the time you worked at the Officers Club you must have had a chance to observe General Short when he was relaxing.

A: Yeah, he was a very nice man to talk to. He was pleasant and he always seemed to have something on his mind really. The biggest maneuver of peace time was to be pulled on Monday morning, December the 8th. Every man in the Army, Navy, Marine, Air Corps was going on the biggest maneuver peace time ever had, but the Japs stopped it.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of December 7th?

A: On the morning of December 7th, I had $1500.00 sprawled out across the bar. I was getting ready to go on a picnic after that money was counted, so I could buy out Bill Leader’s Bar on a Monday morning; on the 8th.

Q: So I guess events must have put a little crimp in your plan.

A: Yes, it hurt real.

Q: What was the first indication you had, that there was something going on that morning, that was out of the ordinary?

A: Well, the first thing was when the planes were flying overhead and low. Then after the few minutes we heard explosions.

Q: Did the explosions sound like they were close or far away?

A: No, they sounded like they were real close. So from that second on I believe everybody knew there was something wrong but nobody knew what it was until [*Lt.*] General Short, [*Lt.*] Col. Powell, Capt. Truman, and Ray Bergman come in off the golf course, that we knew we were at war.

Q: Do you remember how General Short was dressed?

A: I believe he was dressed in kahkies at the time.

Q: Do you remember any conversation that went on with General Short and his party?

A: The only thing I could recall was to say that General Short told Capt. Truman that we were in trouble and they had to get

back to headquarters immediately.

Q: Do you remember how he left?

A: I don't remember how he left. He could have walked; it only takes a few minutes to walk from the Officers Club to his quarters, and another minute to headquarters. Although I believe his car was parked up there.

Q: What did you do then?

A: Then along with all the other men working up there, we tried to block all the windows so no light would be able to get out during the evening. And we were told that the men who were guarding the Officers Club might be trigger happy, and not to go out unless we absolutely had to, because they were afraid the Japs might start landing on the north side of the Island.

Q: What did you think of it?

A: I thought they made a big mistake because it hurt me in more than one way but I guess I wasn't the only one.

Q: So how long did you stay in the Officers Club there?

A: I stayed in the Officers Club until 1942.

Q: I mean that day.

A: Oh, that day, just blocking everything up and all the windows and everything so no light could get out. Then we had to close the bar. We weren't allowed to sell any more whiskey until further orders. The back bar and everything, all the liquor had to be locked up, and the doors all had to be sealed so nobody could get any whiskey.

Q: Well let me ask you something, going back to the evening before, that is Saturday, December 6th, were you working at the bar that Saturday night?

A: Yes I was.

Q: Was it a big night? ...usual or light? How was business?

A: Business was good. What we had that night was a party of young Naval officers with, it was either a birthday party or farewell party for one officer who was supposed to leave. That party continued on until about 10:00 that evening before everyone left.

Q: What time did you close up the bar?

A: I closed up the bar after I cashed in and everything, say about 10:30 that evening, I cashed up.

Q: Sounds like it was an early evening.

A: It was.

Q: Was that fairly typical for a Saturday night?

A: Well, the only reason it was closed that early, because these officers were the only ones allowed in that evening for that party. And there was another party at someone elses, some other officers home. So that took care of most of the officers on the Post.

Q: Is a caterer?

A: No, we had our own. In 1940, the Officers Club had their own mess and their own cooks and waiters up there. We stopped catering at that time. Because before that, [*Private*] Ray Bergman had to take care of all the catering, had to take care of the line up for golf, he had to take care of the trophies that were given out. He had quite a job up there, Ray, at that time.

Q: So on December 7th, how did you spend that night... and where?

A: Most of that night was spent right in at the bar or close to it, because we weren't allowed out. By the time we figured on time to get back to our quarters, we had to go from the outside of the building to get under the building. We were told not to go out because some of the men might be trigger happy.

Q: So, what did you do in the next few days after the attack?

A: Well, the next few days was a matter of routine I believe, outside of the bar being closed. I did uh...help a few officers during the day who had to pack their family up to leave. They asked for help to pack their families up so their families could leave. But I always had to return at the Officers Club by 5:00 at night, because nobody was allowed out after 5:30 unless you were on duty.

Q: Did there seem to be a lot of panic among these families, or were they pretty calm?

A: By the 8th and 9th of December, they were pretty calm, the families. But on the 7th, and a couple of them on the 8th, were a little panicky, but most of them calmed right down on the 8th. But everybody was afraid of a Japanese invasion from the North Shore, because they did destroy Navy installations on the North Shore before they came into the Islands, so nobody could detect them.

Q: So, were there a lot of rumors floating around?

A: Oh yes, there was an awful lot of rumors. Every time, the rumors that they were landing, there was rumors that they were parachuting in. On the night of December 7th, there was rumors that the planes were coming back in. The Navy says they had no planes in the air, so they shot down anything that was flying, and when the Army says they had nothing in the air, they shot

down everything that was flying. It took about three days for them to get together to find out who had what planes in the air at the time. I believe they did shoot down one of our B-17s on December 7th, that had come in from the States by mistake, and nobody knew what plane it was.

Q: What was life for you like in weeks and months right after the attack... the first few weeks?

A: Well, the first few weeks after the attack was to watch your step, especially after 5:00 in the evening, because if you stuck your head out someplace, and whoever was on guard duty didn't recognize you, they always take a shot at you. Because there was several shots fired on the 7th, 8th, and 9th, that guards around when somebody started to go outside, everybody was scared. They didn't know if it was a Jap, or an American, or what?

Q: How long did you stay working at the Officers Club there?

A: Until March, 1942.

Q: And where were you assigned after that?

A: After that I went to Schofield Barracks for one week, and then I was reassigned to the [220*nd*] Signal Supply Depot in Fort Shafter for the remainder of the War.

Q: What memory stands out in your mind as most vivid, about the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7th?

A: Well, I didn't see it on December the 7th. I did see it on December the 8th, when I went to Col. Powell to Hickam Field and Sub-base to see everything.

Q: What did it look like over there?

A: It looked like that there was no way that any man could have survived off of the ships, and off the wrecks of them planes were... if anybody was there they wouldn't have had a chance.

Q: Well thank you. I appreciate you taking the time to come up here and talk with me.

A: It's alright. Thank you.

Lloyd Johnson #33
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Johnson, I'd like to start at the beginning of your Navy career. When did you first join the Navy?

A: I enlisted in the Navy in Chicago, Illinois, on the 10th of February, 1928.

Q: What made you decide you wanted to join the Navy?

A: I started working on farms at about the age of 14. I worked about 4 years by the month. In other words, you called it "hiring out" and you agreed to work, but you worked 12 - 14 hours a day let us say from some time in April around the first of September. After about when I was 18...about 19, I revolted and I refused to work under those conditions. I worked one year "by the day", on an hourly basis. And then in the Fall of 1927, I went to work in the railroad shops of the Burlington Railroad at Iola(??), Illinois, which was a suburb of Aurora. I worked in that "hell hole" for the magnificent sum of $.25 and hour until the following Spring, when they decided I wasn't doing enough work to justify my $.25, and they put me on piecework. The net result was I had to quit my job and then try to get in the Navy in the winter time, rather than wait until Spring, because I knew the winters were cold in the Great Lakes.

Q: Where did you take your basic training?

A: Great Lakes.

Q: And how long did that last?

A: In those days, it lasted from some time in February to some time in April.

Q: Do you recall the first ship to which you were assigned?

A: Well, my next trip I went to the radio school that's at San Diego, where I spent something like 7 or 8 unsuccessful months trying to become a radioman. I had two things against me - one is I couldn't type fast enough and my reactions were so slow, that while I could read the codes (code sounds), I could not transmit them from my brain to my fingers fast enough to be accurate as a radio operator. Also, in the mean time, I had a bad ear. They punctured it; they took my tonsils out and I sat in radio school for months not being able to hear out of one ear and having reactions too slow to become a radio man. And years later when they finally kicked me out of radio school, it was the greatest favor they ever done me in my life.

Q: What did you do then?

A: This is interesting thing, I was in the outgoing unit of San Diego with a friend of mine, who had also failed in radio school,

and they lined us up for draft. And the radio officer said, "Anybody who wants to go to the [*USS*]*Henderson*, China, go." Before anybody else could react, I stepped forward, and Robby my friend also, he stepped forward too, and we were the only two. They put us on a bus that night, transferred us from San Pedro to San Diego and the good ship *Henderson* started north. And at midnight, that night, I found myself up on deck as a lookout, looking for lights, but I never saw any.

Q: Where was the ship headed?

A: It was headed to the Navy Yard at Mare Island for an over haul. And for the next three years plus, I was engaged in making seven round trips to the Orient and back, as we carried passengers back and forth to the Asiatic Fleet. In the mean time in addition to the seven round trips to China, we also added it on when we made three trips from the West Coast all the way to Norfolk and back. The trip to the Orient, a round trip, took three months. When we made the trip to Norfolk and to the Orient and back, that took six months.

Q: When was the first time you got to Hawaii?

A: In very early.... probably about my birthday, about December 1928 on the way to the Orient.

Q: What was Shanghai like in those days?

A: Shanghai was the most amazing place, and let me explain. As we made our trips to the Orient, we would go from San Francisco, a day or so in Honolulu, a day or so in Guam (two weeks later), where the *Henderson* baseball team would play one of the Navy teams there, and I was on the baseball team. We then would go about six days to Manila, spend maybe three night in Manila, and of course we all went to Saza(???) Anna's Dance Hall and danced with the bellarinos(??)(*that's the Phillipino girls*.) And the most attractive ones are what we called the mestizos. They were the Phillipino girls who had a white father and some of them were strikingly beautiful. From Manila we would go to Hong Kong for one or two nights (beautiful place but not much there), then a day or so up to Shanghai, where we would disembark the Marines, making a trip up to North China, as far as Chinwantao. That's the railroad terminal for Peking. And on two occasions I was in Tsingtao, maybe one day and one night, and I've also been in Chefoo once. Then we went back to San Francisco, anchored in the Yangtze River, off the Bund...

Q: Was that in Shanghai?

A: In Shanghai. And then we would have recreation there (*leave and recreation*) about twelve days. And in my seven trips I have figured out that I have spent the equivalent of about 90 days in Shanghai. In those days we were allowed to go out into the international concessions and we could also go out North Session(??) Road to Range Road. That was open to us. We could go out beyond Range Road, staying on North Session(??) Road where the Japanese cabarets were. The rest of the city was restricted

to us, and I suppose by rickshaw and other ways, days and nights, I covered the cabaret scene, and I also had my camera riding rickshaws and taking pictures. The city was beautiful and fascinating, especially for a country boy who had never seen anything before. And it was basically safe. In fact the most dangerous things you could meet in Shanghai at that day, other than getting down in the French concession, Blood Alley, where the service people from the various services might get together and fight in cabarets, would be one of your ship mates who didn't like you and might punch you or hit you when you didn't know it. And the other thing is Cabarets, you learn fast, I never went in a Cabaret, I always went with a friend of mine named Roger McCluney and I always sat with my back to the wall. Some of the nice young boys were out there and the Asiatic Fleet thought they were tough and they had a very quaint system of being very brave which consisted of hitting somebody over the head with a beer bottle from behind. But nobody was going to face two boys who didn't get drunk.

Q: Do you remember how to spell McCluney's last name, just for the record?

A: Yes, the name was Roger McCluny, M-C-C-L-U-N-E-Y. The boy was from Tulsa, Oklahoma and his father was quite a well to do oil man, because it was such a contrast. I was sending half of my money home to my mother so my younger brothers could eat and his father used to send him maybe $50 or $75 bucks every once in a while. So he was a rich young kid and I was poor.

Q: It sounds like quite a supplement for a sailors salary!

A: Well, he was probably the only man on the ship who had a supplement.

Q: How fast was rank? How fast did a sailor advance in rank in those days?

A: Very, very slow. Let me illustrate. When I went aboard the *Henderson*, I of course, was a Seaman 2nd Class. You (word unclear) for under Seamen 3 or 4 months, $21.00 a month, then $36. Now I was in the deck force. I went to board the ship about late November, and the following May we had an examination for Seaman 1st Class and there was ten or twelve of us who went up for advancement. Only two of us were on our first cruise. The rest of them were people who had over 4 years in the Navy and were still Seamen 2nd Class. So by May I was Seaman 1st Class. Then that Fall by accident I got to be the messenger or the striker in the executive offices. And again I was very fortunate, I went into the office in August and I became a Yeoman 3rd class in December, 1929, less than two years. Then the only way you could get promoted was to have a vacancy on the ship. I stayed on the *Henderson* two more years. We never had a vacancy. In '32 or so the Depression hit on my second enlistment. There were practically no advancements, so I was 3rd Class over four years. Then in a competitive fleet examination I was very fortunate to be one of the very few who made 2nd Class. And miracle of miracles, when I had 9, 10 months in they had an

examination for 1st Class and I was on the flag allowance of Commander Battleship Division Three at that time and they recommended that I be allowed to take the examination for 1st Class even though I didn't have my year in.

Q: Were you on the flagship?

A: Yes, When I reenlisted I was assigned to the flag allowance of Commander Battleship Division Three. Our flagship was the *Arizona*.

Q: What was life like on the *Arizona* in the mid 30's.

A: Well, let me go a little bit further. So in the next four years I was on the staff of Commander Battleship Division Three. We moved around. For two years basically we stayed on the Arizona. Temporarily we made trips on the *Tennessee*, a short trip on the *Nevada*. When we went to the East Coast in 1934 we transferred to the USS *Maryland*, which was not in our Division. We went around to the East Coast and the remodernized battleships, *Idaho*, *Mississippi*, and *New Mexico*, were coming out of the yard; the new Battleship Division Three. I served on all of them, and I served the last year of that tour aboard the *Idaho*.

Well, life on a battleship in those days was I suppose by modern day standards, I suppose it was the same as being in Paul Revere's Navy, but to us it was pretty good. What did a sailor expect? to eat three times a day, and find a place to sleep if you possibly could, which was not easy. The deck force on some of the battleships would have to swing hammocks. Being a yeoman, we had a flag office, or temporary office, and where you worked in the day you slept in the night. If you were fortunate you had a cot. If you didn't have a cot, you cleared the desk, you had your mattress, and you slept on the desk, or any..... we didn't sleep on the floor. And the ships in that respect were very crowded. Where it was living space the daytime, it was literally sleeping space at night. And the only battleship I was ever aboard that had bunks was the *Nevada*.

Q: What years were you on the *Arizona*?

A: I was on the *Arizona* from... I went aboard in May, 1932, stayed only a few weeks, went to the *Tennessee*, went up to Puget Sound and back. We came back to the *Arizona*. Except for a few trips, we stayed on the *Arizona* until the Spring of 1934, when the ship went into the Navy yard and the Fleet went to the East Coast.

Q: What sort of reputation did the *Arizona* as a ship have, in the Fleet.

A: Well, I think the Arizona was a good ship and to me I didn't realize on my first four enlist..... I thought... we hadn't been eating so well, my first four years, but when you don't know it, it makes the world of difference. The food on the *Arizona* was excellent, and one reason being anchored in Southern California, fruit, and vegetables, and milk, and all those things were very very plentiful, and it was what you would call a "good feeder".

But I would say the *Arizona* was a good ship. In fact, my experience on all the battleships I was on, the battleships were nice ships. They were clean, plenty of room, and at noon you could... in the sunshine.....you could lay down on the teakwood decks and they were clean. The ships were good.

Q: What was discipline like in the Navy at that time?

A: Very strict. Very strict. In other words, in the Depression days, if you were over leave just a few minutes, once or twice, you would be discharged. See in other words, there was just no money.

Q: When you were on the *Arizona*, on the flag allowance, who was the battleship division commander then?

A: The first Admiral we had was Admiral Crosley. He was a very splendid old gentleman, waiting to retire. He had a big beard, and very much a gentleman. The next one was Admiral Ridley McLean as I recall. He was a much different type of individual, very fussy, and actually he must have had a certain amount of influence because his health was so bad that he never should have come back to his sea command. And when we made a trip up to San Francisco on the USS *Nevada*, he died in San Francisco, and I had pictures, which are now in the Navy Museum, of the tremendous funeral party of all the Admirals in the Fleet coming over to pay their respects to Admiral Ridley McLean. The next Admiral we had was Admiral Murfin. He was... well later on in the Pearl Harbor investigations and what not; also a very splendid man; very much a gentleman. And I always remember him because as we had the farewell... when he said farewell, and was being detached, we lined up all the flag allowance and as I went past him he said, "Good bye Johnson." He called me by name. He knew who I was. See, I was a 3rd Class Yeoman, or 2nd Class at the time and somebody occasionally, when the Admiral writer was not there, I would have to take the bail into the Admiral, and a few times I had some rather unsuccessful attempts at taking shorthand, at which I wasn't very good at. Then the last Admiral we had was an Admiral Smith, By that time I was a Yeoman 1st Class, having made it in seven years, a miracle, and.... would you like that? That's an interesting thing?

I told you, when I went upper 1st Class I didn't have my year in. I took the examination on the *Tennessee*. I thought I'd done quite well on it, and the Sunday before they were to go over to the flagship, I found out from some of my spies in their executive office, that all the members of the board signed off on my paper, except one JG who refused to sign, because I didn't have my full year in. So the next Sunday I got those papers. If I hadn't had contacts I couldn't have done this. I knew how the system worked. In other words, I was living within the system and I was going to beat the system. That's the way you survive. I got those papers from the Executive Officers office, strictly under the cuff. I went around to the Senior member of the Board, and he signed it. I went to the next member of the Board, he was the supply corps officer and he said, " You have some trouble?" Fine old gentleman, and he signed it. There was no way that the young JG was going to do it. The next day our flags secretary

and our flag Lt. were both aboard. The flag secretary was Edmund Woolrich who later became a Vice Admiral, and the flag secretary was Harry Thurber, who later became a Rear Admiral; very hard man. He also had had kind of a hard night the night before, and I went up very respectfully, and I said to him, "Mr. Thurber, Lt. JG so and so won't sign my papers." Now.. we called him.... what did we call him... well, when he didn't know it the flag yeoman said, "Harry's a mean man." He buzzed the flag secretary, the flag Lt. (*Lt. Woolrich*) He said, "I want those papers signed." And I'm not quite sure what took place, but enough pressure was put on that Lt.(jg.), where he signed the papers with a note on the bottom, not eligible on such and such a date. Then I felt satisfied and vindicated. Then the papers went over to Commander Battleship Division Three, and the promotions came out and my name was not on it, which didn't bother me. Then again, I contacted one of my friends, a spy, on combat ship staff. See, the enlisted men also had contacts. If you had friends you had contacts below official circles. If you were smart enough to use them. He told me that the papers had been destroyed and I felt satisfied. In other words they had my chance. And we were on I believe the *Mississippi*, I believe at that time and I was in the flag office one Saturday afternoon and the guard mail came in, and I opened an envelope like this, and I could see something. The only thing I could see, it said, Yeoman 2nd to Yeoman 1st, but I couldn't read the name. I suppose I stared at that 30 seconds, which believe me, was two eternities. I finally screwed up the courage and the strength to gingerly pull that paper out, and it said Lloyd O. Johnson being promoted from Yeoman 2nd to Yeoman 1st. I jumped up in the air. I looked on the other papers; there were some other promotions there. I took those in my hand. I got permission from our staff officer to request a boat. I got a boat. I went to the *Tennessee*. I hand carried it to their office. I got them to endorse it and sign it and bring it back to our ship. And I went to the executive office where the ships yeoman were, and I said, "Promote us." I proudly sewed on my three stripes, one hash mark, seven years in the Navy, which was almost a miracle, because I think there was only one man on the ship. And when you walk down the street, with one hash mark and three stripes under your bird, nobody believed it could happen. That was in the Depression days.

From then on out; from '34 out, the rating structure became just a bit easier, but very difficult. Then I found out afterwards, again through the grapevine, what had happened. Our flag secretary, as I say, Lt. Woolrich, later Vice Admiral Woolrich, at the direction of the flag secretary, had gone over to combat ships, and told the flag secretary over there, the Admiral wants the Yeoman and the Signalman rated. So they had put them in the safe, and secrecy. That was the only time that anything like that had ever been done.

Q: So when was your next promotion after that?

A: Next promotion...well, I played it smart. After making 1st Class I believe you had to have either two or three years sea duty before you were to be eligible for Chief. Now what would happen, quite a number of the boys would make 1st Class, immediately put in for shore duty, and then they would be marooned because they would have to come back to complete their

shore duty and do more sea duty to get their time in to be eligible for Chief. I waited until I knew I would have my two or three years... three years I believe it was, at sea before I applied for sea duty, and I applied for shore duty. Again, I lived within the system, still beating the system.

Again, one of our Officers had gone back to Washington, and I had asked him to look into the possibilities of getting me recruiting duty in Salt Lake City. And when we down in Panama in 1936, I received a dispatch from him, from the Navy Department, addressed to me in care of Commander Battleship Division Three, stating there was no vacancy in Salt Lake City, but there was a vacancy in Denver, would I take it. And of course the answer is yes.

I then took the examination for Chief Petty Officer, passed it and by the time that the three years was up, I had taken the examination but they wouldn't promote me because I didn't have the three years in before the examination. And this is a side light, I felt very well satisfied about that until that time, until a couple of years later I saw a friend of mine who was a Chief Yeoman at that time. A year after I had made 1st Class, I had been responsible for him to make 1st Class, because we had one allotment for 1st Class which we couldn't use, and I was able to .... the Yeoman had quite a bit of power, if you knew what to do. I had been able to get our flag secretary to transfer that to his... where he was, so he got 1st Class. I found out that he had been attached to the White House Staff. He had shown moving pictures to President Roosevelt, and he had made Chief Yeoman in two years before I did. In the mean time though, it was academic because the second time I took the examination, I had gone to night school to improve my shorthand and typing, I received my Chief promotion in February of 1939. I already was on the list for acting pay clerk. On the 1st of April I was promoted to acting pay clerk.

Q: What year was that?

A: 1939. And I went to transfer to Norfolk and on the 1st of April I became a warrant pay clerk. I was number 13 on the list. They made 10 originally, so I was on the waiting list of three. Then in those days after you had been an acting pay clerk after one year, had to take an examination for your permanent warrant. And I did that successfully, I think in the summer of 1940.... maybe it was two years, I'm not sure. Well it was '40 or '41, and I'm quite sure that I was the last, or one of the last acting pay clerks that ever had to take the written examination for a permanent warrant because the War came along, and then it was relaxed.

Q: How would you describe the duties of a pay clerk in the Navy in those days?

A: The pay clerks in most... were broken down in two categories. On the USS *Whitney* there was the stores pay clerk who took care of all the general stores. In my particular case, and fortunate for me, I was a commissary and ships store pay clerk. In other words, I was responsible for the general mess and the ship store. But again on the *Whitney*, it was a much greater job than that,

because we acted as the mother ship for the two squadrons of destroyers assigned to us, and we were accountable for their provisions, when their provision ship.... in other words, they would be invoiced to us and we had to reinvoice them to the destroyers. In the mean time, we had large refrigerated space and store room space, under normal conditions, when the destroyers were alongside, we provisioned them. So my case was unique in that I had much more to do than I would have had to do if I had been let us say on a normal ship... much greater responsibility.

Q: Where was the Whitney when you joined her?

A: Another good story. I was temporarily assigned to the pay office. When they found out I was going to be promoted, I was transferred to the recruiting station to Norfolk where I was sworn in. You couldn't become a pay clerk unless there was a commissioned Supply Corps Officer there. The *Whitney* came to Norfolk, it went up to Newport, was supposed to come back and pick my up. It came in, I met my new boss, and I want to get that in here because Lt. Comm. Charles Schoff, Supply Corps USN, the most wonderful man I've ever met.

Q: Do you recall how to spell his last name?

A: S-C-H-A-A-F, Charles. And the ship departed for ... their ship departed for Newport and I was in the process going in debt maybe 4 or $500.00 to have all my new uniforms made. About three days after I put in the order, one night at something like 6:00, I got telephone orders, "You have to be detached in the morning and join the *Whitney*, in Newport."

Q: Hold on just a second. (changing side of tape)

A: I had the following things to do: I had to get out to the Naval Base, and I had $300 in my safe and turn it over to the old Chief Pay Clerk. He'd had one or two drinks after he came home and he didn't want to come out to the ... he didn't want to bothered coming out there or not. I convinced him he should. I had to go down to Frank Thomas's Clothing Store, the uniform shop, just before they closed and get my uniforms out. I had to get packed. I had to get up the next morning and catch the ferry for across the Bay and head for Newport and be there the following day. So about 8:30, I left my 21 year old wife and baby on the dock, and as I'm on the dock waving, she's 21 years old, away from home, crying. And that was her first experience being married to a Navy man.

I traveled all night by bus. The next morning we got into Newport and as we drove through Newport, they'd had that terrible hurricane up there; a lot of damage. I got aboard... the boat was waiting for me. I got aboard the ship. I met the man I was going to relieve. He had been a Chief Pay Clerk on the *Arizona*, Rudy Summers. I had to sign a few papers. He proudly withdrawn at 1:00. As soon as he got off the ship, the ship headed for Panama. In fact they were waiting for me there. Then we went to Panama of course, and up to San Diego. In the mean time my wife had got the car shipped by boat, got transportation, and

when we got to San Diego, she was waiting for me.

Q: And when did you get to Hawaii?

A: We stayed in San Diego the December of '39. In April, we

went up to the Navy yard in Mare Island. We came back to San Diego and I think we got to Hawaii latter May or about the first of June, of '40. We anchored... strange thing... then we anchored next two years or so, in what I call the "mud flats" right below the Aiea sugar cane mill.

Q: Did the *Whitney* spend most of her time anchored there or did she go out to sea?

A: Very, very seldom... during the two years we were there, in the Fall of 1940, we made a short trip back to San Diego and back and the following year about the same time, we went back to San Diego and returned once more. And on that occasion my wife said, "I'm coming out to join you." So sometime around in October, she went to the bank, she drew out the last... we only had $150, she drew that out and bought a ticket for her and the boy on the [*SS*] *Lurline* out to Hawaii. And by that time fortunately, I had found her a place to live, very difficult. It was on Sutter St. in Kaimuki. And the only other times I remember going out, this must have been in '40, we made a recreational cruise, not so much for the Whitney but for other people to the Islands... one day trips to the Islands of Maui, and the big Island of Hawaii. Again, one of my interesting experiences where being Junior, I got stuck with something which wasn't my business. I got this nice little piece of paper from the Executive Officer, appointing me to facilitate the loading and off-loading of the passenger, officers cars. Now that should have been the Chief Boatswain and the Boatswain Mate, but he had done a little politiking, because he was afraid he might damage it, but in my case, again there was a certain amount of luck. When I had been on the *Henderson*, while I had never been responsible, I had seen cars moved back and forth many times by the Boatswain's Mate, so we didn't have any trouble at all. We off-loaded the cars along with the Boatswain's Mate... good men. Unloaded them at Maui, brought them back that night, off-loaded them at Hilo, back that night, unloaded them back off in Honolulu, not a scratch.

Then... now here's an interesting thing, sometime in '41, as times were getting worse, our ship and I suppose others, we went off to shoot the guns for target practice. I don't think the guns had been shot for ten years. And on the *Whitney* as I recall, we had four 5-inch 50 main battery, and for anti-aircraft guns we had the 3-inch 50's. And I remember it very well, because I was check sighting on the rear after-gun. So we fired our batteries out there in target practice, and as a result we couldn't fire the 5-inch, but when the 7th of December came along, our anti-aircraft crews knew how to fire the 5-inch 50's, and while I wasn't involved, we also had the .50 caliber machine guns. And I was talking to Al Piccard, they apparently fired them too. At least or crew had had some experience in firing.

Now also, it's kind of interesting, we mentioned the guns. Again, when I came aboard the ship, you get a battle station.

They put me in ammunition supply. I'm not sure that's the place where a pay clerk, or an acting pay clerk would normally have the battle station. But I almost suspected, again, being Junior, I was given something that nobody else wanted.

Q: Well, as war approached, were you given other collateral duties aside from your regular duties as a pay clerk?

A: That's a yes and no thing because on the ships the supply department normally makes up the coding board.

Q: What's a coding board?

A: The coding board is that group of officers who are qualified to learn and can code and decode classified messages.

Q: How did the coding board work?

A: A coding board would consist basically of the Communication Officer. The Senior Officer was normally the Senior Coding Officer which on the Whitney was my boss, Lt. Comm. Shauf, and the other pay clerk, Chief Pay Clerk Forrest Brown of San Diego, the Dispersing Officer at that time was Ensign Wally Milleson, later Captain Milleson.

Q: Do you know how to spell Milleson's last name?

A: M-I-L-L-I-S-O-N.

Q: And what about Brown, does that have an E or not?

A: No.

Q: No E.

A: Forrest Brown. Now, I don't think this is classified any more. I don't remember all the system, but they have strip systems of coding, where you move strips back and forth and line up letters. And then of course the other thing is the ECM, I think that's unclassified now. An ECM machine is a typewriter keyboard, looks like a typewriter, and again I don't even remember for sure, but basically its a system of wheels with numbers and letters on them (I don't know how many rows.) And in some preordained order, on every single day, for a given code, you have to put these wheels and all these other things you put in there in a certain. And when you type, whether you're coding or encoding, the machine types out in most cases a combination of 5 letters or 5 numbers, or combinations of both.

Q: Do you recall what sort of messages were coming in from high commands to the Whitney as was began to approach?

A: Again, as things... first thing is, on the ship's level I don't think I ever coded or decoded anything. In the late Fall sometime, of 1941, the staff of Commanders Destroyers Pacific Fleet came aboard temporarily (the Admiral is Captain Theowald) and then I was pressed into duty on the coding board, COMDESPAC

coding board. Now there codes were on higher level, which the ship was not authorized to break, although we had the wheels. And I cannot remember any of the other codes or classifications except one thing which will always stick in my mind, historically, which is apparently unrecorded in everything I've read. And sometime very late in November, I'd a week or ten days before Pearl Harbor, when I was on watch, a dispatch came in and I have refreshed my memory having read the one, "*At Dawn We Slept*" and I'm sure they're identical. The first thing it said, "This is a war warning message."

Q: Was that a message addressed to COMDESPAC?

A: No it was not, as far as I remember. Again, I think the message (I haven't really got a sense), I think it was the action addressee was Commander Asiatic Fleet, and I'm quite sure that CINCPAC was an info addressee. And I would guess (I know the communication system) I think it probably went priority to Commander Asiatic Fleet. Into CINCPAC Fleet, I'm going to surmise, without checking, that it probably came in deferred. Now I never thought anything about it at the time. We processed it. I never saw anything change. And if my memory is correct, and I'm sure that it is, that message, or a version of it, was transmitted through that same channel system at least twice in the next two or three days that I'm aware of. Because the only time that I would see the classified messages, is when I was on watch, because the COMDESPAC communicator would periodically take those messages out of the coding room and you never saw them again.

Now what bothers me about that particular message, after I read "*At Dawn We Slept*", "*Day of Infamy*", "*American Magic*", and probably two or three more, it tells about the very restricted distribution of that "War warning message" even to the Chief of Staff, one of the big staffs not seeing it. Now there is a discrepancy there because we broke that on the COMDESPAC, which is the Type Commander code level. If we broke it, every other Type Commander out in the Pacific Ocean would have broken that, unless we were making an authorized ... an authorized decoding of a message which should have been addressed to us. But I believe if we had the coding ability to break it, it was something that any type commander should see. And another thing is when a message is decoded, it doesn't go from the coding room to the Admiral. A classified message goes to the communicator, probably goes to the communicator who (I don't know whether it's paraphrased before the Command sees it or afterward) but a classified message is paraphrased in such a way that if you took the message and the code you couldn't put them together. Normally on our...

Q: Is that for security reasons?

A: Oh yes, that's a requirement. If fact, I don't even believe President Roosevelt got the original copies in the White House. Now, on our staff, the smaller staff in COMDESPAC, the dispatch would at least have gone from the Coding Officer to the Communication Officer, possibly the Flag Lt., and certainly the Flag Secretary, before the Admiral ever saw it. On a larger

staff like COMDESPAC or CINCPAC, it probably passed two or three hands. It probably went to the Chief of Staff, but I can't believe that anything got to the Admiral right away. So in all the investigations I read, either nobody comes forth and says it or in other words, it seems to me that the distribution of that message is shown as much more limited in reality than it must have been, even though nobody wants to remember it or admit it. Now the reason I say that, I was a communication yeoman in '32 on the Tennessee. I spent four years on COMDESPAC. I was the Admiral's writer for a year, where I took the Admiral's mail in to him. And of the only three people on the staff that had free access to the Admiral's cabin was the Admiral's steward, the Admiral's writer, and the flag secretary. Nobody else could walk unannounced into the Admiral's cabin.

Q: In 1941, as War approached, and you were getting these messages in, what other sorts of activity were there in the Fleet? In other words, did the tempo of activity pick up?

A: Oh yes. It seemed to be a gradual thing. For instance... well, now one of the things we were aware, we were very much aware, and I had a good pipeline because my boss, Capt. Schoff had the pipeline let us say, to higher information, was a personal friend of mine besides being my boss, and he was to keep my in. And he also had been in Washington, where he knew how thepolitical system worked. He also had second hand information about President Roosevelt and an attitude he had if he ever got mad at a person. In other words, I don't remember the exact details but he was apparently, quoting this, a man who never forgave. In other words, if someone crossed him, that was the end, let us say, of that particular person in that position or even a career.

Q: What sort of things were happening on the *Whitney* and the destroyer she serviced?

A: The first thing we started to notice, let us say probably in late '41... late '40 or '41, we started getting Reserve Officers aboard.

Q: How did they fit in with the regular officers?

A: Well now, the ones that we got aboard our ship fit in, I would say, very well. I don't remember all of them but I'll try to. One of them was a dentist for instance. He was so happy to come aboard the Navy and live the good life, when he didn't have to worry about all the ladies complaining about their missed appointments. Another one that came in, if my memory serves me right was a Lt. Ashley. I don't remember much about him. Another one, I didn't know him personally.... well I knew him but... and another one who came was Ensign VonWine. Somebody asked me about him the other day. I remember him because he was about 6'7". The ones that came to our ship fit in very well, and we possibly had a doctor, and there may have been one or two more, but I think in the initial stages, we got about 5 in '41 by the time the Japs came.

Q: And what about the enlisted ranks?

A: I seriously doubt that we got Reserves at that time on the *Whitney*. See the *Whitney* was somewhat of a specialized ship because we had the repair shops. And the people who worked in the repair shops in the repair division were highly qualified machinists, carpenters, and so forth. And the ships company on a ship like that remained relatively stable. They got some real good men. Although we acted as a receiving ship where people would come temporarily to and from destroyers, but very few of those people ever stayed. In other words, the *Whitney* sailor, if he got on there, and he made it, and nobody got mad at him, he'd become what we call a "plankie" or a "plankor". You own a little spot, and you found some space on there, where there was just enough room for you to sleep at night, and nobody else dared to sleep there.

Q: On the weekend of the Attack, how did you spend Saturday, the day before the Attack?

A: On the coding board.

Q: And what about Saturday night?

A: I was scheduled to take the weekend watch, but about 6:00 at night, Chief Pay Clerk Forrest Brown said, "Your wife is here. Why don't you go home? I'll take your watch." And of course, I was happy to take that. And by strange token the USS *Casson* had just came in on a cruise from Australia, and by brother-in-law, Bruce Harrison was aboard that ship, and I had been responsible for getting him into the Navy, when I was on recruiting duty in Denver. So when I got home, my wife tells me. As I got off the bus, they were just going to the movie, and my brother-in-law spotted me and said, "That's Johnny!" They called me Johnny in those days. So we went home. I had quite a talk with him and I remember he told us that night, he said, "If we don't quit practicing shooting these guns. These guns are going to be worn out before we ever get a chance to shoot at the Japs. We then planned a trip to windward Oahu and went to bed that night.

Q: What time did you get up that morning?

A: The next morning, believe it or not, we were in bed around 8:00 and my brother-in-law came to me and said, aghast... his face was aghast. He said, "The radio says, the Japs are attacking Pearl Harbor!" I said, "You're crazy! That's one of those silly drills." All we have is drills. Heard a few announcements. My little boy went and turned the radio off, but the radio down below me was blasting out, "The Japs are attacking Pearl Harbor!" So we got on our clothes, dressed, got in our old 1937 car, went down Center Street, and headed out Beretania [*Street*] to the [*Pearl Harbor*]Navy Yard.

Q: What was the trip out to the Navy yard like? How long did it take?

A: Well, I've estimated that and I just don't know. The distance is approximately 12 miles. I suppose under normal conditions, it should have taken me half an hour. If I left home... my wife tells me we were dressed in 10 minutes... I must have left home no later than 8:20. Again, as I recall, although my mind is kind of blank, it seems to me that our trip was relatively fast. In other words, we had some hold ups, but not very many, and again...

Q: What sort of hold ups?

A: Well, there were police and what not... a traffic jam. I don't recall we had any serious hold ups... some delays. And again, it's impossible for me to give the exact time. But the only thing I can specifically remember as we were approaching Hickam Field toward the Navy yard, you could see the smoke, and I say a number of planes that were in the process... I'm sure they were dive bombing Battleship Row. Now that would have been the second attack, and there must be a time on that. Then very shortly thereafter, as we were getting a little closer to the Navy yard gate, looking down the road toward Aiea, there was a very large plane flying less than probably a hundred feet off the ground in the direction... it would have been the northern direction and it was flying so low, I said, "That is going to crash!" And since then I've been told that one Val bomber did crash out in the cane fields. Another thing, they tell me, forty years later, that the road between Hickam Field and the Navy yard was littered with cars in the ditch and what not, where many people had been killed by strafing. But I have no memory of that. That they had told me.

I got in at the Navy yard, no delay. I let my brother-in-law off at the enlisted mens landing at [*Merry*] Point. I drove down and parked the car by the Officer's landing, went to the dock; there were probably half a dozen officers there. All Battleship Row was burning. You could see the whole thing, and there was a Japanese aerial torpedo beached about... a distance of maybe 30 feet. I've been told afterwards...

Q: 30 feet?

A: 30 feet from where I stood. I've been told afterwards, that that had been fired at a ship that tied up to the lumber dock and missed. Another survivor told me. I can't verify. The torpedo I thought was remarkably small. I would estimate it to be eight or nine feet long, and ten to twelve inches in diameter at the most. It was a small torpedo. We stood... now I'm going to estimate that we stood at the dock and watched things burn, it couldn't have been over 10 or 15 minutes. It might not have been that long. The what I call a "pool boat" came along, an officers boat, and everybody got in it. And the coxswain, as we departed, headed over Battleship Row and he almost got... we were almost over where the oil was burning. He went that close. We then went through the area where the Phoenix had laid, over off the sub base, and the whole area there was covered with floating case... the brass cases that the Phoenix had fired. It must have been hundreds of them.

They then let us off and we got to the Whitney. Now again, at the time, it's my impression that I got to the Whitney not later than 9:45. Now during that time I never saw a plane. There's was no planes over Battleship Row. We didn't see any. Although afterwards I'm told that my brother-in-law was strafed, the area on the enlisted mens landing was strafed. I don't know by how many planes. We never saw that and we never heard it. I got aboard the ship, changed my clothes as fast as I could, went down to my battle station in ammunition supply. About 10:00... roughly 10, our anti-aircraft guns fired a few times at some plane flying over. Somebody said they were American planes, but reading the Naval Institute proceedings afterwards, I'm told it was a Jap reconnaissance plane. It was taking photos of the area, and I understand some of them were even later. When I got back aboard the ship I was very well pleased, like I told you earlier, I had been in charge of ammunition supply for two years. The men who were in the working party were off in the repair force. But we would have General Quarters, we would have General Quarters, the magazines were right outside my office where I stood. It was necessary for the boys to go down, open the hatches, go down two decks, and they would bring out two of these dummy 5-inch shells and the powders, and they lug this mass all the way back to the end of the ship. And the anti-aircraft crews would have to get out two or three dummy anti-aircraft projectiles all the way up toward the top around the Captains cabin where the thing were. General Quarters would be secured and these boys would be dragging this dummy ammunition back and forth, and I suppose they must have spent two years swearing at me for having made them do all these things.

But when the attack came, a gunners mate by the name of Webb went up to Captain's cabin, broke in, got the keys to the ammunition locker, came down and unlocked it. He got down into those magazines, they got the anti-aircraft projectiles up there, and in something less than ten minutes they were firing the anti-aircraft guns. The one on starboard fired the most. And along with the other ships, it's my impression they also got the .50-caliber machine guns going and Al Piccard tells me that he kicked in the door to the Captain`s cabin, and hooked up the water hose to the .50-caliber machine gun. So along with the .50-caliber machine guns on the *Whitney*, the destroyers alongside, some of the 5-inch batteries on the destroyers, or 3-inch, they either shot down or diverted the attacking the Japanese fighters basically coming from the direction of Battleship Row and Ford Island, where they, let us say, run them between us and the *Dobbin* and Ford Island, and a number of them crashed over in the vicinity of the *Medusa*. And I've always felt that my ammunition handling detail probably contributed toward saving the Whitney and her destroyers by then. I fully appreciated all those tiring drills that we had gone through in a job that I didn't think was mine. And in San Antonio be strange chance we had a *Whitney* meeting and I found about 7 or 8 of these boys had been in my ammunition supply parties and I was able to thank them and let them know that I was the man who was responsible for making them carry that damn dummy ammunition back and forth for two years when they didn't want to.

Q: Well, thank you very much. I really appreciate you taking the time to come up here and help us out.

A: Good.

Q: It's been a major contribution.

Ellsworth Johnson #34
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Johnson, what ship were you stationed on at Pearl Harbor?

A: I was on the USS *Dobbin* AD3 which was a destroyer tender.

Q: What were your duties on the *Dobbin*?

A: Well, I was a fireman at the time. I was in the engine room.

Q: When did you first realize that morning that there was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: About 30 seconds after it started. Being a Sunday morning, I had just had breakfast and had gone up to the fantail to relax for the day because no work; it wasn't church time yet. So I was just on the fantail relaxing when we saw the first planes drop bombs on Ford Island.

Q: Tell me what you saw?

A: Well, when we saw the planes coming in we heard a couple of explosions and we looked around and we saw the Japanese planes, but we didn't recognize at that time, the Rising Sun on the planes. So the first thing we said was, "Gosh, it's a heck of a time of day, on a Sunday morning, for the Air Force to be holding practice." And about that time we saw one of the hangars explode and go up in the air, and we began to realize it was just more than practice. And approximately the same time, it couldn't have been but just a matter of seconds, they sounded General Quarters.

Q: Where was your battle station?

A: My battle station was down in the Repair Five, which is engineering repair.

Q: Is that below decks?

A: That's on the second deck. And my place was just in the passage way above the Engine Room. And basically we were... our job would be to either uh... help with trying to control any damage that happened or if they needed release in the Engine Room; anything of this nature.

Q: What did you do once you got down to your battle station?

A: Well, first when we got down there, why we just all mustered at our battle station and were standing by, waiting for further orders for anything to go on; anything that might need. Sometimes our phone talker was on the J phone system which was connected with all the engineering department, and we had one man that was connected to topside and he would tell us, or we would hear bits of information going over, and our phone talker would repeat that to us what was happening. So we had an idea of some of the

damage being done, but yet we could see nothing.

So shortly afterwards, I don't know how long it was, just a matter of minutes I suppose, and they passed the word that they wanted men from Repair Five to go down to the armory and help carry machine guns up to the topside. We had quite a few .30-caliber machine guns stored down there that they could use. They were for landing parties and such as that. Of course we had the .50-calibers had already been installed; they were mounted permanently, but these .30-calibers were all portable. So we carried them up topside to the boat deck for the parties up there to use for shooting at planes that came close.

Well at this time the *Arizona* had already been hit, and a couple of the other battleships. From where we were, we could see the fires, and see the stern of the ship was beginning to go down. Well that basically was about all you could see. And there were a few planes coming by, well, we weren't allowed to stay topside. As soon as we got the machine guns up and turned them over to crews up there, we were to go back down again, to our station. So that basically was all I could see of the action.

Well I had returned down to Repair Five and we were sitting there waiting for further orders when we got a report from some of the fellows down in the shaft alley, which was well a stern, that they thought we had had a hit. Now basically what it was was a bomb that had dropped off our starboard stern, oh, approximately 50 yards off. And uh... course the terrific concussion is what shook the ship and everybody had thought we had a hit. But shrapnel did fly aboard, and one of our aft 3-inch gun crews received some of the shrapnel and there were three men killed by shrapnel. That was the only damage we received, although the side of the ship and even the gun barrels had shrapnel holes in them. Not all the way through, but just enough that it could be seen, and we knew what it was.

Well basically, that is just about all we had during our action down below, because there wasn't a great deal we could see. Everything we got was from reports going on topside.

Q: When was it that you finally got up to topside?

A: Uh, it was after the second attack, and of course we lay our good fortune to the fact that we had five destroyers, which was the *Hull*, *Dewey*, *Worden*, *MacDonough*, and the *Phelps*, were all alongside. And uh, they had all their guns in operation, which put up quite a big fire control over us, and weren't too many planes that got too near us.

Q: So how long did the *Dobbin* stay at anchor there?

A: Uh, well we... after the second wave broke off, uh the destroyers got alongside. They were all in for repairs and they had all their fires out. They were cold iron. We furnished them with fuel, water, and whatever they needed, and they all took off the go to sea. But we let off our engines and we moved over toward Aiea, in more shallow water. And the thinking was, that if we got over there where there were maybe only four feet of water under us, if we did get another hit, or got a hit at any time, we wouldn't have far to sail. They wouldn't lose the ship.

It would be beached, or drowned, and that way it would be much easier to salvage the ship, or save it.

Q: What one incident stands out in your mind more than any other, about the Pearl Harbor Attack... in your memory?

A: Well, there's only a couple of them, and one was the first sighting of the planes and the bombing, when they came over Ford Island, and the other one is when I got back topside and could see the *Arizona* and the *Oklahoma* laying over there in the water.

Q: What was you feeling when you first saw the *Arizona* and the *Oklahoma*?

A: Well, I don't know really. Never tried to put a feeling on it. I guess it was one of shock, and awe, and we just wondered how much more damage we would have before the darn thing could be over with.

Q: O.K. Well, I thank you for coming up and sharing your memories.

A: Well, your welcome. Wish I could give you more.

Q: Well, you've given us quite a bit.

A: Because.... well, that's alright go ahead.

Celeste Pilvelis Brauer #35
December 8, 1984

Q: Would you tell us, Mrs. Brauer, where you went to nursing school?

A: I graduated from Philadelphia General Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, in 1938.

Q: What was your first job after graduation?

A: After I graduated, I went to the Emergency Hospital in Washington, D.C., because I was only about 21 and I couldn't take my State Boards until May. I graduated in February, and I couldn't take my State Boards until May. But the fact that our hospital was recognized and had reciprocity with various... in fact, actually, with all the states...United States, I was permitted to take the position before I took my State Boards. So I was at the emergency room in Washington, D.C., which is only a few blocks, incidently, from the White House, Pennsylvania Avenue...and the White House. And somebody approached me one day and said, "Why don't you go out to Walter Reed and check on nursing there?" And so I did go out to Walter Reed and the fact that I think you had to be 22, at that time, to be a Regular Army Nurse. But I went out and I was a civilian under the Civilian Conservation Corps. I worked as a civilian nurse at Walter Reed. Then I took my physical for the Army shortly after that and became a Regular Army Nurse.

Q: How did you get to Hawaii?

A: After I was there I worked... funny part about it was when I told the girls I was going in the Army, I said, "Well gosh girls, I'm not going to have any more women to take care of." The only funny part of it was they put me in the obstetrical ward at Walter Reed for a short time, and after that I was at the officer's ward, which they called 'The Country Club' at Walter Reed. They do ask you when you're there if you have to put in for several places for overseas duty, and one of my choices was Hawaii. And after I was there about a year... let's see I went over there in '38... uh, I was there about a year and a half and I was sent to Hawaii in June of 1940. In fact we had a wonderful trip over. We sailed from New York on the [*USAT*] *Republic* and had a day on each side of the Canal... Panama Canal, and had a whole week in San Francisco. Then we had the World's Fair there in 1940, so we just had a ball. There was only two of us, young nurses, and 26 Air [*Corps*] Officers from Kelly [*Field*]. So...

Q: Sounds like an interesting social life!

A: Oh we had a wonderful time... wonderful trip to Hawaii.

Q: Where did you first catch sight of Hawaii? Do you know what part of the Islands you saw first?

A: I'm trying to think where the boats.... You know, at that time when you went to Hawaii it was just fantastic because they had the bands out to meet you. They had sent the... everybody knew who was coming over, so there were quite a few people on the docks to meet everybody. In fact, I had a telegram sent over, aboard ship, because I happened to know Father Rhine at Walter Reed quite well, and he sent me a wire saying, "We'll have the band out to meet you Celeste." I can't remember exactly where the ships docked at that time. See, they're not using them too much now...

Q: Where were you first assigned?

A: I was assigned to Tripler General [*Hospital*].

Q: What were your duties there?

A: Well, the funny part of it is, the fact that I was in OB in at Walter Reed, and apparently had a very good record in obstetrics and gynecology, they assigned me to obstetrics again. Of course, after the War started I had charge of the gas gangrene cases.

Q: Well, tell me a little bit about what life was like before the attack on December 7th.

A: Before the attack? Well, life before the attack was simply wonderful... just fantastic! Uh, things... the Army was a little different than it is today. Everything was quite social. People had to dress for dinner after 6:00, you know, the men... the officers had to wear their white tuxes, and we always wore long dresses for dinner. In fact, you had to wear a long dress just to go to the movies... shows, if you were going on any of the Bases. So we had a very very nice social life.

Q: And what Ward were you assigned to at Tripler?

A: Well, as I told you, I was on obstetrics, but then after the War started, I uh... and all the casualties came in, and we had all the casualties come... we had practically all the casualties from the Pearl Harbor, we got them from Hickam. The fact that we were the General Hospital, see Schofield was a station hospital, so that most of the casualties were sent to Tripler General [*Hospital*].

Q: Let me ask you, what were doing on the morning of December 7th?

A: Well, the night before the attack, we happened to be at Hickam Field, at a party at Hickam Field. And I was so happy because that morning I was assigned to day duty, Sunday, December the 7th, and I was on duty when we had the attack. And I was quite pleased about that because I ... you know, the fact that I was right there to help with all the casualties coming in. And as I say they were simply terrible because you know, we had people with practically their heads blown off, or their arms... a lot of amputations.

Q: Where did you work.... or... let me back up a little. That morning, what was the first inkling you had that something out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well, the fact that uh... I mean this came so sudden actually, you know about ten... well, a quarter to eight. We were barely on duty, you know, about 45 minutes when the planes came over and all the casualties came in. So we were just so busy, without thinking we went to work.

Q: But, did you hear any of the bombing?

A: Well then someday said, "The Japs! The Japs are here! The Japs have attacked!" And we did have some shrapnel hit the Hospital. It was on the roof of the Hospital.

Q: Where did you work once the casualties started coming in?

A: Well, we worked for several days... I mean any place we were needed. And as I say, after things settled down after a few days... two or three days later, we were assigned to special duty, and as I said I was the with the gas gangrene cases. Fortunately, we only had eleven. But it was a very busy place because those people had to have deep x-ray therapy twice a day and so... which meant getting them out of bed and onto litters, and into the x-ray department and it was extremely busy. And we only had... one of the lieutenants had an amputation. That was the only amputation, due to the gas gangrene. He had to have his leg amputated.

Q: Can you remember much of what you did on the 7th itself?

A: No, I was so busy! We were extremely busy. In fact, we were on duty practically, well, 24 hours you know continuously. You just think about going off duty, because we were so very, very busy.

Q: How long was before you got a break?

A: Well, our nurses home was very... adjoined the hospital, so we could get over there. But as I say, most people just stayed on duty and worked. And I never wore very much make up, but one thing that I did like was lipstick, and all I could think about, I don't even have a lipstick. I don't think I had a lipstick for three days. So we just kept extremely busy.

Q: How long did you stay at Tripler?

A: I was at Tripler... from the time I went over in 1940?

Q: Yeah.

A: I arrived, I think it was about July of 1940 and I was there until June... I was married June 3rd of 1942, after the attack.

Q: That's just about the time of the Battle of Midway.

A: That was the Battle of Midway. And uh... several of the, as I say, we had a wedding planned and many of our friends could not attend because they were busy... the Battle of Midway, and they were off flying.

Q: So, what was the general atmosphere like among military people in Hawaii between Pearl Harbor and Midway? Were there a lot of rumors going around... uh.... was there a lot of tension in the air?

A: Well after... it's surprising how things settled after that sneak attack which uh... I mean I don't know if Washington, or if Roosevelt had any inkling that we were going to have a problem or not. But it was surprising how everybody chipped in and worked hard and settled down. I think that probably everybody was in such a state of shock, they didn't even think about too much except keeping busy and working.

Q: You know, looking back on it, is there any one particular thing, any one particular memory that remains vivid in your mind about the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Well I... uh... the fact that it was such a sudden attack was very, very surprising. I didn't think it would be possible that such a thing could happen so quickly.

Q: So, do you have anything else that you can add about that period?

A: Oh, of course we had the blackouts. You do know that we had a blackout for about... I don't think they lifted the blackout for about nine months because even after I was married, even our apartment, all the windows were blackened. You know, we couldn't open the windows; there were no lights.

Q: How would you black out your apartment? What would you do?

A: Well, the fact that the windows were all painted black, and you'd have to be very careful opening the doors that there wouldn't be any lights showing. I don't think many people smoked outdoors. People tried to be very cautious for a long time because you never knew whether or not the Japanese were going to return.

Q: What about when you drove around at night, did the headlights on the cars.....?

A: No, we did not have the headlights on the car for a long time; as long as I can remember... while I was there.

Q: What about flashlights at night?
A: Well, if we used any in the hospital we'd have to be very very careful. But I can't even remember using a flashlight myself. I think the lights were probably turned down very, very low and unless you wanted to look at something very carefully, I don't think you'd need your flashlight. And most of our treatments

were all done during the daytime, as far as transporting people to the x-ray departments and so forth. We had... of course so many of the doctors, it was surprising what people did during that attack. We had so many people volunteer. A lot of your very, very famous doctors volunteered from the United States, you know, from New York especially, uh, to come over and help as much as they can. In fact in the gas gangrene cases they were the ones that thought about doing all the debreedment. You know, we had to debreed all those legs and pack them with sulfadiazine, or one of the sulfa drugs, plus the (?)therapy.

Q: What was one of the words you used, debreed?

A: Debreedment. They debreed.

Q: How do you spell it?

A: D-E-B-R-E-D-M-E-N-T. Debredment.

Q: And what does that entail?

A: Well, cleaning out the wound. And you did that every day, and repacked it with you sulfadiazine, one of your sulfa drugs. And as I say, it was miraculous, the fact we only had the one amputation. It was actually most unusual, you know, you usually lose most of those gas gangrene cases or you would have to have amputations. So, we were extremely lucky. I mean, you think of the dirty wounds, you know the fact that the wounds were so very, very dirty from the shrapnel and so forth.

Q: Well, it sounds like you had an interesting period of your life there.

A: Very interesting. And I was glad that I was there, and happy to help as much as I could. I will add the fact that my family was very disappointed with the fact that I was going to be married in June. They felt that I should have stayed and helped as long as I could. See, at that time, if the nurses were married, they were automatically dependent, became dependents and uh, they had to be evacuated. So I was evacuated to the States in September of 1942, but I barely got home when they asked me to return to the Service. Of course when I wrote to Al and asked him what he thought, he said no he wanted me to stay home and do as much as I could in the States. Because the hospitals were very busy because we lost a lot of the nurses in the States, and he felt that there could have been a possibility that we wouldn't have been stationed together. And shortly after that, you know, they changed the law... well, shortly after I was married, maybe 3 or 4 months, where when the nurses were married they automatically stayed in the Army. They were not discharged because they were losing too many of their Regular Army Nurses through marriage.

Q: O.K. well thank you. I appreciate your coming up here and sharing your memories with us.

A: Yes, I enjoyed it very much and I was happy to meet you.

Q: O.K., well same here.

A: Thank you very very much.

Floyd Jenkins #36 and Leo Hovde #37
December 8, 1984

Q: Now were both of you gentlemen aboard the [*USS*] *Rigel*, say, quite a long time before the attack?

A:(Leo Hovde) I'd been there approximately six months.

A1:(Floyd Jenkins) I caught in Bremerton in May of 1941 and we left Bremerton in July of 1941 and went to Pearl; tied up alongside the old coal docks there. What had happened, we had gone up to Bremerton for a partial overhaul and then when they went to Pearl it was to finish up the overhaul converting her to an actual repair ship. So when we moved around from the coal dock, we moved around to 1010 dock then and that's where we were sitting when the attack come off.

Q: Oh you were at 1010 dock?

A1: Yes, we was moored right ahead of the hammerhead crane there. The *Ramapo* was aft of us and we was at the forward end of the dock. We had the rigs torn off. We had the boilers torn out, and we never even had a pea shooter going that day did we? Nothing... not a weapon. In other words we was under going almost a complete overhaul at Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. Of course, the old boilers had been on it since it had been built in 1918. They built that ship in 72 days and then... it was a merchant ship, the Navy took it over, I don't know, sometime, and it was tied up down at the DES [*Destroyer*] base in San Diego and old Capt. McCanlis(??) used it as an office and everything. So when they broke her away from them, brought her up to Bremerton, they done some work up there but then they sent her to Pearl to finish up and that's why we were sitting there. We was getting ready to put in new high pressure steam boilers and to bring the rest of the machinery aboard and everything to finish the conversion.

Q: What was your job... your regular duty aboard the *Rigel*?

A1: In the medical department... in the Sick Bay.

A: I was attached to the dental department.

A1: He was on the dental department. I was at this particular time I was the O.R... I was working operating room. And we actually did not have any battle dressing stations set up per say, at this particular time. So when they realized that this was an actual attack, part of the Corpsmen stayed up in the main Sick Bay, part of us went down to the deck below, which was a deck above of where our storeroom was. So we could pass up the necessary equipment and everything to set up a battle dressing station in this area. So I was working down there and Leo was up in the...

A: I was in the Main Sick Bay; me and one other guy, another H.A. Duce (?), that's old Bob Bailey. (laughter)

Q: What was the first indication that either of you had that morning that there was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: I had just gotten out of bed. I was sleeping in the dental office on the 01 level of the *Rigel*, about midships, and I had to report to Sick Bay for duty to feed the patients. And I got dressed in my uniform, stepped out on the 01 level. This low flying aircraft suddenly tilted and banked apparently after a torpedo launch. And that's when I seen the meatballs, that's when I headed to the Sick Bay.

A1: Myself, I had been on "liberty" the night before. I was with three fellahs off the *West Virginia*. One of them I'd gone through boot camp with, so I knew him. And needless to say, I'm sure you've heard this before, the liquor was flowing like water out there the night before. But they had overnight "liberty" so they were staying in the "Y". Well, I had to be back aboard ship by midnight, my "liberty" was up. So I had gotten up the next morning and I was getting ready to shave and shower, and get ready to go back to shore, because I had to go to go ashore at 8:00. I didn't have the duty, he did. Anyway, I heard the noises, the explosions, and everything and I thought it was, you know, a drill. So I stuck my head out the porthole just in time to see the *Oklahoma* take a couple of torpedoes in the side. And about that time the *Argonne*, which was laying over from us there got some guns in action. And this one gunner hit a plane, and as the plane nosed up I could see the Rising Sun on the wings and I realized then that this was no drill. So about that time they started passing the word, you know , that General Quarters, this is no drill. We're under actual attack. About that time [*Leo*] Hovde came down. Well then I went on down below then, to set up the auxiliary battle dressing station.

Q: What happened to the *Oklahoma* once those torpedoes struck her? What did you see?

A1: Well, you see, I looked over just in time to see a couple of torpedoes going in, and about that time, why they said hey it's an attack. Well, I realized that then, when I was saw this other, the other indication. So of course, I pulled my head back in out of that porthole and went down and got busy. And it was probably about, oh I would say, between 2 and 3:00 in the afternoon before I could get up to get up on deck to see anything. And that was the first indication that I had of the actual destruction.

Q: What was the sight that greeted your eyes?

A1: Holy cow! Looked over and saw the *Oklahoma* on its side, the *Arizona* burning, the *West Virginia* burning, the *California* setting on the bottom, the *Nevada* beached out there. It was one hell of a sight to say the least, because actually, I knew some of the fellahs on the *Arizona*. Cause in 1940, when I was transferred from Hospital Corps School to Bremerton, I rode the *Arizona* up and I was aboard it, oh, for a couple of months, six weeks to two months, in route going up to Bremerton. And some of

the fellahs that had gone through boot camp was aboard the *Arizona*. So when I saw that, I realized that probably they wasn't alive. And sure enough, it turned out they wasn't; they had been killed. And the actual bomb or shell that hit the *Arizona* hit I guess around #1 gun turret. Well the Sick Bay, the Medical Sick Bay was right below that and it just wiped them out. That's why all medical personnel was killed on the *Arizona*. And where of course, I'd slept, and done duty on it when I was riding it up.

Q: What about you Mr. Hovde. When did you get up on deck?

A: I never left the Sick Bay like I said, I had the duty. Bailey and I stayed there and we were watching most of that through the porthole.

Q: What did you see?

A: Oh, violent explosions and planes. Nineteen years old, and curious, and scared to death. The level of the portholes are such that the *Oglala* was moored on the other side of 1010, docked on the outboard side, I assume it was the *Oglala*. But we treated one patient off of there. We got one patient that morning... flash burns... and he was from the *Oglala*. But that blocked most of the view from the portholes in the Sick Bay.

Q: Well, tell me what went on with the *Oglala* that you could see?

A: Nothing... that I could see. Looking from a porthole, the view is restricted to say the least. Apparently the torpedo missed her and passed underneath and exploded against the dock. And the resulting concussion and blast sank her or turned her over, and it was there that this young Sailor got hurt that we treated.

Q: Did you see the *Oglala* um...

A: About that time everybody was running around screaming. There was no PA system. Like Jenks said we were under overhaul. No PA system, so the word was being passed by somebody sticking their head over the hatch and yelling down the #1 hatch, "Everybody below! Everybody topside! Everybody below!" and they couldn't make up their mind!

Q: Sounds like a pretty confused type of situation.

A: (laughter) That's the reason Bailey and I didn't... We had the duty, and at first we obeyed the orders. We went down below, down to the double bottoms; all the way to the bottom of the holes. Then they yelled, "Everybody topside!" so Bailey and I went back up. Finally Bailey says,"What the hell are we doing this for! This is Sick Bay, let's just stay here." That's what we did. We sat there. I remember feeling very safe because I got this steel deck over my head. And Bailey was watching incoming strafing aircraft through the porthole he had his head in. And I distinctly remember telling him two or three times, "Bailey,

you're going to get your damn head shot off!" (laughter) He didn't but that's one of the main things I remember is that dumb clown looking out the porthole watching these incoming planes.

A1: We took a bomb hit forward of the ship. It didn't hit the ship per say. But we had a motor whaleboat that was tied up just forward of the bow. The engineer had already got into the boat and had the motor started. The Bow Hook and the Coxswain was coming down the piling; they looked up and this plane was just above mast height. The guy dropped a bomb. The engineer of course, jumped out in the water. The Bow Hook and the Coxswain swung around behind the pilings and the bomb hit the aft part of the whaleboat; tore the rudder off and everything. So the bomb was a delayed action I guess, because it didn't explode until it got to the bottom and the engineer was in the water. Well they brought him, the Bow Hook and the Coxswain jumped in the water and pulled him out and brought him up to the battle dressing station.

Q: What sort of shape was he in?

A1: We thought he had bought the course. He was spitting blood and everything; across his chest we thought was crushed. So we sent him to the hospital and a week later here he come walking back aboard ship. And needless to say we was all quite surprised because we figured well he'd had it because...

Q: Lucky man.

A1: He was very lucky.

A: I wonder, you know that burn case off the *Oglala*, we treated him with tannic acid jelly, which you know in those days was the accepted treatment for burns. Since then over the years, been around the medical department, it was the worse thing we could have done for him. Reduction of scars after tannic acid jelly is horrific. Now they recommend ice water and sterile Vaseline but this poor sailor, we treated him with tannic acid jelly.

A1: Well, you had nothing else, you didn't know any better.

A: That was the accepted method of treatment in those days. Bailey and I were (unclear) nothing else available. We were by ourselves and we couldn't get into it. We were only H.A.Deuces and they wouldn't let us get into it.

A1: We had another hit aft. They dropped another bomb and we had these big hawsers of course, wire hawsers holding us to the dock and the bomb hit one of these hawsers and exploded. I could put that 159 shrapnel holes in the fantail of the thing. We had a couple of guys hit. They brought them down and of course we bandaged them up and sent them back up. Somebody told me later, I couldn't remember, was one of the guys killed on that hit?

A: No.

A1: I thought it was just a couple of them that....

A: The only patient I ever saw like I said, I was attached to the dental department. I was down there that day just... I think it was you and Dr. Powell, took that piece of shrapnel out of that guys head, about the size of a pea. Apparently it had penetrated the skin and bounced off the skull and come back. So we just nicked the skin and the piece of shrapnel came right out.

A1: But I think really, the thing that I remember, remember the hammerhead crane, the Navy Yard workers abandoned that thing, and they called for volunteers to man it, and some of our men went up and manned that thing and was lifting those PT boats out in the water? Remember that?

A: No. I remember worrying about somebody saying that the *Ramapo* was going to (unclear)

A1: This *Ramapo* was carrying ammunition and high-test gasoline. They got behind us and it was a little weird.

A: Now I was thinking what if that hammerhead crane gets hit and falls on top of the *Rigel*, now that was a possibility that entered my mind but I don't know...

A1: Well there was PT boats that they had on the dock, at the end of it. As I understand, Holmes and some of the men manned this thing and was lifting the PT boats out in the water. As they was lifting this one off, this kid got a .50-caliber going and shot one of the planes down, as he was lifting this PT boat over in the water.

Q: Moving target from a moving mount.

A1: (laughter) Yeah, that's about it.

A: Sure was something for the Japanese intelligence though in the book, "At Dawn We Slept" there was a sketch by one of the bomber pilots that flew that strike and shows the hits, severe damage, and minor damage inflicted on the fleet. The *Rigel* is marked as 'serious damage', and the reason was, she wasn't hit, but we were dismantled. They had torn us apart to rebuild the bridge. So I can understand why a fighter pilot would think well here's a major damaged ship. We were damaged, but not by them. That thing is marked in that book as 'major damage'. (laughter) And it shows the two bomb hits also. The guy, they took two bomb hits, one fore, and one aft. They was near misses.

A1: Actually, our job involved primarily rescue. We sent all of our boats our and everything to pick men up off the *Oklahoma* and the *Arizona*, and you know, out of the water. That was our primary mission I think. It's all we could do.

A: There was nothing to fight with. There was no guns or anything else.

Q: They were bringing the men back to the *Rigel* for you to treat?

A1: No. No...they...course they were taking them to the beach and offloading to go back for more.

A: Most of them went to the *Solace*, or to hospitals.

A1: Those that wasn't hit, they just off-loaded them there on the dock and went back for more. In fact, actually, on that Monday night I went over on the *Oklahoma*. We worked most of the night and all day long and so I remembered that we had a Corpsman over there named Dolan. You remember Dolan of course.

A: Yep.

A1: And I reminded the Chief that Dolan had been over on the *Oklahoma* all Monday, all during the day and asked him was he going to send a relief over, and he said, "Yeah." he said, "You." So you know, somebody had to go so I said,"O.K. but be sure and send me relief over at midnight." They had a midnight boat, relief crews coming over at midnight. He assured me that he would and you might know, he didn't. The relief boat came over and there was no Corpsman on it so I was stuck.

Q: Well, tell me what you did, Mr. Jenkins, over on the Oklahoma?

A1: Well, this is what I'm getting to. About 2:00, well we heard tappings, oh probably about 12:30, and so the Navy Yard workmen by this time they quit using the cutting torches of course. They was using these diamond dipped drills, and boy they was peeling through that steel like it was butter. And when they'd get one of the drill bits dull they just toss it over in the water. And you know, those things are pretty expensive but it didn't matter.

Q: Under the circumstances...

A1: Under the circumstances. So we cut, they cut through the double hull and we got the last two men out about 2:00 in the morning and so I put them in the motor launch. And of course they had these white blankets so all they had on was a pair of scivvys. So we started out taking them to the *Solace*, the hospital ship. They asked me what time it was. I said, "It's Tuesday morning about 2:00." And they couldn't believe it! They thought that really, the time compression really showed up there because they thought it was about 4:00 in the afternoon on a Sunday. And here it was 2:00 in the morning, Tuesday morning. The interesting part is, we rounded the point where the *Arizona* was. They had a minesweeper I think, or a tug type minesweeper tied up at the fantail at the *Arizona*. And this sentry shot at us. Well I just stiffened up and slid to the bottom of the boat. One of these guys said, "What's the matter doc. That's a good clean death." They didn't even bat a eye out of it. So we took them on over to the *Solace* and of course took them aboard and checked them in and everything, and got a cup of hot coffee and a cigarette(?) and back to the *Oklahoma*. So about 9:00 Tuesday morning, here come a boat over and still no Corpsman. So I abandoned ship. I left.

I got back aboard ship. I was mad, needless to say. So the doc, I saw Dr. Cowan first thing. I told him.

Q: What was the doctors name?

A1: Cowan... J.S. Cowan... Dr. Cowan.

Q: How is that spelled?

A1: C-O-W-A-N. And so Dr. Cowan says, "Well go on up and take a shower and go to bed and sleep as long as you need to." So I went on up and was getting a shower. Here come Leo with a Coke heavily laced with brandy, compliments of Dr. Cowan. And so I drank that and had my hot shower and I went back and hit the sack then. And boy I was out, what, about twelve hours.

A: Yeah you were our for quite a while.

A1: I was... I mean I had it. So me and my Chief never did get along after that needless to say. There was little love lost there. (laughter) So I guess I had the...

A: I think you were.... that's when that... it was Dr. Cowan and myself took that piece of shrapnel out of that kid. You were asleep, I remember that.

A1: It may have been. Anyway, uh...

A: What we did was just nick the skin and pop that little piece of shrapnel out.

A1: Now I forgot what I was going to say. Oh, I guess that the two fellahs that we took off the *Oklahoma* that night was the last two that was rescued as far as I know. I remember that I made some notes after I was back aboard ship. I think one of them was a Shipfitter 2nd Classman and the other one was a Carpenters Mate, 2nd Class, that uh, we took off. And that's the last two that I know of that we rescued. Because when I came back, why, they could get no more soundings the rest of the night. So the next morning they figured, well we've got all of them that we're going to get out of there. Because after all, this was 48 hours later, by that time. Let's see... Monday... Yeah 48 hours. And uh, I know that was the end of mine. I didn't go back over there. And that's about all the recollections I have of the immediate proceedings up to date.

Q: Well, that's interesting.... interesting story. What about... about...

A: Considering....Considering it was a non combat vessel with nothing to work with, it was interesting. But uh, like I say, when I stepped out of the dental office on the 01 level, the first thing I'd seen was that plane bank up and those big red balls. And that's when I headed to the Sick Bay which was forward. I didn't stop to look at anything else. There wasn't much to see at that time, smoke and flames was about all you could see really.

A1: You know I was telling you about the...

A: You didn't stop to look anyway. No time for sightseeing.

A1: Yeah, I was telling you about when I was looking out the porthole and I saw the Argon shoot this plane that banked up. I remember I wrote down, that was the plane that when it banked and circled back around, it was the one that hit the Naval Hospital, but...

Q: That was the one that crashed through...?

A1: MMHMMM. I wrote this down so it must have been, cause I had it written down in some notes that the plane I saw, when it banked up and it peeled off, and it was hit why it came back around and crashed into the hospital..

Q: Whatever happened to your notes?

A1: I got them down in my...I've got a book... my wife.... I spent 30 years in the Navy, and at my retirement party my wife presented me with a book that she had, of memoirs of the day I entered the Navy until the day I retired.

Q: You know, I'd like to get a copy of those notes. If you can send me a copy.
A1: I've got them. I've got them right here with me. They're just a few things that I jotted down. I don't know why I done it. I never did figure out where she got them from (laughter). I couldn't figure out where she got half the stuff that's in that book really.

Q: I'd be...

A1: In fact, I'll go down and get the book and bring it back up I wanted to get through here and then you can look at it.

Q: Yeah, I'd like to see that.

A1: In fact I got some... I wrote her a letter. I was with the 5th Marine Division later on at Iwo Jima, and she's even got a.... Do you remember the ... you've heard of the 'V-mail' deals? I was sitting there in a foxhole writing her a V-mail deal (laughter) She's got that thing in there.

A: You know, speaking of that, it's odd because the last time I was with mother over on the west coast, that's been over 20 years ago now, one of the things she showed me - remember that little postcard that they gave us? You wrote to your folks and you checked, 'I am injured.' 'I am well.' and she still had this stupid postcard for that many years. (laughter) I suppose she's still got it. But I remember them passing those out and said everybody fill them out, and they mailed them for us. And she's still got it, 'I am well.' What the hell else was on there?... just for a joke was, 'I am killed.' (laughter)

A1: Yeah, I know my folks later on told me when I came back to the states that I was reported dead and everything else you know, at the home town. They was calling them and everything else. So until they got the mail back through, why they was quite worried about it, since the newspaper called and told them that I was listed as being killed and everything. It turned out I wasn't thank God. In fact I'm still here, evidently (laughter)

A: They were getting some pretty good information to have somebodies name in that mess.

A1: Oh gosh yeah. But that's about all that I could think of for right now.

A: Yeah, our part was really rather insignificant. In fact, the *Rigel*.... you mention the USS *Rigel* and people say, "What kind of disease is that?" (laughter) No, but we didn't do anything. We didn't have anything to do anything with for that matter.

A1: Well, except for them people that we rescued and things like this...

A: Oh fire and rescue. We did fire and rescue which was normal. That poor clown off the *Oglala*, I think he was just wandering down the dock or gangway to watch, dragged him and sent him up to us in the Sick Bay. But I think he was delirious when he was wandering down the dock, wherever that explosion was.

A1: You know, I talked to a fellow off the *Oglala*, back in Sacramento, one of those state ... California State Conventions, and he said, "You know the thing that I remember about that day?" He said, "After we came off the *Oglala*," he wasn't hurt or anything, but he came over to *Rigel* to eat dinner that evening, and he said," Man, that was the best food I had had, and boy did it ever taste good." But we had a commissary department aboard that ship that was outstanding. I think it was one of the best feed ships out there. But uh... that's what a lot of the fellows that come aboard, for some reason you know, they always remember the galley that we had... the food that we had. And uh... we had a Chief Commissary Steward on there that was just an outstanding man. He would go out and get fresh vegetables and fresh fruit and he bought an old Chevrolet pickup out there just to go scouting for food and different things.

Q: It's funny how when you ask people what they remember about their ship, you know the... well one thing you get most often was 'Oh she was a good feeder' or 'food was lousy'. People, can't remember a bomb that blew up you know, ten feet from them but they can sure remember that food.

A1: That's the number one...

A: To most sailors that's the way a ship is remembered; how she fed them. I'm like you, everywhere over the years that I spent in the Navy, the 20 some years, someone mention a ship and they say 'Oh she's a bum feeder' or 'a good feeder' and from there on

out there you go. And no matter what kind of ship it is from submarine to battleship, they're all alike.

A1: I'll tell you the ship that was a good feeder, the morale was usually up. If it was a bum feeder, morale was down. It was a very good indicator of how the food was aboard ship was to how the morale was. It was a very significant part in the morale aspect of it.

Q: O.K. well, thank you very much.

A and A1 (jointly return thanks)

Floyd Jenkins #36 and **Leo Hovde #37**
December 8, 1984

Q: Now were both of you gentlemen aboard the [*USS*] *Rigel*, say, quite a long time before the attack?

A:(Leo Hovde) I'd been there approximately six months.

A1:(Floyd Jenkins) I caught in Bremerton in May of 1941 and we left Bremerton in July of 1941 and went to Pearl; tied up alongside the old coal docks there. What had happened, we had gone up to Bremerton for a partial overhaul and then when they went to Pearl it was to finish up the overhaul converting her to an actual repair ship. So when we moved around from the coal dock, we moved around to 1010 dock then and that's where we were sitting when the attack come off.

Q: Oh you were at 1010 dock?

A1: Yes, we was moored right ahead of the hammerhead crane there. The *Ramapo* was aft of us and we was at the forward end of the dock. We had the rigs torn off. We had the boilers torn out, and we never even had a pea shooter going that day did we? Nothing... not a weapon. In other words we was under going almost a complete overhaul at Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. Of course, the old boilers had been on it since it had been built in 1918. They built that ship in 72 days and then... it was a merchant ship, the Navy took it over, I don't know, sometime, and it was tied up down at the DES [*Destroyer*] base in San Diego and old Capt. McCanlis(??) used it as an office and everything. So when they broke her away from them, brought her up to Bremerton, they done some work up there but then they sent her to Pearl to finish up and that's why we were sitting there. We was getting ready to put in new high pressure steam boilers and to bring the rest of the machinery aboard and everything to finish the conversion.

Q: What was your job... your regular duty aboard the *Rigel*?

A1: In the medical department... in the Sick Bay.

A: I was attached to the dental department.

A1: He was on the dental department. I was at this particular time I was the O.R... I was working operating room. And we actually did not have any battle dressing stations set up per say, at this particular time. So when they realized that this was an actual attack, part of the Corpsmen stayed up in the main Sick Bay, part of us went down to the deck below, which was a deck above of where our storeroom was. So we could pass up the necessary equipment and everything to set up a battle dressing station in this area. So I was working down there and Leo was up in the...

A: I was in the Main Sick Bay; me and one other guy, another H.A. Duce (?), that's old Bob Bailey. (laughter)

Q: What was the first indication that either of you had that morning that there was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: I had just gotten out of bed. I was sleeping in the dental office on the 01 level of the *Rigel*, about midships, and I had to report to Sick Bay for duty to feed the patients. And I got dressed in my uniform, stepped out on the 01 level. This low flying aircraft suddenly tilted and banked apparently after a torpedo launch. And that's when I seen the meatballs, that's when I headed to the Sick Bay.

A1: Myself, I had been on "liberty" the night before. I was with three fellahs off the *West Virginia*. One of them I'd gone through boot camp with, so I knew him. And needless to say, I'm sure you've heard this before, the liquor was flowing like water out there the night before. But they had overnight "liberty" so they were staying in the "Y". Well, I had to be back aboard ship by midnight, my "liberty" was up. So I had gotten up the next morning and I was getting ready to shave and shower, and get ready to go back to shore, because I had to go to go ashore at 8:00. I didn't have the duty, he did. Anyway, I heard the noises, the explosions, and everything and I thought it was, you know, a drill. So I stuck my head out the porthole just in time to see the *Oklahoma* take a couple of torpedoes in the side. And about that time the *Argonne*, which was laying over from us there got some guns in action. And this one gunner hit a plane, and as the plane nosed up I could see the Rising Sun on the wings and I realized then that this was no drill. So about that time they started passing the word, you know , that General Quarters, this is no drill. We're under actual attack. About that time [*Leo*] Hovde came down. Well then I went on down below then, to set up the auxiliary battle dressing station.

Q: What happened to the *Oklahoma* once those torpedoes struck her? What did you see?

A1: Well, you see, I looked over just in time to see a couple of torpedoes going in, and about that time, why they said hey it's an attack. Well, I realized that then, when I was saw this other, the other indication. So of course, I pulled my head back in out of that porthole and went down and got busy. And it was probably about, oh I would say, between 2 and 3:00 in the afternoon before I could get up to get up on deck to see anything. And that was the first indication that I had of the actual destruction.

Q: What was the sight that greeted your eyes?

A1: Holy cow! Looked over and saw the *Oklahoma* on its side, the *Arizona* burning, the *West Virginia* burning, the *California* setting on the bottom, the *Nevada* beached out there. It was one hell of a sight to say the least, because actually, I knew some of the fellahs on the *Arizona*. Cause in 1940, when I was transferred from Hospital Corps School to Bremerton, I rode the *Arizona* up and I was aboard it, oh, for a couple of months, six weeks to two months, in route going up to Bremerton. And some of

the fellahs that had gone through boot camp was aboard the *Arizona*. So when I saw that, I realized that probably they wasn't alive. And sure enough, it turned out they wasn't; they had been killed. And the actual bomb or shell that hit the *Arizona* hit I guess around #1 gun turret. Well the Sick Bay, the Medical Sick Bay was right below that and it just wiped them out. That's why all medical personnel was killed on the *Arizona*. And where of course, I'd slept, and done duty on it when I was riding it up.

Q: What about you Mr. Hovde. When did you get up on deck?

A: I never left the Sick Bay like I said, I had the duty. Bailey and I stayed there and we were watching most of that through the porthole.

Q: What did you see?

A: Oh, violent explosions and planes. Nineteen years old, and curious, and scared to death. The level of the portholes are such that the *Oglala* was moored on the other side of 1010, docked on the outboard side, I assume it was the *Oglala*. But we treated one patient off of there. We got one patient that morning... flash burns... and he was from the *Oglala*. But that blocked most of the view from the portholes in the Sick Bay.

Q: Well, tell me what went on with the *Oglala* that you could see?

A: Nothing... that I could see. Looking from a porthole, the view is restricted to say the least. Apparently the torpedo missed her and passed underneath and exploded against the dock. And the resulting concussion and blast sank her or turned her over, and it was there that this young Sailor got hurt that we treated.

Q: Did you see the *Oglala* um...

A: About that time everybody was running around screaming. There was no PA system. Like Jenks said we were under overhaul. No PA system, so the word was being passed by somebody sticking their head over the hatch and yelling down the #1 hatch, "Everybody below! Everybody topside! Everybody below!" and they couldn't make up their mind!

Q: Sounds like a pretty confused type of situation.

A: (laughter) That's the reason Bailey and I didn't... We had the duty, and at first we obeyed the orders. We went down below, down to the double bottoms; all the way to the bottom of the holes. Then they yelled, "Everybody topside!" so Bailey and I went back up. Finally Bailey says,"What the hell are we doing this for! This is Sick Bay, let's just stay here." That's what we did. We sat there. I remember feeling very safe because I got this steel deck over my head. And Bailey was watching incoming strafing aircraft through the porthole he had his head in. And I distinctly remember telling him two or three times, "Bailey,

you're going to get your damn head shot off!" (laughter) He didn't but that's one of the main things I remember is that dumb clown looking out the porthole watching these incoming planes.

A1: We took a bomb hit forward of the ship. It didn't hit the ship per say. But we had a motor whaleboat that was tied up just forward of the bow. The engineer had already got into the boat and had the motor started. The Bow Hook and the Coxswain was coming down the piling; they looked up and this plane was just above mast height. The guy dropped a bomb. The engineer of course, jumped out in the water. The Bow Hook and the Coxswain swung around behind the pilings and the bomb hit the aft part of the whaleboat; tore the rudder off and everything. So the bomb was a delayed action I guess, because it didn't explode until it got to the bottom and the engineer was in the water. Well they brought him, the Bow Hook and the Coxswain jumped in the water and pulled him out and brought him up to the battle dressing station.

Q: What sort of shape was he in?

A1: We thought he had bought the course. He was spitting blood and everything; across his chest we thought was crushed. So we sent him to the hospital and a week later here he come walking back aboard ship. And needless to say we was all quite surprised because we figured well he'd had it because...

Q: Lucky man.

A1: He was very lucky.

A: I wonder, you know that burn case off the *Oglala*, we treated him with tannic acid jelly, which you know in those days was the accepted treatment for burns. Since then over the years, been around the medical department, it was the worse thing we could have done for him. Reduction of scars after tannic acid jelly is horrific. Now they recommend ice water and sterile Vaseline but this poor sailor, we treated him with tannic acid jelly.

A1: Well, you had nothing else, you didn't know any better.

A: That was the accepted method of treatment in those days. Bailey and I were (unclear) nothing else available. We were by ourselves and we couldn't get into it. We were only H.A.Deuces and they wouldn't let us get into it.

A1: We had another hit aft. They dropped another bomb and we had these big hawsers of course, wire hawsers holding us to the dock and the bomb hit one of these hawsers and exploded. I could put that 159 shrapnel holes in the fantail of the thing. We had a couple of guys hit. They brought them down and of course we bandaged them up and sent them back up. Somebody told me later, I couldn't remember, was one of the guys killed on that hit?

A: No.

A1: I thought it was just a couple of them that....

A: The only patient I ever saw like I said, I was attached to the dental department. I was down there that day just... I think it was you and Dr. Powell, took that piece of shrapnel out of that guys head, about the size of a pea. Apparently it had penetrated the skin and bounced off the skull and come back. So we just nicked the skin and the piece of shrapnel came right out.

A1: But I think really, the thing that I remember, remember the hammerhead crane, the Navy Yard workers abandoned that thing, and they called for volunteers to man it, and some of our men went up and manned that thing and was lifting those PT boats out in the water? Remember that?

A: No. I remember worrying about somebody saying that the *Ramapo* was going to (unclear)

A1: This *Ramapo* was carrying ammunition and high-test gasoline. They got behind us and it was a little weird.

A: Now I was thinking what if that hammerhead crane gets hit and falls on top of the *Rigel*, now that was a possibility that entered my mind but I don't know...

A1: Well there was PT boats that they had on the dock, at the end of it. As I understand, Holmes and some of the men manned this thing and was lifting the PT boats out in the water. As they was lifting this one off, this kid got a .50-caliber going and shot one of the planes down, as he was lifting this PT boat over in the water.

Q: Moving target from a moving mount.

A1: (laughter) Yeah, that's about it.

A: Sure was something for the Japanese intelligence though in the book, "At Dawn We Slept" there was a sketch by one of the bomber pilots that flew that strike and shows the hits, severe damage, and minor damage inflicted on the fleet. The *Rigel* is marked as 'serious damage', and the reason was, she wasn't hit, but we were dismantled. They had torn us apart to rebuild the bridge. So I can understand why a fighter pilot would think well here's a major damaged ship. We were damaged, but not by them. That thing is marked in that book as 'major damage'. (laughter) And it shows the two bomb hits also. The guy, they took two bomb hits, one fore, and one aft. They was near misses.

A1: Actually, our job involved primarily rescue. We sent all of our boats our and everything to pick men up off the *Oklahoma* and the *Arizona*, and you know, out of the water. That was our primary mission I think. It's all we could do.

A: There was nothing to fight with. There was no guns or anything else.

Q: They were bringing the men back to the *Rigel* for you to treat?

A1: No. No...they...course they were taking them to the beach and offloading to go back for more.

A: Most of them went to the *Solace*, or to hospitals.

A1: Those that wasn't hit, they just off-loaded them there on the dock and went back for more. In fact, actually, on that Monday night I went over on the *Oklahoma*. We worked most of the night and all day long and so I remembered that we had a Corpsman over there named Dolan. You remember Dolan of course.

A: Yep.

A1: And I reminded the Chief that Dolan had been over on the *Oklahoma* all Monday, all during the day and asked him was he going to send a relief over, and he said, "Yeah." he said, "You." So you know, somebody had to go so I said,"O.K. but be sure and send me relief over at midnight." They had a midnight boat, relief crews coming over at midnight. He assured me that he would and you might know, he didn't. The relief boat came over and there was no Corpsman on it so I was stuck.

Q: Well, tell me what you did, Mr. Jenkins, over on the Oklahoma?

A1: Well, this is what I'm getting to. About 2:00, well we heard tappings, oh probably about 12:30, and so the Navy Yard workmen by this time they quit using the cutting torches of course. They was using these diamond dipped drills, and boy they was peeling through that steel like it was butter. And when they'd get one of the drill bits dull they just toss it over in the water. And you know, those things are pretty expensive but it didn't matter.

Q: Under the circumstances...

A1: Under the circumstances. So we cut, they cut through the double hull and we got the last two men out about 2:00 in the morning and so I put them in the motor launch. And of course they had these white blankets so all they had on was a pair of scivvys. So we started out taking them to the *Solace*, the hospital ship. They asked me what time it was. I said, "It's Tuesday morning about 2:00." And they couldn't believe it! They thought that really, the time compression really showed up there because they thought it was about 4:00 in the afternoon on a Sunday. And here it was 2:00 in the morning, Tuesday morning. The interesting part is, we rounded the point where the *Arizona* was. They had a minesweeper I think, or a tug type minesweeper tied up at the fantail at the *Arizona*. And this sentry shot at us. Well I just stiffened up and slid to the bottom of the boat. One of these guys said, "What's the matter doc. That's a good clean death." They didn't even bat a eye out of it. So we took them on over to the *Solace* and of course took them aboard and checked them in and everything, and got a cup of hot coffee and a cigarette(?) and back to the *Oklahoma*. So about 9:00 Tuesday morning, here come a boat over and still no Corpsman. So I abandoned ship. I left.

I got back aboard ship. I was mad, needless to say. So the doc, I saw Dr. Cowan first thing. I told him.

Q: What was the doctors name?

A1: Cowan... J.S. Cowan... Dr. Cowan.

Q: How is that spelled?

A1: C-O-W-A-N. And so Dr. Cowan says, "Well go on up and take a shower and go to bed and sleep as long as you need to." So I went on up and was getting a shower. Here come Leo with a Coke heavily laced with brandy, compliments of Dr. Cowan. And so I drank that and had my hot shower and I went back and hit the sack then. And boy I was out, what, about twelve hours.

A: Yeah you were our for quite a while.

A1: I was... I mean I had it. So me and my Chief never did get along after that needless to say. There was little love lost there. (laughter) So I guess I had the...

A: I think you were.... that's when that... it was Dr. Cowan and myself took that piece of shrapnel out of that kid. You were asleep, I remember that.

A1: It may have been. Anyway, uh...

A: What we did was just nick the skin and pop that little piece of shrapnel out.

A1: Now I forgot what I was going to say. Oh, I guess that the two fellahs that we took off the *Oklahoma* that night was the last two that was rescued as far as I know. I remember that I made some notes after I was back aboard ship. I think one of them was a Shipfitter 2nd Classman and the other one was a Carpenters Mate, 2nd Class, that uh, we took off. And that's the last two that I know of that we rescued. Because when I came back, why, they could get no more soundings the rest of the night. So the next morning they figured, well we've got all of them that we're going to get out of there. Because after all, this was 48 hours later, by that time. Let's see... Monday... Yeah 48 hours. And uh, I know that was the end of mine. I didn't go back over there. And that's about all the recollections I have of the immediate proceedings up to date.

Q: Well, that's interesting.... interesting story. What about... about...

A: Considering....Considering it was a non combat vessel with nothing to work with, it was interesting. But uh, like I say, when I stepped out of the dental office on the 01 level, the first thing I'd seen was that plane bank up and those big red balls. And that's when I headed to the Sick Bay which was forward. I didn't stop to look at anything else. There wasn't much to see at that time, smoke and flames was about all you could see really.

A1: You know I was telling you about the...

A: You didn't stop to look anyway. No time for sightseeing.

A1: Yeah, I was telling you about when I was looking out the porthole and I saw the Argon shoot this plane that banked up. I remember I wrote down, that was the plane that when it banked and circled back around, it was the one that hit the Naval Hospital, but...

Q: That was the one that crashed through...?

A1: MMHMMM. I wrote this down so it must have been, cause I had it written down in some notes that the plane I saw, when it banked up and it peeled off, and it was hit why it came back around and crashed into the hospital..

Q: Whatever happened to your notes?

A1: I got them down in my...I've got a book... my wife.... I spent 30 years in the Navy, and at my retirement party my wife presented me with a book that she had, of memoirs of the day I entered the Navy until the day I retired.

Q: You know, I'd like to get a copy of those notes. If you can send me a copy.
A1: I've got them. I've got them right here with me. They're just a few things that I jotted down. I don't know why I done it. I never did figure out where she got them from (laughter). I couldn't figure out where she got half the stuff that's in that book really.

Q: I'd be...

A1: In fact, I'll go down and get the book and bring it back up I wanted to get through here and then you can look at it.

Q: Yeah, I'd like to see that.

A1: In fact I got some... I wrote her a letter. I was with the 5th Marine Division later on at Iwo Jima, and she's even got a.... Do you remember the ... you've heard of the 'V-mail' deals? I was sitting there in a foxhole writing her a V-mail deal (laughter) She's got that thing in there.

A: You know, speaking of that, it's odd because the last time I was with mother over on the west coast, that's been over 20 years ago now, one of the things she showed me - remember that little postcard that they gave us? You wrote to your folks and you checked, 'I am injured.' 'I am well.' and she still had this stupid postcard for that many years. (laughter) I suppose she's still got it. But I remember them passing those out and said everybody fill them out, and they mailed them for us. And she's still got it, 'I am well.' What the hell else was on there?... just for a joke was, 'I am killed.' (laughter)

A1: Yeah, I know my folks later on told me when I came back to the states that I was reported dead and everything else you know, at the home town. They was calling them and everything else. So until they got the mail back through, why they was quite worried about it, since the newspaper called and told them that I was listed as being killed and everything. It turned out I wasn't thank God. In fact I'm still here, evidently (laughter)

A: They were getting some pretty good information to have somebodies name in that mess.

A1: Oh gosh yeah. But that's about all that I could think of for right now.

A: Yeah, our part was really rather insignificant. In fact, the *Rigel*.... you mention the USS *Rigel* and people say, "What kind of disease is that?" (laughter) No, but we didn't do anything. We didn't have anything to do anything with for that matter.

A1: Well, except for them people that we rescued and things like this...

A: Oh fire and rescue. We did fire and rescue which was normal. That poor clown off the *Oglala*, I think he was just wandering down the dock or gangway to watch, dragged him and sent him up to us in the Sick Bay. But I think he was delirious when he was wandering down the dock, wherever that explosion was.

A1: You know, I talked to a fellow off the *Oglala*, back in Sacramento, one of those state ... California State Conventions, and he said, "You know the thing that I remember about that day?" He said, "After we came off the *Oglala*," he wasn't hurt or anything, but he came over to *Rigel* to eat dinner that evening, and he said," Man, that was the best food I had had, and boy did it ever taste good." But we had a commissary department aboard that ship that was outstanding. I think it was one of the best feed ships out there. But uh... that's what a lot of the fellows that come aboard, for some reason you know, they always remember the galley that we had... the food that we had. And uh... we had a Chief Commissary Steward on there that was just an outstanding man. He would go out and get fresh vegetables and fresh fruit and he bought an old Chevrolet pickup out there just to go scouting for food and different things.

Q: It's funny how when you ask people what they remember about their ship, you know the... well one thing you get most often was 'Oh she was a good feeder' or 'food was lousy'. People, can't remember a bomb that blew up you know, ten feet from them but they can sure remember that food.

A1: That's the number one...

A: To most sailors that's the way a ship is remembered; how she fed them. I'm like you, everywhere over the years that I spent in the Navy, the 20 some years, someone mention a ship and they say 'Oh she's a bum feeder' or 'a good feeder' and from there on

out there you go. And no matter what kind of ship it is from submarine to battleship, they're all alike.

A1: I'll tell you the ship that was a good feeder, the morale was usually up. If it was a bum feeder, morale was down. It was a very good indicator of how the food was aboard ship was to how the morale was. It was a very significant part in the morale aspect of it.

Q: O.K. well, thank you very much.

A and A1 (jointly return thanks)

William Rush #38
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Rush, what was your normal duty aboard the *Phoenix*?

A: I was a radioman and I was striking to be a radioman. At that time I knew what the Morse Code was or who invented it from history in high school, but I didn't know that I was going to be using this stuff. I had no idea what the code was or what it was for. I did not know how to type, but they made a radioman out of me. Set me down, put a pair of earphones on me, said, "A E is a dit, a T is a dot. Now you pick them out." Well golly, it was I don't know how long before I could pick out the E's and T's. But after 19 months they made me a Radioman 3rd Class because I could pass 35 words a minute... typing and sending and receiving.

Q: Well that's quite an accomplishment. I understand not everyone made it through radio school.

A: That's right. I was one of them. Straight from boot camp.

Q: And when did you join the *Phoenix*?

A: The Phoenix? I got on the *Helena* [*at*] Norfolk to go around through the Canal to get on the *Phoenix* [*in*] dry dock [*at*] Vallejo. And in the Fall, and I don't remember what month, August, September, or October of '40, 1940, and she was settin' in dry dock and the first time I went aboard with the rest of the boot camp buddies, it was in my camp, S's, P's, and R's assigned to the USS *Phoenix*. And the Radio Officer come down and looked us over and he picked out who he wanted. He said, "Anybody know how to type?" Well I did take a typing course in high school just to see what a typewriter was all about, but not for any credit or anything. I didn't know how to type, but I thought I did. So I held up my hand and he said, "You're a radio striker." That how I got to be in the radio game. And of course you know, you've heard this many times I'm sure, all of us were known as "radio girls" because they would pass by and see us sitting down in a nice room with a chair, and typing you know, and nothing dirty or anything you know. They'd say "There are the radio girls." And the signalmen were skivvy wavers! Have you heard that before?

Q: No, first time.

A: Oh my goodness. I've got a "skivvy waver" here that's with me; a very dear friend of mine Jack Focal from Sherrill, New York.

Q: I've talked with him.

A Oh you have?

Q: I think.

A: Jack Focal from Sherrill, New York. He's the Chaplain of our Chapter in central New York, and we're that host Chapter for this convention today, and I'm the prerestoration chairman for this convention, and all the work that you've seen and the way of typing of programs or any brochures, name tags, or on the cube, or any kind of typing are because of my wife's taking her time after she comes home from work. We started in February of this year and we did not get behind. We kept up to date, and if Manney(??) hadn't have gone in the hospital to carry out his assigned duty, there would have been nothing to go wrong here. We did run into a few hitches because of his not being here.

Q: Well, it's a fine job that you've all done here. When you were on the *Phoenix* what was your battle station?

A: I was assigned to the antenna repair party. That was my general quarters assignment, to man the sound powered phones because I was a radio striker, passing the word from the Skipper on the bridge, the Senior Officer, the Skipper was not aboard, to the Executive Officer, but the Senior Executive Officer in the control room below decks, in case they were knocked out we could run the ship from down there. I was half way between them. I was on the 3rd deck below, laying flat on my stomach, passing these messages back and forth.

Q: What kind of messages were going back and forth?

A: "A fighter planes coming 2:00! Ten after two..." you know, whatever. That's the way they described them, "Coming in at 2:00, two planes... two torpedo planes!!" or whatever kind of planes. And, "They just dropped this bomb!" or "There are subs over here!" whatever... I didn't believe it! I didn't believe it. I wasn't scared. I was waiting to get ours. I was disappointed, really, that we didn't get one. But anyhow, that Saturday we had a white glove inspection. They couldn't find any dust anywhere on that ship. But while I was laying down there at my station, all of us were laying flat on our stomachs, they wouldn't let us stand up, they fired those guns on topside so fast and furious that a few rivets did pop out of the bulkheads and they was dust everywhere in there. They was dust everywhere. Where it came from I have no idea. About a two hours and there was a lull in the activity, I asked the Chief in charge of our antenna repair party if I could go and see for myself. He said, "Five minutes. I'll take the phones." I went up to the main deck to raise the hatch to come up. Our boatswain mate put his foot down on that hatch and said, "Close the goddamn hatch if you don't want your head blowed off. Get below!" I don't know which boatswain's mate that was. I have no idea.

Q: So, did you go back below then?

A: I went back, took over my position manning the sound powered phones. Then finally we were able to get past the flames of the Arizona and that's when they made the picture... somebody made a picture of the *Phoenix* passing the *Arizona* with the flames and smoke in the background and the *Phoenix* is the mythical bird that

can rise from the ashes, right?

Q: Right.

A: And that is a real good picture as if the *Phoenix* right there from the... and it is named after the capital city of Arizona.

Q: What was the hull number on the *Phoenix*?

A: The CL-46. That's it. And we went out to get the enemy, three major ships, the *St. Louis*, the *Detroit*, and the *Phoenix*, the three largest ships and I don't care what the *St. Louis* crew have said that they were the only ones to get out of there. They were not, cause when I was finally relieved to go to my duty station in the radio shack, approximately 12:30, I was going up to go up to the radio shack, the boatswain's mate said, "Hit the deck! Torpedoes! Starboard side!" The wakes were coming right at us. I laid down flat on my stomach waiting for the explosion. It didn't happen and I looked over there and I saw the two torpedoes one right after the other went underneath us, O.K.?
Now, while I was relaying all these messages, I do know they stripped ship right in the harbor because we were anchored. Normally, we are nested with the *Helena* and the *Honolulu* right in the middle. Had we been that way that day, they would have gone for us and we couldn't have fought back. We were accredited with shooting down nine planes. We were accredited with saving the *Whitney* and all those nest of destroyers, the *Phoenix*. She was able to get under way and maneuver because they did not come after us. They went after the 'big boys'. But the *Phoenix* was a big ship. I mean let's face it, 1,200 people lived aboard that ship. Now where was I... uh...

Q: Last time you were...

A: We tried. We tried to get out both sides of Ford Island, but we eventually got past the battleships burning and the oil without catching ourselves on fire. And when we got to the *Nevada* beached herself so she wouldn't bottleneck us coming out. They tried to do that. I looked ahead and as I was on my way up to the radio shack I saw the *St. Louis* full speed ahead of us and they was submarines right outside there that also fired the torpedoes at us. Then our ship was starting to throw depth charges over. I made it up to the radio room and then it began to get dark before I was relieved from my uh.... We had to set up emergency frequencies, right? We needed more operators. I was manning the weather frequency you know? Well, when we got ready to eat, I stayed up there quite a while and it was dark. They stripped ship though, I meant to tell you about this. They stripped the ship. They cut down the awnings. They through them overboard. They through over the paint pots. They dropped the Officer's mahogany gangplank right in the harbor... gangway.

Q: Well, that means they were serious.

A: That was serious. The Skipper had to come back on a motor launch and come up a Jacob's ladder to get aboard. Captain Fischer I believe was his name. And uh, the Executive Officer,

there was quite a few of the Senior Officers ashore. Now when they sounded that GQ that morning, I was on the fantail with a radioman by the name of Gashay(??) a Cajun from Louisiana which I've tried to find in my cad(??). I don't know what's happened to him.

Q: Do you know how to spell his name?

A: G-A-U-T-H-I-E-R. I don't know what his first name is even. He's the one that started me smoking. I want to get back at him. Uh, he was a good buddy. We just finished eating our apple from breakfast and was standing there looking at the clear water on the fantail of the *Phoenix*. We threw our core into the water... BONG BONG BONG BONG (GQ) I said, "Oh my goodness, not on Sunday! We just came in from two weeks! Why on Sunday!" I was dressed to go to church service over on one of the battleships, the Protestant service. He was going to the Catholic you know. And we were waiting for the motor launch. And I just poked along to my battle station. But boy, by the time I got down there to man those phones, it was the real thing. It really was.

And as I say, the submarine that they did capture with the map, they got in there at five that morning and went around to all of our positions and the ink wasn't dry on it, you know. He was at up periscope at our tail end at 5:03 or something like that. He'd been to our.... he knew where we were. Now as I say, we passed the *Nevada*, beached. One of the cruisers went that way, we went this way, and they went that way. That's when the rumors started. Darken ship. They wouldn't let anybody light up a cigarette. We hadn't eaten all day. They lined us up. Told us to get in line, come down to the mess hall, get a.... You want me to tell you what it was?

Q: What's that?

A: The sandwich we called it?

Q: Sure.

A: Horse-cock and onion (baloney and onion sandwich)(laughter)... and a cup of coffee. That was soooo good. So good. That was really good. But anyhow, while we was standing in the line, where this scuttlebutt started and how it started beats the hell out of me, but we got word that they were landing on Bellows Field, they were landing at Barbers Point, and I thought, my God, we're right here; we're by ourselves... all by ourselves; a sitting duck, you know? But for somehow we couldn't find anything out there, except those submarines that we tried to depth charge, and we did sink one of the subs.

Now we were out for three days. We'd just come in. We were low on provisions and food. We had to come back in that next Wednesday after we couldn't find anybody, to provision up. And as soon as... I went on the signal deck to look over at Aiea. I saw the motor launches scouring and dragging the Harbor, dead bodies, whatever you know. And I saw wooden box after wooden box stacked up at Aiea with dead bodies or parts of bodies in them, from the signal bridge in a telescope. That was sickening, the smell of the burning the oil, the burnt and the flesh, the dead

flesh, was really pungent, really.... really. I remember that right now, how it smelled.

We got under way as soon as we were provisioned. They ordered us back to San Francisco. We were very fast cruisers, one of the fastest, 35 knots; full speed to San Francisco because they fired one of the 5-inch turret guns so fast and furious that when it cooled (it got red hot), cooled off it cracked.

Well before.... I'm getting ahead of myself. We were ordered back to escort another hospital ship out there loaded down with medical supplies. We made it there in four days and we came back, and we were there. They would not let us talk to anybody that came aboard the *Phoenix*, while the dock workers came on and replaced that gun barrel. We were not allowed to speak to any of the dock hands. They did not want us to tell what had happened over there.

I wrote my mother a letter because they had me reported as killed in the battle, because Commander Samuel Johnson who was the doctor on the *Arizona* was killed. He was from my hometown and the fellow that joined from high school with me named Smith and went through basic training with me also was on the *Phoenix*, and there was a guy named Clifford Smith on the *Arizona* who was killed. There was a P.R. Rush on the *Arizona* who is still on the Arizona and those names are out there. And because they associated those names with the Commander Samuel Johnson and the similarity in names, they had all three of us from that county as casualties. My mother wouldn't believe it, two weeks when she got my letter, there was everything cut out except, "I still have my appetite. Love, Son" She knew then I was alive. But for two weeks it was reported on account of the paper that we three were casualties, only Samuel Johnson, and he's still on the *Arizona*. Well, then when we brought the hospital ship over here that Christmas Day, we were there two days. They let us, half of us went over to Waikiki to have Christmas dinner.

Then two days later we had orders back to San Francisco. We made it full speed. Well, the next morning after we docked and provisioned up and everything, nobody went ashore, when we woke up we were going under the Golden Gate Bridge with this [*SS*] *Queen Mary* and a bunch of the Matson Liners and all small craft. We were to escort *Queen Mary*. The *Queen Mary* had a full Division on her going, we did not know where, but we figured it our after a while, the people... the enlisted personnel charting the course finally figured out we were headed toward Australia, Melbourne. But we had to turn the loose, I believe it was the [*President*] *Coolidge*, and she was to land at one of the Islands, and they hit a mine and it turned over and the soldiers climbed off and waded ashore.

But we went into Melbourne and they was so glad to see us down there. they came down out of the hills and everything here's the *Queen Mary*! It's too big. They had to send out ferries to bring in the soldiers the next day, because she was so big. The *Queen Mary*... MacArthurs Division or whatever.

But anyhow, we made hay there with the girls naturally before the soldiers got there. But we were there and then they dispatched us over to Perth, Fremantle, and then we were to take these thirteen coal stoking ships, escort them to Ceylon which is Sri Lanka now, loaded with Australians going to help out in the Middle East War. But before we got there, we got a message

to go to relieve the *Houston* which was in trouble coming out of Manila. Well, before we could get anywhere near the Houston, they told us she was lost; to head for Broom, Australia. Well before we got there, we got a message they bombed Broom and were after us. They were all kind of small craft there and your old "S" submarines coming out of the Philippines right down there, and we did not know what kind of ship was what, or who they belonged to. And the *Phoenix* put our two planes up, and they went over and they dropped some bombs. And I don't know whether we sunk any of our old "*S*" U-Boats or not, but we tried because we didn't know who they were. MacArthur's crew, you know escaping Corregidor where ever they was coming from.
Well, then they ordered us back to Fremantle. But by the time we got down there, that's where we met all this conglomeration of ships trying to converge on Fremantle too. We provisioned up and then they ordered us out with the first aircraft carrier, *Langley* loaded with P-38's, going to the Middle East War. We took her and a tanker loaded with oil, the *Pecos*, was headed again for Sri Lanka, Ceylon at that time, India, Bombay I think. But for some reason they had us to go to the evacuation of Java, to aid in that, the *Phoenix*. The *Pecos*... the *Langley* was sunk, the *Pecos* picked up some of the survivors off of the *Langley*. It was torpedoed and sunk. They dispatched to that position in the Indian Ocean to try to find any survivors from both the ships. Well, all we could find was an oil slick; no survivors off of the *Pecos* or the *Langley*. Our first aircraft carrier. It was a converted one you know. Everybody came down to the docks there to see an aircraft carrier. Of course you couldn't take off or land on it. It was just loaded with planes. Now, do you want me to go on from there?

Q: Yeah, it's interesting.

A: Well, we did what we could do. They called us "the galloping ghost of the Great Barrier Reef"... the *Phoenix*(laughter) because we operated with the Dutch Admiral who was in charge at that time down in that part of the world, which operated with the Australian cruisers and Dutch cruisers, and up and down Sidney. And we went into Sidney to get the mail for the Fleet. The entire Fleet was around Guadalcanal at that time. They dispatched us up with a load of mail to deliver the mail to the ships. When we were approaching, or getting in sight of the *Saratoga* to give them the mail, they got two torpedo hits, and the smoke went up, but they were not sunk, thank goodness. So I was in the battle of Guadalcanal on the *Phoenix*.

In April of '43, we pulled into Fremantle and uh... I mean not Fremantle, I'm sorry, it was uh... we pulled into Brisbane(??). I was so efficient a radio operator, they thought I had belonged over on General MacArthurs staff. He was sitting up there in a hotel in Brisbane, his headquarters. And I begged and pleaded with the radio officer... I was homesick. I had never been away from home for that long a time that I said to wait for new construction to come through and let me go back to the States so I could go home. He said, "O.K. Rush, if you don't want to, O.K." I'll be darn. We went right from there up to Townsville. I got my orders for new construction (laughter). He said," You're going FFT [*For further transfer*]." Do you know what that means?

Q: No.

A: You're hitch hiking. You're on your own. Report to the receiving stations you know. I caught the train. I stayed with the Army in tents that night after they put me ashore off of the *Phoenix*. I slept with the Army in a tent. I was put on a train in a white uniform with my bag and baggage; everything I owned, and I rode that blame train down to Brisbane, and I, I mean I saw the kangaroos. That was wilderness. And they had no screens on those trains and the cinders... my white uniform looked like it was black by the time I got down to Brisbane. I only stayed there a couple of days until they put me on the [*USS*]*Thomas Jefferson* for New Caledonia, for further transfer.

I got on the blame [*USAT*] Sea Witch, an army transport filled with diseased and wounded soldiers to come back to San Francisco. And it was so crowded, and so messed up, you couldn't take a shower or anything; I got the scabies. When I got to San Francisco, they put me in quarantine for 3 days in sulphur and then they turned me loose for a 15 day leave to go over to Alabama on the train.

I had to stand up, the trains were so crowded. And I'll be blamed, when I got back to Tacoma, 15 days later, I was assigned to the [*USS*] *Mission Bay* to commission it; a plank owner. They had already... I was assigned to the [*USS*] *Liscome Bay*. They had already sent it out. The crew got there; a bigger crew, and they assigned it, and assigned us to the *Mission Bay*. I'm sorry, they assigned us to the [*USS*] Baffins and we took it up to Vancouver and gave it to the British, and then came back, and I went on the *Mission Bay*. But before I did that, as soon as I come back off that first fifteen day leave, I turned right around and they said go back for another fifteen days. I turned right around and did the same thing again. I was stupid, because standing in front of the train from Tacoma to Birmingham is no fun. I had no where to sleep, nowhere to sit, and I asked everywhere, bathrooms, where ever I could.

O.K., then, but the *Liscome Bay* went out on trial run; that was the first one I was assigned to and on the trial run it caught fire and 80% of the crew was burnt up on that *Liscome Bay*, my first assignment. The good Lord has been with me ever since. And uh, on the *Mission Bay* now we left there and they brought us around to the Atlantic Ocean. We had a squadron of pilots aboard. You know, those baby flat tops weren't very long to land on and take off on either. And they assigned us to ASWDVELANT which was Antisubmarine Development Detachment Atlantic, stationed at Quonset Port, Rhode Island, and I was on flight pay because they wanted me to fly. I couldn't. I was too fast to stay at the base radio. I was in charge of that. Those pilots were not as fast as I could... They couldn't keep up with me and I couldn't slow down for them at that time. So they said, "Get rush off of that circuit, I don't know what he's saying! Slow down!" I couldn't slow down. I don't know because I was just too fast for them. But anyhow, then they made me go up and copy the damn stuff and put me on flight pay. But anyhow, one time, we pulled into the Azores and right alongside us came a German U-Boat to provision up also. They were neutral, right? Nothing could happen to us as long as we were there(laughter). That was

the oddest damn thing, but...

Q: How far away were they from your ship?

A: They were docked right in the harbor with us, provisioning the same as we were. Then we had been out there looking for them at sea and they were looking for us, to sink us. As I say, that was our job. Well a year on that ship if you wasn't on duty, you had nowhere whatsoever to go because they wouldn't let you in your quarters unless you were going to bed and they had no kind of recreational rooms or anything. They wouldn't let you on the flight deck. They wouldn't let you in the radio shack because you was off duty. They wouldn't let you in the flight deck because they was flying them on and off and we just walked around like a chicken with a head cut off.

After a year of that I said, "I'm going to put in for shore duty." I did and they sent me to Quonset Point and I got homesick for my buddies at sea and I said, "I can't take this either. I want to go back to the cruiser. They sent me on the USS *Missouri*. Now there's a story behind this that you may not have heard, or nobody else for that comparing. Captain R.L. Hillenkoetter our first CIA director was the senior surviving officer off the West Virginia on December the 7th, '41. He was a Lt. Comm. I think at that time. He was the Skipper of USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay with the other two battleships, *Iowa* and *New Jersey*. Capt. Hillenkoetter on the *Missouri* brought the old *West Virginia* along with him for the signing of the surrender because they were sunk there in Pearl Harbor and he wanted to show them that they did not sink his old battleship, got it?

Q: Right.

A: Now, I went aboard in Guantanamo Bay after the signing of the surrender and for three days I left Norfolk on a subchaser. I had never ridden on anything smaller that a cruiser. For three days I could not get out of my bunk. I was so sea sick, I couldn't stand the smell of food and I was right next to the galley. And when I reported aboard on Valentines day of 1946, they had to gather enough crew to make a goodwill cruise to the Middle East to take the Turkish Ambassadors body back on the *Missouri*; the one that died here during the War, and they wanted him returned to Istanbul. While we did that, we gathered a bunch of ships and borrowed radiomen from all directions to make this cruise. I was the Senior Radioman aboard and I had to put out the press and everything. I was also an honorary pallbearer for this... whatever his name was. I couldn't pronounce it then; I can't now. A Turkish gun. Well, one of the fellows that later worked with me at (??), I was his supervisor at Cornell, from Istanbul. He said, "Bill, I remember your coming in at Istanbul. I was nine years old. You made such big waves and did such damage to the small craft there. I'll never forget that day. You were aboard?" I said, "I sure was." Well when I left that Library, he made a model of the *Missouri* and in semaphore the flags on it, he put W.P.Rush, and I'll treasure that always. I made his picture and put it right by it and put it on a special shelf. I've got a military wall at my home in Ithaca but I don't know what I will do with all the stuff I have accumulated. I

have a ten room house there in Ithaca the children call their home. They don't want me to sell it. They've moved on. My third daughter is an associate professor of law at DuPaul University at this time and she's only been there two years. She worked (unclear??) for two years number on Wall Street. She graduated Cum Lade and a Cornell graduate I believe. She doesn't know what it is to want for anything right now, you know what I mean. So I like to brag on my children as everybody does I guess. We did a good job getting them all advanced degrees, except the youngest one. She says, "College is not for me. I want to get on the telephone as a line person. Till this day she has her own bucket truck with Bell Telephone Company in Tacoma Park, Maryland, Prince George County, and she is a very good Cable splicer I understand. She's making quite a bit of money.

Q: Sure. It's a good paying job.

A: So ah, that.....
(tape ends)

Ralph Osterhoudt #39
December 8th, 1984

Q: Mr. Osterhoudt when did you first join the Army?

A: Sept. 24th, 1940.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

A: I enlisted.

Q: Where did you do your basic training?

A: Really, I had no basic training. I enlisted for the Signal Corps. I had to be a high school graduate to get in there and what little basic training I had, it was done right there on Hickam Field.

Q: When did you arrive in Hawaii?

A: January 30th, 1941.

Q: What was the first unit you were assigned to?

A: 328th Signal Aviation Company.

Q: What did you do there?

A: I was a teletype operator.

Q: What did that job involve?

A: I operated a teletype machine in the uh... this company that was attached to the 7th Air [*Corps Squadron*].

Q: So you handled messages that were coming in and going out?

A: Coming in and going out between all the fields on the Island.

Q: Did you have that job on December 7th, 1941?

A: No, I didn't. I had it but I was a man that never missed a breakfast, and I was up having breakfast that morning and a fellow came in and wanted me to relieve him while he went down to eat. He was on guard duty at a little radio station in our outfit, and I said, "Sure." Dressed in two tone sandal shoes and a T-shirt, it was just a temporary job but [*it*] was in the center of Hickam Field.

Q: At what point did you notice that there was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: Well, when I got there on duty that morning, it was a Sgt. Edgar Johnson. He lives in Vermont right now. And he was the Sgt. in charge of the power station. And he says, "We're going

to have another, uh... the Japanese are going to attack again this morning." Because about every weekend there was rumor for two or three months that's been going on like that. You get the rumor that the Japanese are going to hit. And we're standing outside the power station, radio power station and we're watching and we see these planes come down over... well it would be from the Wheeler Field area, down in the valley there over Pearl Harbor. See them peel off over there, come down drop their bomb.

Q: What did you think when you first saw that... those planes?

A: Another Navy alert... or Army, Navy, or somebody was just I figured another routine, and we made comments of it. And of course, by the time the second one had dropped his bomb, the first one was right over top of our heads. Then it was just a matter of moving. And of course, then I was a very short distance from our headquarters where the teletype was. I ran over there and of course I sent a message to HD, which is Hawaiian Department, over at Fort Shafter. And of course then I got a little comment back on there... I can't remember now what it was, but they made some comments about the Japanese and everything... that it was impossible you know...so I was just fooling around. And I put S.O.S., S.O.S., and I went back down to the power station.

Q: And what did you do down there?

A: I stayed there until I was relieved, probably in about well, had to probably about an hour because I had a command car with me that I rode up there to on, and I would almost think maybe I might have been... I don't know I could have been, probably took the first one that was injured on Hickam Field to the hospital. Because a fellow came across from the hangar line out to where I was and he had his left arm shot off. It was just hanging by tendons or something. It was bleeding real bad. And we wanted to stop the bleeding and he said no get me to the hospital. So I stuck him into that and took him up to the hospital, dropped him off and came back.

Q: How close were the bombs falling to your post?

A: Oh, probably within, I'll guess... 100 feet. It was close.

Q: Were there a lot of strafers around?

A: I... the car that I had that morning, I was hit three times that morning just coming back down the boulevard from the hospital. That's the only strafing that I got myself. Uh, originally this field where the signal power station was, was originally the location of all the fuel for Hickam, and apparently they must have had the maps I guess that they found, that they didn't realize that the storage had been moved from there down towards the main gate. So, I think that's the reason that they bombed that field because that was where they thought all the fuel was stored, and that's where the bombs were hitting that morning when I...

Q: So, it sounds like you had kind of a grand stand seat on it.

A: Oh yeah, yeah, I was there close enough... real close yeah.

Q: Could you see any of the planes that were parked on the ground?

A: Out on the field itself?

Q: Yeah.

A: No. No, I was far enough away where I couldn't see the planes on the field itself.

Q: Could you see any of the hangars?

A: Yeah, I could see the hangars, yeah.

Q: What happened to the hangars that you could see?

A: Well, they were, my gosh they were... you could almost say they were just being... they were bombing that...uh, dropping bombs there and just setting on fire and that's about all I could see really.

Q: Were you alone at the post or were there other people there?

A: No, this Sgt. Johnson was with me.

Q: Did the two of you decide to stay there or...?

A: Yeah... yeah. Well, that was his station for the power. He was a radioman and it was guarded by one man; we took turns doing that and of course I just relieved him while he went, but the Sgt. stayed right there. Uh, apparently they didn't even get a chance to eat breakfast that morning.

Q: And how long did you stay there?

A: Well, I'd say maybe a matter of a half to three quarters of an hour because by the time I had been there a little while, and had been up to the hospital and back, uh, maybe 15 minutes after that I went back to my station as teletype operator.

Q: What did you do there?

A: Just took care of messages as they came in on the teletype.

Q: What sort of messages were coming in?

A: (sigh)... It's almost impossible to remember what some of those were. It was just a matter of... uh, like Wheeler Field, and Schofield, and Bellows Field, we were getting messages from them and it was just a case that they were being hit at such and such a time; Pearl Harbor too, that was under our jurisdiction there.

Q: So how long did you stay at your post there, at your machine?

A: Uh, let's see... I would say maybe until about 11:00[*AM*] and then we got the orders that we were going to pull out, and it wasn't too much longer, shortly after noon, we were heading back up in the hills.

Q: Did they establish a new communication center in the hills?

A: Yeah... yeah.

Q: Do you remember about where that was, or...?

A: It was up... I keep thinking it was the Moanalua Crater. Now it was up near Ft. Shafter which is headquarters of the Hawaiian Department.

Q: Would that have been Aliamanu Crater?

A: Could have been the Aliamanu Crater... yeah. Because originally it was an ammunition storage crater up in there. It had tunnels through there where they used to store stuff and we sat around in one of those tunnels. [*Radio and telephone units were also setup within the creator.*]

Q: What was the general atmosphere? What kind of talk was going around up there?

A: That day, well it really wasn't until that night probably, uh, it was just a matter of getting things set up. They were running lines so we would know what was going on. During the evening, and this probably started in around midnight, they had been getting messages coming in from... well, you get them from all over. Messages were coming in: Unknown object sighted so many yards off shore. And so they got down where they were landing at Fort [*Kamehameha*], flying at Hickam, and that went from there to: Paratroopers are landing in such and such a sugar cane field. And then we would have to send out messages to there to relay that message, so they could "bird" us. Well they were supposed to be "birding" the fields; now that's what I understood they were supposed to be doing. Whether they did or not, I don't know.

Q: Did that sort of message traffic go on all night?

A: All night long, yeah... all night, yeah.

Q: How long did you remain there in the Crater?

A: Uh, well let's see, of course I didn't get any sleep that night and the next day, well it was the wee hours of the next night before I got any sleep. But I stayed up in that Crater until I think it was April, when I moved back over there. We were over there quite a while.

Q: What one incident or impression remains in your memory stronger than any other?

A: Oh... things happened so fast there at Hickam that I can't say anything special right there. Probably that first night was the worst night; you had time to stop and think a little bit and begin to realize what was going on.

Q: What were you thinking?

A: Well... you pray a little bit. By golly, you think back home and wonder whether your mother ever heard about it and whether you were ever going to make it back or not. It got to the point where they said they were landing and beginning to land on Hickam and Fort [*Kamehameha*], and you know darn well they're getting pretty close if they're doing that. I really didn't think I was going to make it through that night. No... I really didn't... So, but then of course we used to send letters out, or send radio grams out that we were alright. I sent one; my mother never got it until Dec. 24th. So she didn't know until the 24th that I was still alive... yeah... Quite an experience.

Q: Yeah, must have been.

A: But it just didn't seem possible that a little country like Japan could ever do something like that, you know?

Q: Yeah. Guess people just underestimated...

A: Yeah... right. Yeah, I had a fellow [*George Truesdell*] in my outfit, I just went to his funeral the other day down in Norwich, New York; and I had seen him twice since then. So Norwich is only 60 or 70 miles, in there. But he had just moved up there. I didn't realize he had moved up there just recently, because he was down in Walton which is quite a ways a way. But we talked to the missus and come to find out, you know she had never let us know but he had had a heart attack, and several of them. He had to retire ten years ago, and he just passed away. So I've met quite a few of them through the Pearl Harbor Conventions. I communicate with quite a few of them now I still write letters back and forth.

Q: Well, thank you.

A: Yeah, real good!

Q: I appreciate your coming up here and taking the time to contribute to our program.

A: Well, yeah... I hope(tape ends)

Felix Balodis #40
December 8, 1984

Q: Mr. Balodis, when did you first join the Navy?

A: I joined in 1940, July.

Q: What made you choose the Navy over, say, the Army?

A: I always loved the Navy. Somehow it seemed to be more elite than the Army.

Q: Where did you go to basic training?

A: I went to basic training in Newport, Rhode Island. While [President]Roosevelt had a ... interviewed, and we used to pick up the blimps on a patrol before the War. It was quite a thrilling experience at that boot camp at that time. We also, recommissioned the old Constellation.

Q: Oh really?

A: I slept on board that for two nights after graduation, just before we went on active duty from Newport, after leaving the Constellation, we had a train pull in and that shipped us out to the West Coast, to San Pedro. That's where all the Fleet was tied up at that time. We took the Fleet out to Pearl Harbor at that time, in 1940.

Q: What ship were you on?

A: I was put on the Helena at that time. The Helena and those bow ships that everybody just looked beautiful to go out to Hawaii at that time. All the water just lit up like a Christmas tree where they were going. So when we pulled around Hawaii there just going into Hawaii, before we get into the Harbor just around Diamond Head, it was early in the morning and you could see the hillside all lit up. It looked like a Christmas tree with all the street lights lit and the waves off the Waikiki, to me reminded of maidens running down the beach with silk scarves just following them, you know? It was a very beautiful sight. And then we operated out of Hawaii constantly; two weeks in, one week in, two weeks out. Finally, we went back to the States again. We went back to Pedro, or back to Hawaii again, until 1942...'41 when the War started. So then finally when we came back again we operated off of Hawaii; always Hawaiian waters. Anchored off in Lahaina, Lahaina Roads. It was a beautiful, beautiful place. So uh...

Q: Did the Helena usually operate by herself, or in company with...

A: She seemed to be all be herself most of the time.

Q: What was your job on the Helena?

A: Well, at first I went aboard I was in 2nd Division, a (??) sailor. And then the rates came up and opening up for strikers. I went striking for a carpenter. First I wanted to go A Division; I desired engines. So I wanted to be a diesel engineer; go down in the engine room. And my division officer was Lt. Com. Bowls. He was strictly Navy. Didn't even want anybody to whistle. Only ones he wants to whistle aboard were the boatswain mates and fools. So every time I started to do a little whistling, he stopped me. And from then on I couldn't whistle (laughter). So uh, so after from 2nd Division, I went to R Division and became a carpenters mate. He told me, he says, "Look, you cannot, Felix, you're not a below deck sailor. You're a topside sailor." So alright, I stayed topside. But still I told him, I said, "Mr. Bowls, you convinced me not to be down below decks. I should stay topside, but I still want to be off the deck. I want to go striking for something." So I went for a Carpenter's Mate. But I wanted to go in the V Division because they used to do a little flying down at Floyd Bennett Field. And I figured well I'm going to go in aviation and would like that. I looked around, but I was afraid; too many court martials. Anything anyone did wrong... court martial. Every evening they used to fire a gun for court martials for some reason or another. So one evening we heard a gun fired. Well first we heard, "pup-pup" a little machine gun go a couple of shots. Aviation mate was revving the SOC, whatever it was, and by mistake he just pressed the trigger and fired a machine gun by revving. Got a court martial. I said "Heck, I don't want that!" If I put a (??) go in V Division, put a (??) and don't secure something properly, it's going to me my skin. So I said, "The hell with it. I gotta go to carpenters shop." If I make a mistake, they always give you another piece of wood. So that kept on going. I just get transferred into R Division, the carpenters shop, and I was... still we had lookouts going. By that time we in Lahaina Roads already in a carpenters shop and uh...

Q: About what month was that?

A: I just can't.... really ...November, just before the Attack.

Q: mmhmm.

A: So uh, this time I'm in a carpenters shop transferring from 2nd Division aft, and but I was still assigned my battle station was still number two turret forward, Handling Room. So this evening, I'm out by the carpenters shop outside, just after evening meal was dusk just before the... I can't remember exactly, but I just happened to just go by the railing, and just looking down nonchalantly in the water, and I see this here black stick floating about I would say no more than 10 or 15 feet away from the ship, very close. Well, as I'm looking down, I follow it, I walk, I follow it, then finally I could see it looked like a periscope. I said, "Periscope! How could a submarine be so close because it has a broad belly." and our hull's quite a ways down too. So I follow, follow it. Finally I see and notice it's a periscope at a little moment like. Then I started getting a

little excited and I started to say, "Hey, there's this submarine alongside us fellows! There's a submarine alongside!" I'm trying to go forward up to the Bridge to make a report and they laughed me down. They said, "Ah, you're look-out happy." Well then I said, " Well, what am I going to do? If I gotta go up to the bridge and make a fool out of myself I might as well just drop it right there." But I still followed it. And the submarine passed the Quarter Deck and I kept on going forward. And that was it, I just dropped it as just a submarine.

Q: Did this happen off Lahaina?

A: Right in Lahaina Roads. We were at the anchor. So I just let it go. So that night, before we put out anchor. We were supposed to night battle target practice. So I just, new compartment and everything, I fell asleep. You know, at night I fell asleep. I don't know what time it happened, when I went back to General Quarters. So like uh, usually a ship has noise, blowers blowing or something, and all of a sudden the noise ceased and I woke up due to the silence. The silence woke me up.

Q: Where was the ship at this time.

A: It was out at sea. We were already under way. So uh, I look around and I said, "Gee, everybodys gone! What happened?" I notice everybody is in general quarters. My ship is quiet. So by the time I got down to my battle station was way up fore. I guess I would say I'm down here almost just forward of the hangar deck, so I had a lot of compartments to go through. And when I got down to my general quarters station nobody said anything. Nobody had even missed me. Mine was way down below in the ammunition handling room. Well down there I just snuck in, you know, like a little mouse. I didn't want to be noticed. I thought, hey, someone's going to court martial me for missing my battle station. So then I hear them saying, "Break out service ammunition." The gunner said, "Well, should we load?" I said, "No, don't load just hold. Hold back." And sort of a communication between the main central... I just passed it away. Didn't even say that I saw the sub anymore; just dropped it. So then, after that, we secured. The word was passed that there was an enemy sub in the vicinity. And that's when I started to think it was an enemy sub. Still, what was I going to say. It was just a strike or nothing; I kept my mouth shut from then on. Then when we pulled in the Harbor, they put us alongside a 1010 dock. Well the (??) was supposed to take that place I understand, so we stayed there. I don't know what was the reason. So the night before I remember a movie we had. It was "Hold Back Till Dawn" or something about war pictures. Someone had to go to war and they didn't want to go and they're beating the drums and say, "Well I'm patriotic now and they're attacking us, so I'm going to war." And that was the movie night before. So that night I slept in a carpenters shop. I didn't go down to my compartment anymore. I didn't like it because it was too quiet and it was too far away from everything. I wanted to be near the action and so I stayed in the carpenters shop and I slept on a bench. So I wake up this morning and instead of going for morning breakfast, I figure well I'm going to sleep in this morning. So I slept in. I didn't go

down to mess hall. I stayed on topside so I just, oh about a few minutes before 8:00, I got out at (the carpenter's shop was main deck), I just went out on the main deck and facing Ford Island I looked. And again I'm looking over the railing, just looking towards Ford Island, nice sunny day. And I just glance up and see one of the hangars going up in flames and gosh almighty, what are they doing? They making movies? I see a funny little plane flying. What are they making? Movies? They're burning this old hangar down. Hmmm. Hesitating. Then all of a sudden the little plane made a turn, veered to the left and hit another hangar! Another hangar goes BOOF up into the air, in flames. I said, "God Almighty! Fire Rescue party." So I'm going back and forth just like a bird just weaving. I didn't know what to do... run in and holler away, "Fire Rescue Party" or what! And then I see another shiny plane with a little red ball on it is going, flying right low. So then another bomb hit. It hit the PBY's on the pad, and when it hit the PBY's, hit on the pad, all that junk came up towards the ship. I said, "This is it." and I just ran towards the shop. As I enter the shop, just about in the shop, they hollered, "General Quarters! All hands man battle stations! Japs attacking Ford Island!" I said, "That's it." so I ran out. All I had was my shoes, skivvys. Well, I grabbed my shoes; I don't know what happened, but I wound up right about library area, midships.

Q: Is this on main deck still?

A: No and then from main deck at my battle station, I had to go one deck below, go forward and through warrant "officers country" into fore. My battle station at that time was transferred, changed, from magazine to anchor windlass way up forward; just forward anchor windlass - warrant officers country.

Q: Which deck was that on?

A: That was the second deck.

Q: Second deck.

A: Deck below main. So I'm going to the battle station. As I left my carpenters shop I just about hit midships by library. Now just there was a ladder going down from main deck to the library area. And then going through a passage way, doorway. Another ladder would lead you down to mess deck, and right there was a trunk coming up from main engine room. Right on the deck was also engineering office. Well, I didn't even get through the deck. I just came up to this passage way leading to the next compartment from library when it got hit. I don't know how many men in front of me, I would say about 3 or 4, or maybe... I don't know, I just could see they were white men. I know the men looked in white, and all of a sudden " WHOOV" the lights went out and a air blasted me somehow to jolt below, knocked me off my feet. And uh, I spinned like a yo yo.

Then the flames; I could see the flames come up, and I tried to get myself off and I scratched the deck. They said I even scratched that deck, the red deck was scratched with my fingernails. I tried to get away from the flames because I was

spinning around on the deck. I couldn't move... the vibration, and the flames coming up. So, I scratched the deck and I didn't even know it. There was a fellow by the name of Bernacki (??), he had his cleaning station and if someone scratched the deck... boy he really scratched it. I said that was I. I tried to get out of the flames. The ship was bouncing and I tried ... the only thing, I got caught, my legs were caught in the flames. So my legs were burned. But I didn't even know I was burned until 12:00 that night.

But when everything ceased, all the vibration, I looked and all of these men in front, they were all charcoal black. I said," What the heck these men. These are not mess attendants. They're supposed to be white. And they were mess attendants. I just totally lost my mind somehow. My thoughts went right back to my childhood, what I did or didn't do, and what not. The ship is blowing up. I said, "This is it." I didn't know what happened. So somehow when I got myself woven together, instead of going forward, the lights went out, I couldn't go forward and I didn't have shoes on. I was barefooted. And they said, "You can not go bare footed on deck." because they can become so hot that you can burn your feet. So I have no shoes. I lost my shoes. So uh, I go up on main deck, have to go up. I didn't know, I'm just going around in circles, dazed, where are we.

So seeing the Oglala, I said, "Well I'm going to have to go jump in between." I said, "What do I want to go jump in between the Oglala for. We're along side. I'm gonna go on board the Oglala. I didn't know what was going on. So I didn't go on the Oglala. I said, "Hey, we're along side the dock." So I didn't go over to the Oglala then. I didn't know what to do anymore. I was just so confused. So I finally go on the other side of the ship along side the dock, and there I see this one fellow named (he was at a bar where they called him 'Red') and he was burned. All his skivvys were burned off. Just all he had was burning. The seam of his skivvy shirt was still burning, and I see him. Fellows recognize him, but I couldn't recognize him. "Say hi y Red" what...what. So he just mumbled something. So the fellow went off and pulled this here part of his left shoulder skivvy shirt that was burning yet.

And so finally I said I still have to go back to my battle station, but how am I going to get forward. Because you had to go below decks and over. So finally, an officer came along with a flashlight and I followed him, led on through, and went to my battle station, which was up to anchor windlass, just forward up in back of after anchor windlass. So I got there and my partner was another carpenters neighbor. He was a painter, a fellow by the name of Sandy Bake. And I said, "Hi Sandy!" So he looked like an Indian. He slept in the paint shop. And when it hit, that bar whipped and knocked all the paint off and fell on top of his head. He looked like a Cherokee Indian, all black, red, (laughter) red deck and what-not on him... white. So I didn't even notice that he had a little cut on his head. A paint can fell on top of his head; hit him.

So he's with me. And there we both were standing there next to each other and "General Quarters!" Then after general quarters, "Gas attack!" So we put the masks on to secure gas attack. "Gas attack!" We didn't know what the hell to do. Well all we could hear on topside, we had .50 [caliber] machine guns. The Marines manned the .50 caliber machine guns. They were on

wheels, so I could hear them, "There's one!" "Hey, we got one! We got one!" and pow pow pow, they're hittin'... boom, they're hittin'. We didn't know what was going on topside. All we could hear, "We got one!"

So finally, I don't know what time it was, when the shooting secured, they told us pass the word down to our area to take sonings(??) if any water damage. So...

Q: Take what?

A: Take soundings... soundings of the voids(???), see. So, I go up. I just took the sounding watch about, I don't know, a few days before, and I went down to that compartment area. I know exactly where the sounding was. So I go up to look for how I could take the sounding but the whole deck was filled with paint. Paint was just knocked down and just flooded that whole deck. There must have 6 or 8 inches of paint floating around this deck. I couldn't take the soundings. But mean time when I looked up I see a hatch open. Actually they dog down from topside. It couldn't open it from down below decks and I was left open. So when I climbed up the ladder to look outside, God Almighty, my fingers went numb and you know when they say your rectum just shrivels,(you don't know if you have one...) So that's what happened to me. I just looked out. It was all hell. I was afraid to think of anything else. I said gee anymore and I wouldn't have any strength in my fingers to come down the ladder. So I went back...

Q: What did you see when you looked out?

A: I looked out... if anyone's been in hell, I said, "This is hell!" All black smoke. I felt like we were in a hole... a black hole. The Pennsy [Pennsylvania] burning, the battleships burning, and something's burning over here around us, and all that black smoke right in the middle. I said, "God Almighty!" So I went back and I said,"Sandy, you better go our there and take a look. We're in hell." So Sandy comes back and that was it. We couldn't talk anymore. From there on, I can't remember what the hell I did that day... just... the day kept on going.... just like a dream. All I remember, that evening, when evening meal came along, they had chili and beans, or bean something. And mess hall you couldn't eat so we ate wherever we could, and we ate topside. And no wash or whatever; you finish the bowl of beans you just gave the bowl to someone else. He went out and filled out the same bowl with his... didn't have no scullery or anything. That was that day, and then we just.... oh yeah, that day.

So the following night... the same night I mean, not the following night; the same day but it was about 12:00 midnight, I had the mid watch. So I'm on mid watch in Repair One forward and I looked down at my feet because I didn't have no shoes but I picked up a big pair of shoes. We had a fellow by the name of Stan Peen(??) on the battle station with us, but he was not at our battle station. He was a painter and he had his shoes there, so I took his shoes. I wear a size 7 1/2 and he wears size 12, so I wear them all day. And at night on my watch I feel my feet sore. God Almighty! And here I'm going around with these big

clod hoppers all day long. I thought maybe the shoes wore me out. So the battle station was set up, the battle dressing station was wardroom. Well being mid watch, I didn't have anything else to do; I just relaxed myself and I started looking down at my legs... my shoes. I said, "Jeez, they're sore." and all looked dirty, like dark from soot. So I said to the corpsman, my feet are sore... kind of funny. So he said, "O.K. sit down and let my take a look at it. Gee, you're burned." I had a second degree burn and didn't even notice it. That whole night, legs here. I've still got my dark marks. I thought the shoes did it but I was burned. I just couldn't get out of the flames when I got hit.

So, he said, "You're burned." So he put the salve on; get my feet all squared away. Like I say, I didn't pay attention. But I didn't even go to a hospital. I just stayed on board. So I was one of the first casualties that didn't go to a hospital. I'm lucky that I wasn't burned. It was just about a split second; I probably wouldn't have been here. The fellows that were in the front of my path... in front of me... they're not here any more. They were so burned that they charred black. That was that day... that night. So I kept on going.

Christmas came around. We were... shrapnel... clean up the ship. I picked up a piece of shrapnel. I still have it. Then we had another fellow that was (I don't know if he ever said it)he was so lucky to get out during that attack. We had a forward engine room blown out. We had to set up a secondary fire main. So this here fellow who was in charge of the fire hose, he had a compartment... a fire hose compartment and he asked, go and get the fire hose. So he goes down to get the fire hose in the compartment. As he's leaning over the fire to pick up the firehose, all of a sudden he has a little "clackity bang" something. And right behind him there was a mirror. The shrapnel went right through the mirror in through the blower. It fell down into the blower hole. That's where he heard the clack and he was just leaning over. It just missed him. And if he would have stayed, it would have been somewhere around his shoulder or head height. He was just lucky; just a few seconds that saved him.

Now what else... so they came and we kept on going. Then Christmas came around. Our boats had shrapnel holes. We had to fix up the boats again. A place called... they had a, called a 'tin roof' so nearby. So we were working by the 'tin roof' area
and...

Q: Was that on 1010 dock?

A: 1010 dock. So we're working on our boats. So we had to ask the Chief, "Hey, now it's Christmas. What are we going to do for Christmas?" He says, "Christmas hell, it's just another day." So we worked and worked and worked till finally they gave us availability at Number 1 dock to go into dry dock. So we go into the dry dock, took a couple days to fill it and so on. So we got over there, and we were all scared chickens. Heads were secured. We had to go on top outside on the dock to a head. Afraid to light a cigarette and we were all jumpy.

They gave us sort of a 'liberty' or something the first days. You could go somewhere if you wanted to. So they gave us 'liberty'. I said O.K. I'm going to go to a Naval hospital to see if I can find any of my buddies. So I put my dress whites on and going over to the

hospital. As I'm going through the... I pass the Downes, and the other destroyer, and the Pensy [Pennsylvania]. They all burned up. I go across the tennis courts by the hospital grounds. There's a pit where that Jap plane was shot down and he landed in the hospital grounds.

Then I go into the ward and I see this man laying all over. I could smell the burned flesh. I look at the guys...(overcome with emotion) ...guys are in the ward you know. (difficult to understand)... burned... burned flesh. God...you better stop that thing. So I see this burned flesh smelling and finally I come to a bed, and the fellows in the plastic cover and he's mumbling, eyes all gray-like. And I say,"Temkowski(??) gee. Here he is." But he couldn't recognize me. Then I felt kind of bad. I said, "Gee, I better not go looking around for any more men. Because they may recognize me but I may not recognize them anymore." So I said, "No." I just walked right out with a very sick feeling.

Then I got down, bypass again the tennis court. I picked up the piece of that Jap plane that landed there. It was sort of perforated piece of metal. And I go again past those aisles, the ammunition on the dock, the smell of oil and everything else, and the smell of flesh got me so sick. Then I carried that piece and while going back to the ship I didn't know what to do with that piece. I didn't want to hold it. I didn't want to possess it. I didn't know how to dispose of it. Where would be the most dirtiest place to dispose of it? If there had been a cesspool that was loaded with maggots, I would have buried it. The only dirty place that I could come upon was a garbage can after an old discarded meal. So the garbage cans were filled and I just took that piece of metal and I shoved it in that garbage can. And I said, "That's it of my souvenir."

So that kept on going. From there on we came back to the states, went to Cornell. I got off the ship. I kept on going.
So from there on I went on another ship with new construction. It was in battle damage repair. I kept on going Peleliu, Iwo, Okinawa, until the War ended. I came around Diamond Head. Was just about going around Diamond Head when the War ended.

Q: Wow...

A: So that was all my war. I could probably tell you more about other things. That was all on the Helena.

Q: Well, it sounds like your war ended just about where it began.

A: Where I begun. I got down to Iwo Jima on the beach. In fact, I watched the flag raised at Surabachi. I got it on my records.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: I could ride off the foot of Surabachi that morning and I see this here flag come up and I said, "Hey, there goes the flag." and I screamed like hell. And then everybody watched the flag there and they sent our records too. So I finished Iwo in March and then from there we went to Okinawa. Finished that. And then, we didn't know where we were going to go. We wound up in

Leyte, and gosh most of the guys were homesick. And I myself, I wasn't exactly homesick, I was constipated. You want it for the record. I couldn't... everybody complained about stomachs so hell, during that time you couldn't take any clothes off. Like Okinawa, bogies used to come in and work seven hour shifts; from 7 to 7, 7 to 7, and at night you couldn't even take your clothes off. You just had your clothes on. If you went to the head and the next thing you know, General Quarters went, you just grabbed your pants and ran. You could hardly go to the head.

So when we got down to Leyte, my stomach felt kind of lumpy. I said, "Gee, I better take a check with the corpsman. Maybe he can do something to clear me up." I was constipated. So doctor hears me. "Hey, I want to see you." Alright, he sees me and they give me enema. I didn't know what the heck to do with the damn thing.(laughter) I had it. He said... (tape ends)

January 12, 1985
Ernest Cockett #41

Q: Mr. Cockett, when did you first join the Honolulu Fire Dept.?

A: I first joined the Honolulu Fire Dept., July the 4th, 1935.

Q: What was your first assignment?

A: My first assignment was as a hoseman at the Palama Fire Station.

Q: Did you stay at the Palama Station until December 7th, 1941?

A: Just prior to December the 7th, I received a call from my Asst. Chief, [*Edward*] P. Boyle, to pack my things and go to Kaimuki Fire Station to relieve the engineer who was going on vacation for 30 days. After that, I should return to Palama Fire Station.

Q: What was your duties to be over at the Kaimuki Station?

A: I would be engineer on the rig that was on Kaimuki Fire Station.

Q: And what was the duty of the engineer?

A: The duty of the engineer mostly is to pump at all fires, connect up to the hydrant and so on. There's other duties to perform but that's your main... to keep that pump in good condition so that when there is a fire you will be able to furnish water to all the men that is fighting fires at the particular fires.

Q: Were you on duty there on the morning of December 7th?

A: On the morning of December the 7th, I was on duty and from my station which was way up on the hills in Kaimuki, I was looking towards Pearl Harbor on account of all the airplanes flying over one. And I noticed that the shots that were being fired from these planes are from the ground wherever it was, it was all black. Usually the smoke that comes out of these shots are white and when I saw this black smoke I says, "Doggone it, that's... there must be something wrong." And...

Q: Why did you think there was something wrong?

A: Because of the color of the smoke.

Q: Uh huh.

A: Then later, we could see big black smokes coming from the vicinity of Pearl Harbor. Then my told my Skipper, "Hey, something is happening down at Pearl Harbor." Up until that time, we did not know that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Then we got our first call: Move in towards Makiki Fire Station.

Q: Do you remember about what time that was?

A: Yes, that was a little after 8:00. We were on the road. And our way to Makiki Fire Station, I noticed these planes coming from the vicinity of Kaneohe, flying over the town. And under their wing, I could see that these planes had the insignia of the Rising Sun. And then I knew something was wrong, because we never have any foreign planes come to our Islands like that. There were many of them.

Q: You said you were called to Makiki Fire Station?

A: Makiki Fire Station.

Q: Why were you called to Makiki Station?

A: Because everybody was moving toward Pearl Harbor, so naturally we had to cover in. We're the farthest away from Pearl Harbor. Kaimuki's the last station on that side. We did not have too many stations during that time. There was no stations on the Windward side. There was no stations past Kaimuki, Hawaii Kai, all of that area did not have any fire stations. Kaimuki was the last station on the east side. Now they're moving the Companies towards town because everything was being concentrated toward Pearl Harbor.

Then after about 15 minutes, we get another call to move into Central. So now we're in the heart of town and there's not too many fire... too many Companies left in the fire station because they've all moved towards Pearl Harbor. And naturally, we got calls, whether it was bombs, or whether it was shots from our Pearl Harbor, or from Hickam Field, wherever these shots came from anyway, the calls come in and say, "A bomb just dropped next to my house!" So when we get up there, there's nothing.

Q: How did you first get the news that there was actually an attack going on?

A: Well, when we got at Makiki, I happened to go in the back of the station to get a mop, because I was going to mop the station. I heard the radio in the next door: We are at War! This is the McCoy! So I run to the Skipper and I say, "Capt. I think we're at a War!" He says, "How come?" I said, "I just heard it over the radio!" Then our neighbor jumps over the fence. He was a Lt. in the Honolulu Police Dept.. He says, "Hey Capt., we're at War with Japan!" Then we knew why all of these things were happening. We didn't know when we left Kaimuki. We found out when we were down at Makiki. All they said was, "Cover in." That was the order we got. "Cover in, in Makiki." So we came on down to Makiki. Then we got another call, "Cover in at Central." That's when all these false alarms were coming in. People were hearing shrapnel falling in this area. Here they say a bomb was dropped here, a bomb was dropped there. We were going all over the place and still we couldn't find anything, until we got a call that there was a big fire on King and McCully Streets. And when we got there, the whole block was on fire and I witnessed one of my friends home going up in a blaze, because he was off

duty. I don't know where he was that day, but his house was on fire. And it was pitiful because not enough men, not enough equipment and a whole block burning.... that's tough.

Q: About how many Units were on the scene there?

A: I think there were only two, one from Waikiki and the other one from Kaimuki.

Q: About how many men with each Unit?

A: Twelve maybe.

Q: Twelve men each. And how did you fight the fire? What did you do?

A: Well, we did the best we could. Let out as much hose as we could and after finishing at one spot, we try to move...which is pretty difficult, to move from one fire to the next fire and so on down the lane because once you lead out that's it. Then you'll have to repeat the whole procedure again when you go to the next one. That's why we had difficulty. You see, if we had enough Companies, we'd take one spot. Then next Company would come in; they'd take the next spot. Then you cover up the whole section. But with only Companies, it was pretty hard... kind of difficult.

Q: Were there any injuries there on that scene?

A: No, smoke inhalation would be about the worst, but there were no injuries because it was just out near a fires that we come in contact with all the time. We're used to contact fires. Residential fires isn't too bad.

Q: What about any of the larger buildings in the neighborhood, did they catch on fire?

A: Everything went down, right to the ground, the whole block. In fact, I think it was a block and a half.

Q: What do you remember most about fighting that fire?

A: My friends home.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: I felt kind of sad because I couldn't do anything to help it. I couldn't do anything to help because it was out of my reach and I just saw that thing go right down to the ground.

Q: What about any of the schools in the neighborhood?

A: Well, there was a school about a block away and that didn't burn. I think on Pumehana Street there was a school there, and that school didn't burn. It was just confined in that particular corner, King and McCully.

Q: What about after December 7th? What was the situation like right after the attack, in the next few days, couple of weeks?

A: Well, then the Office of Civilian Defense stepped in and we were assigned. We had a representative in the Office of Civilian Defense representing the Fire Dept. because that's where you got all your money to but new fire equipment. But we increased from 8 stations to close to 35 stations. We used garages. We used schools... to build our fire stations, because every school was closed. There was no school... no school and the [*Kamameha*] School became a hospital. Punahou School became the Office of the Engineers. I think that was the main office and St. Louis became a hospital. Well, Tripler was just about being built at that time. The old Tripler was the main hospital here. And we increased from a mere, a little over 100 to over 500 firemen.

Q: That's a big jump.

A: Oh yes. We were really prepared this time. If they had come back we had the personnel to handle it a second time if they came back and a lot of people had said that Japan had just followed suit right after the bombing they could have taken the Islands.

Q: What was the feeling among people after the attack?

A: Oh, they were frightened. We went into blackouts. Our headlights on our apparatus was... they gave us a little... it was all painted you know. The lights were all painted and they left a little hole about that big.

Q: About an inch?

A: About an inch. And when we responded at night a guy would have to sit on the fender there and turn a searchlight. We had more light from the search light that we did from our regular headlight, because everything was blacked out at that time... no lights. No nothing. And it was tough responding. Instead of going 50, 55 mph, you were going just about 15 to 20 mph responding. And well, it was pretty quiet during that time because everybody is home now. Nobody leaves home. That's when you have fires, when people leave home. Everybody's home so they're watching their house. There's nothing to do but protect yourself. With all the extra equipment, with all the stations we had, we didn't have enough fires. Because when you have everybody home, everybody is watching. Pretty hard to start a fire in the home.

Q: Getting back to December 7th for a second, on your crew, you mentioned the Chief of your crew. Who was your Skipper?

A: Oh, Thomas Macy... Captain Thomas Macy. He was a good old soul, full of pep, lively, and he already had about 30 years on the job.

Q: So he was an old timer.

A: He was an old timer. He was an old timer.

Q: Was he the one who took you from Kaimuki to Makiki?

A: No, Chief Boyle was.

Q: That was Chief Boyle.

A: Chief Boyle, Asst. Chief on duty, sent me from Palama to Kaimuki.

Q: Who was the Senior man on your crew when you went from Kaimuki to Makiki?

A: Oh, that was Capt. Kipi. He's dead now.

Q: Do you know how to spell his name?

A: K-I-P-I. Captain Kipi.

Q: So this was a crew of 12 men we were talking about?

A: No, there was just about 6 men in each crew.

Q: Oh, 6 in each crew.

A: Yes.

Q: Uh, sounds like...

A: Today, they have a little more. I think they have 7 or 8. But they have three shifts, we had only two. They work less hours and they have better pay... much better today.

Q: Sounds like a day you'll never forget.

A: Oh yes, that was an experience. And then when I got back to Palama after my... after I got through the rig that I was working on still had bullet holes.

Q: Oh yeah?

A: Still had bullet holes. When they came down to strafe.

Q: Is that the same Engine that they still have today at the...

A: No, all of those rigs are gone. They're all in the junk pile.

Q: Well, I appreciate your sharing your memories with me.

A: Well, as I said, if you want to get down to the nitty gritty of this, the day it happened go and see Nagumi Namashita(??) because I believe he is the only member of that crew left today.

Q: Well, I've got him on my list to call.

A: Uh huh. And then another man would be Richard Young.

Q: Richard Young. I've got him on my list to call.

A: He was at Pearl Harbor. Nagumi was at Hickam Field.

Q: O.K., thank you.

David Tai Loy K. Ho #42
January 14, 1985

Q: Mr. Ho when did you first join the Honolulu Fire Department?

A: (tape slips)

Q: What kind of money did the Fire Department pay in those days?

A: (tape slips) was paying (ts) a month. But they was (ts) to raise it to (ts) the bill would pass (ts) job as a fireman (ts) was making (ts) twenty(c)five dollars working for (ts) (ts)

Q: (ts) When you first joined the Fire Department, (ts) what kind of work did you do there? What kind of duties did you have?

A: (ts) fireman you take the low (ts) uh (ts) (ts... repeatedly) you do your housework, and of course every new fireman take care of the dorm (the mens dorm, you know.); sweeping, mopping. And they had spittoons left in those days and you had to polish spittoons every Friday, which was polish the.... (laughter) So we train every day. As a new fireman you train every day that you came on duty, which is every other day. And they train you use of the tools, different kind of hose, how to climb the ladder; all in a period of about a month, until the Captain saw that you proficient.

Q: After you finished that training, what were you assigned to do?

A: Well, we... as far as the old days, firemen wasn't given too much extra work, extra training. Besides the personalized training on the job, he was scheduled to go on inspection in the community and check the hydrants, and inspect the areas where there are likely to be fire hazards (like the restaurants, hotels), to familiarize the new men with the location of the hydrants, the possible entry into the restaurants or hotels. As compared with another Company which responds also, that we'd take our own route to the fire and the other Company would take the opposite route. So at least one Company would reach in case there's an accident.

Q: By the time 1941 came around, what was your.... did you have a regular assigned job?

A: 1941, I was stationed at Kakaako but initially I was in Central. When the person decide he replaces another person who's promoted, I became a firefighter and the person who's promoted became an engineer. So he sent to another person, the engineer was promoted to a Lt., maybe out in Waipahu, so the process continues. And uh, from Central I was sent to Waikiki. I replaced another firefighter. There was a shortage of firefighters who was placed on inspection. His name was Louie Watson. And uh, they had no paying position for an Inspector, so they pulled two men off Waikiki Station which is Number 7 Company, one on each Force to do the inspection work, and after

that transferred me to Kakaako. That was in 1941... early 1941.

Q: What Company were you with then?

A: I was at Waikiki which is Number 7 Company and then when I transferred to Kakaako, I was transferred to Engine 9 under the Number 2 watch with Lt. Dan Kawuiki(?) as a hoseman.

Q: Were you on duty at the Station on December 7th, 1941?

A: On December 7th, it was my off day and I was at home.

Q: Where was that?

A: I was living in Waimanalo, on Homestead, right across the beach. We changed watch... during those days we changed watch at 6:00 in the evening. And I got up in the morning, and I was building my home and working on my front steps when my neighbor yelled across to me and said that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. And I said, "How did you know?" and he said "Turn on your radio!" I turned on my radio and sure enough, there was an announcement: All firemen and policemen report back to duty! And when I came out and got all my clothing, I could see that there was smoke coming out from Bellows Field, not Bellows Field I mean... Kaneohe Airfield. They had bombed the planes over there and way out in the distance I could see black smoke. Looked like an oil tank was burning. And I went to town and I reported back to my Officer. I reached town... it must have been about 8:00 in the morning.

George Correa #43
January 15, 1985

Q: Mr. Correa, would you tell me about your experiences on December 7th, 1941, when you were a member of the Honolulu Fire Dept.?

A: Well Mike, it was like this, at 6:00 AM the bell rings. I need to get up. And so we get up and do our little chores and whatever we have to do, and then we go for breakfast or whatever. And the Captain, Captain Nikora??? asked me to climb up the tower to see what was all that black smoke down at Pearl Harbor. So I climbed up the tower and I looked down there and when I came back down I said, "Captain, I think it's the oil tanks down at Pearl!" And he said, "No, it can't be... it's impossible.... no way.... it can't be." I said, "Well, that's all I can see." And I don't know, we fooled around a little bit, cleaned up our Engine, and pretty soon... BANG... the alarm comes in.

So here we go. We headed right down to, I guess it was Pearl, and we didn't worry going. When we got down almost to Hickam, there was machine guns all over in the middle of the street and the guy was telling us, "Go to Hickam... Go to Hickam!" So here we go. We go to Hickam. Then we get down to the big hangar(*Hangar 7*), the cafeteria was on fire! Therefore, I had to bring in the leads?? through the side door (the front doors were closed then) So I had to come into the side door with my leads and all that. I'm what they call a "nozzle man." So I got in there all right and then my Engineer (*Engineer Larry Kanou*??) was giving us water. But then uh, we didn't know what was going on until I met some of the little soldiers around there, and I said, "Hey, what's going on around here?" and he said, "Don't you know?" and I said "No way man! What is it?" He said, "Well, the Japs are bombing us!" Oh my that was something then!

So we were keep fighting in the planes, and we could hear the bombs coming up as far down, well I guess.... coming all the way up, we could hear the planes and we could hear the bombs bursting over there. It was really terrible. And pretty soon I know, BANG, that was it. I was up against a couple of them steel cases over there. I don't know the rest of it. I don't know what happened. I don't know how they got me out of there or what! When I finally got up, I was up at Tripler General Hospital; up in Shafter at the Old Tripler General Hospital. And here I was again... only me, and I was wondering hey, what's with all the rest of my friends, you know, my firemen? They I found Moses Kliirane Then I found Solomon Naauao and so I... the only thing they gave us up there, Mike, was uh, technicians, I don't know, different types of shots. That's all they did was they had all kind of shots that they gave us. And I said, "Hey, by the way, you know, we are civilian firemen." I said, "we... you know.... we" They said, "No, no, no, you have to stay..." We stayed out on the deck there; not only me, I mean, there were not thousands of us, but a few hundred. They was all out there, lying on the deck there.

Well, I don't know how many days before they ever found out that we were, you know, from the local fire department. Then I

asked for transfer to Queens. That was it. Then I came home. I stayed home for a couple of months. I mean I was kind of bad Mike. Then one of my good friends, my roommate, Solomon Naauao , (he's a big man, he's about 250 pounds, he's a big man, he's my roommate), he got the worst of the whole deal. He got half of his back all wiped out with shrapnel wounds. And Moses Kliikane from Kauai, he had his legs all in terrible shape. And then there was myself and Pat McCabe. Old poor Pat, he got busted up too. So we finally all met. Mike, I don't know, after so long, we finally all met and started talking about the old days. I mean what it was all like. It sure was a hectic day man. I never forget that day boy.

Q: What station were you at?

A: I was at Central, #1 Station, Central... on the corner of Fort and Beretania.

Q: What Company were you in there?

A: Number One.

Q: Number One. Was that an Engine Company?

A: Yeah, that's both engine and hose wagon, you know. See, we have two Companies over there; one to take care of this side, and one to take care of this side. You see you have two Companies, one goes to Kailua too. So that's where we went unfortunate, or whatever you would call it, to go down to Hickam. But then, all in all, it's line of duty. You go where they tell you to go, not where you want to go.

Q: When they were running out the hose for you, where were they getting the water from?

A: We got it, Mike, where the hydrant was, they blew up the bloody hydrant right next to the cafeteria if I can recall. But there was a big hole there and we had to draft from that hole. See where that water was just shooting up, and the fire department thing was two doors down from us. We could see the edges all outside, but no man to man it.

Q: What kind of shape were the engines in?

A: Oh, that couldn't tell. We couldn't tell. I couldn't tell nothing really because right there I had to bring in the leads to get into the firemen. And that day Mike, I can't tell the difference between the planes, but I thought that the planes were bigger than the hangar, or the hangar was smaller, one of the two. I don't know. It was a big difference in there. I think there was about, let me see, I think three big planes if I can recall clearly, three big planes in there. I don't mean those small ones. I mean the big ones. I always thought they was the big mamas you know, the B#1 bombers, but they didn't have them then. So that was the whole situation.

Q: How bad was the fire in hangar #7?

A: How bad was it? Oh, it was pretty bad. It was pretty hot... it was pretty hot Mike, it was pretty hot. I tell you it was really hot... and what? Well you have to do your work, I mean. Yep, I didn't see my Captain. I didn't see nobody after that till we got up to Tripler Hospital. Then I finally located some of the boys.

Q: Sounds like it was a pretty confused type of situation.

A: What Mike?(dog barking)

Q: It sounds like it was a confused situation.

A: It was. It was Mike... it was. I mean uh, I don't know, some say that the Captain says, "Oh, you're on your own now." something like that. I don't remember that... I mean uh, I don't... he never told me that, because he was not very far away from me when the hangar collapsed (dogs barking loudly... difficult to understand) Hey!! I don't know, to me, it looked like it was all repaired, I mean reconditioned or something, because I couldn't tell that (dogs barking) oh gosh there was all the bullet box and so forth and so on all over the wall. But then, to me it didn't seem the same hangar. I don't know why, unless my memory went back on me... so long. But then I knew when I got there, I mean I could never find it. I mean otherwise I used to go down there and see if I could locate that hangar. I could never, I could never. So the only time I did was on this when we were down at the airport on an interview and I said, "Oh, now I know where I'm at." Course it's all changed now. It's not like it used to be. It was something Mike; it was really something... yep. We had one Chief down there, Chief while he was there and he left and that was all... that was all I know. I didn't know about the rest of the guys. I don't know when they got out of there or what. When we all got up to Tripler in the evening, I think it was about 6:00... 6:00 that evening I think and I kept telling them, "Hey, I'm a civilian fireman." So that's how I go get in touch with the Chief. That was it Mike; that was it all in a nutshell.

Q: Thanks. Appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

A: What? (dogs barking)

Q: I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

A: Oh, thank you Mike... my privilege. But of course Mike, I'm getting up in age. I'm 74; be 74 next month and I can't remember. There's a lot of little things I would like to remember but I can't seem to focus on it, you know what I mean. I wish I could be a little help to you Mike. See, there's only two of us living now that actually got hurt, besides Kaliikane and myself, the rest is all passed away. They're all deceased already... four other men.

Frederick Kealoha
#45 January 24, 1985

Q: Mr. Kealoha, what was your job with the Honolulu Fire Department in 1941.

A: Before that? Before I came in the Department?

Q: Well after... when the Attack happened. What was your job in the Fire Department?

A: Before the Attack I was a Lt. firefighter.

Q: What station were you?

A: Uh, let's see... uh... Kalihi.

Q: Kalihi?

A: It's the nearest station to Pearl Harbor.

Q: How did you first find out that there was something unusual happening that morning?

A: Well uh... they called in. They call in: We been attacked by the Japanese.

Q: What did they tell you to do?

A: Oh, well a fire run. Said take your Company to Pearl Harbor.

Q: How long did it take you to get down there?

A: Oh, a fast run. About 20 minutes I think, cause it's pretty close. The road was one way, all rock. The traffic was blocked. Only one way going to Pearl Harbor side. Both side the traffic was jammed.

Q: Where abouts did you take your fire truck?

A: Oh, went right out to the entrance of where the fire call was.

Q: Was that at Hickam Field?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of scene did you find there?

A: Oh well the communication tower was knocked off and the fire station was burning. Oh, everything was all really... servicemen, were walking around there just like there was... they don't know what took place. When I got there I couldn't believe it. They come from nowheres and dropped the bomb. They came through Wailua side; through the back side.

Q: Where did you start fighting the fires?

A: As soon as we got there. You know, I can't believe it because the fire was all over... all over there; in the hangar, outside some planes was just come in early morning and there still was some planes coming in.

Q: While you were fighting the fire?

A: Yeah but... no, I mean our plane they tell them to land down Waimanalo side, some emergency field over there. Some of these Flying Fortress, (what a call 'em), big plane but, they had skeleton crew bring them down. So one was land down in Waimanalo. There the emergency port there...airport.

Q: On the fires that you were fighting at Hickam, what sort of fires were they?

A: Oh, well that was a shop that had several planes, and where it was burning, had storage. You know, all the parts and fuselage or whatever. That was a shop. And it's right in the facing to the entrance of the Harbor... Pearl Harbor.

Q: Were you injured during the fire fighting there?

A: Yes, I was badly hurt, so...

Q: How did that happen?

A: The stray bomb... shrapnel.

Q: What happened to you then?

A: They took me to Tripler General Hospital that morning. That morning then I stayed there until almost the next day light.

Q: Did they take you inside the hospital and put you in a bed?

A: No, it was full the beds. The hospital was full. Servicemen were hurt. Some was lying outside on the yard.

Q: Where did they put you?

A: I was in the yard too because the beds was all taken. We just lying on the floor. So I slip outside the yard. I was the only one. We don't have blanket.

Q: Did they give you any kind of treatment when you were outside there?

A: No.

Q: How long did you...

A: I stayed there till the next morning... daylight. Then the nurse that in charge left at... she's goes off at 2:00 in the morning and she was living in Waikiki side. So she had to pass the main fire station. So I told her to stop the front, the station, because they always somebody on watch, and tell them

where I'm at. So first thing in the morning somebody came and picked my up. Instead of they took me to the hospital, they took me home.

Q: How long was it before you recovered?

A: Oh, I mean from that... I mean at that time? Oh by almost daylight. But they picked me up in that morning... daylight. The Chief sent someone to find me, pick my up. Then they took me to the fire station and from there they took me home. Then from home took me to the hospital. But the hospital was all full, but somehow there were a bunk for the spare time. It wasn't, well during that Attack, seven firemen died.

Q: Of all the things that you remember seeing on that day, what's the one that you remember most?

A: Oh Lord, well dead guys was scattered all over the place you know. Because that took place daylight... in the morning... early... bright daylight. See the planes coming overhead and diving. Just look at it. Nowhere to hide. And they were already attacked... the first attack. But the second wave of planes came down and....

Q: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

Richard Young #47
February 7, 1985

Q: Mr. Young, how long had you been with the Honolulu Fire Department on December 7, 1941?

A: Mr. Slackman, I was in for 8 months, having entered the Department on April 1, 1941.

Q: What station were you working at then?

A: I was originally assigned and still serving duty at the Kalihi Fire Station, Engine Company Number 6.

Q: How long had you been on duty?

A: I was on duty from the previous night at 6:00 and was scheduled to go off duty at 6 PM on December the 7th.

Q: What was the first indication you had that this wasn't going to be an ordinary Sunday?

A: My first indication... I would say our first indication, because two or three others on duty at that particular time in Kalihi Fire Station were at the rear of the Station, and we noticed lots of "Ack-Ack" smoke. In other words, anti-aircraft smoke bursting over the Pearl Harbor, Hickam [*Field*] complex. And we were amazed at the amount of smoke caused by this "Ack-Ack". Of course we all knew what "Ack-Ack" smoke looked like and we were all amazed and we were all waiting for something to happen, or some call to come in. Because it was our first run to Hickam, we had been there before and we knew what the situation was down there through preplanning with the Federal people for fire prevention purposes. We were excited about it and we were anticipating something. That was the first indication.

Q: Did you get a call at the Station to go down to Hickam?

A: I'd say in a few minutes, the main telephone rang and it was answered by Lt. [*Fredrick*] “Fred” Kealoha on duty. Fred hit the gong. Now in most cases we don't know where we're going, but Fred hit the gong. Everybody responded. The engineer started his vehicle, the hose wagon driver (we were a two-piece Company at that particular time) started his vehicle. And Fred mentioned the fact that we're going and he pointed toward the direction of where the smoke was coming from and he didn't need to tell us that we were going to the Pearl Harbor, Hickam complex. He just said, "We're going." and we all knew that we were headed down in that area by virtue of the "Ack-Ack" bursts in the air.

Q: About how long did it take you to get down there to Hickam?

A: It took us a little time because we had to follow the old King St.- Moanalua Rd., passing through Moanalua Gardens and then approaching Ft. Shafter. Fort Shafter is located adjacent to the

Moanalua Gardens and then we made a left turn. We did not have to go over Red Hill. We stayed on the Honolulu side of Red Hill – Pearl City, down through the old Moanalua Rd. towards the Hickam Pearl complex because there's nothing along Nimitz Hwy. Nimitz Hwy. did not come into existence until later on. So I would say roughly, it took us all of 8 to 10 minutes, approximately 7 or 8 minutes. It could be as long as 9 minutes to get down there to Pearl.

Q: When you pulled into Hickam, what was the sight that greeted your eyes?

A: As we approached the Main Gate of Hickam, the guard was there, the gate man, and all he was doing was waving us in. And as we approached, heading down the main road of Hickam, of course the hangars are located on the left and the two big barracks were on the right. Coming down that main drag, my first indication of the wreckage was noticing the row of palm trees being sheared off. There were about 15, maybe 20 feet high and most of the branches and some of the trunks were sheared off 4, 5, and 6 feet from the ground. Then we noticed the injured and in some places there were dead because of the mangling of their bodies. The two big barracks on the right were burning in several places. On the left there was an aircraft already on fire, and of course heading down the main drag of Hickam and approaching the fire station there, we noticed that the gasoline was on fire. Also there was the main pipeline... it was bursting from a huge crater.

The Lt. stopped the Company right in front of the Hickam Fire Station and right then and there, there was the Hickam Fire Ranger, I'd say not completely clear of the station... I'd say about half way out. We stopped at the left of the station and the driver was slumped over the wheel of the rig. Now at that particular time we heard planes coming in. Lt. who no doubt had surveyed the damage on the way, (he had a birds eye view because he was riding on the right of the driver and we were hanging on the rear of the truck. So he got a real good view of things going into Hickam Field. After the rig stopped and we heard planes coming in and of course all during this time there was anti-aircraft gunfire there. Not only anti-aircraft gun but it sounded like guns that were smaller than anti-aircraft firing.

So the Lieutenant, got off the truck and we got off the truck and he told us in just a few words, "On your own! Take cover!" and that was the last we saw of the Lt. That was the last I saw of Mr. [*Harry t. L.*] Pang who was injured. Mr.[*William K.*] Tam and I proceeded to take cover towards one of the hangars and it could have been towards the ocean side of one of the hangars, but definitely I know the exact location that we took cover was on the town side of the petroleum yard, or the service station yard. And all of this time here, planes were coming in we could barely see the "Rising Sun" insignia on sides of these bombers that were coming in. I noticed one, two... I notices three bombers that were clearly visible by the "Rising Sun" on the side.

Now at this stage here, this is quite some time now. I'm talking about time elapsed of about 20 minutes, 30 minutes. It could be up to 40 minutes that we took cover and of course the other two companies were already there. We found our way around. I don't know what time they came in but it shouldn't be too much of a time elapsed since we got there, because the Palama Station, the second end, was located I'd say about a

mile from the Kalihi Unit. And of course Central is not too far away; perhaps a mile from the Palama Unit. So actually, the 3rd Company to come in is only about 2 miles, a little over 2 miles away from the Kalihi Unit, and giving and taking traffic conditions, why the time of entry would be real close for Palama and Kalihi, and maybe even the Central Company.

Q: Were you able to do any firefighting while you were there?

A: Yes, firefighting we did. And after about 30 or 40 minutes (it may be longer, it may be less) this we found later was after the 3rd attack. See, the first one was still in the Station. This was when we noticed the "Ack-Ack" fire over Hickam/Pearl. You know, shortly after we got there, the second attack came on and if you will recall the military attacks on Hickam, that was determined later on. Then after the 3rd attack was over, we did fire fighting work. Of course with the main fire supply line being hit, we engaged our pumping equipment in the bombed out line which created the water hole; took suction there and started the fire fighting operations with, I can recall two of the planes that were burning. Six or seven of us were concentrated in the large barracks. There wasn't too much to burn in the large barracks. There was a lot of kitchen tables and personnel. Because there was solid reinforcement in these buildings. Of course the roof was burning. The sheeting of the roof were wood and I do recall that wooden mess tables were really splintered by those bomb hits. Later on while surveying the damage while conditions were brought a little under control, we surveyed the kitchen area and the way those mess tables were shattered, no doubt about it the main barracks received direct bomb hits.

So we fought fires there at Hickam all the way through December 7th and didn't get back to quarters until the evening of December the 8th, 1941.

Q: What was your feeling inside while the attack was going on?

A: My feeling while the attack was going on, at least from the time we got there, while we were going through that second attack, was that they got us... you know, they got us. The destruction was so widespread, as we approached the area. Now if one attack could do that, we knew that they were coming in again. We figured by golly they got us. This is our end. But we survived. We were very fortunate to survive that attack and we survived the next. But I surmise that if the Lt. didn't tell us to take cover. I think we would have been open targets out there for the balance of the second attack anyway; perhaps the third attack. Because there was one... two men, there were two men... only about two men in the crew that the Lt.... well there were about one, two, three, or four men that were experienced. Pang who passed away had about four years experience, I had about 8 months, [*William K.*] “Bill” Tam who was with me, had about 4 months of service. So we were raw recruits and actually we needed guidance; not only guidance but we needed immediate direction by the Officer, and this we got from Fred Kealoha. And when he mentioned you're on your own and take cover under those conditions, it registers right away (laughter)... no matter how much.... no experience one has.

Q: In looking back on all this, what's the one memory, the one sight, or the one incident that stands out the most in your mind?

A: The one incident today is the total destruction that we approached Hickam in the initial run in... total destruction there. The barracks were hit, the airplanes, the hangars, the palm trees. It was a beautiful place. It was beautifully landscaped coming down that main drag, with well kept roads, sidewalks, and royal palm trees. Now these royal palm trees really made an impression on me because they signified when I was a kid, the old plantation towns, that were all lined with royal palms. And the plantation manager had beautiful homes within those complexes, on the plantations from Waimanalo, Wailua, Kahuku, Ewa.... you name it; there were about 10 plantations on this Island at that particular time. And they signified a thing of beauty and Hickam actually took that landscaping, the landscaping architect for Hickam, took that landscaping from the plantations that we had here on the Island of Oahu. So the total destruction when we were coming in, the buildings, the landscaping, and the dead and injured that we saw; and then would be planes coming over on top that were easily identified.

Q: Is there anything else you can think of to add?

A: Well, I always did say, this is of course this is quarterbacking again, if it could be that over again, the best thing to do in such cases, the best thing to do is withdraw, of course with enough personnel to take care of the injured and the dying, and then when it's all over, come back in. Because actually the engagements that we had down there after the attack didn't do any good because everything had been destroyed; everything had to be repaired. There's nothing we could save in an airplane. Once an airplane started to burn it was gone. Once it was hit and in the process of burning, it was gone. And most of the debris there that was burning was a total loss anyway. I don't recall how many more lives were lost during that second attack. Of course the initial attack is something else, but I think once the disaster or the source of the disaster is known, and the disaster can be early evaluated, I think the best thing that could have been done would be withdraw the forces with of course enough personnel to take care of the injured and the dead and then come back in when it's all over. Because there was no exposures. It was hit period. The targets were there. The targets were hit. Evidently the enemy knew where the targets were directed on the water line, directed on the gas line, directed on the fire station, hits on the hangars, hits on the barracks. Of course the single story duplexes in Hickam along the Pearl Harbor water line there were not too severely damaged. In other words, the enemy knew what they needed to do and they did it. And I think we lost quite a few men during that second and final attack.

Q: OK, thank you.

A: (laughter)

Alexander Beck #48
February 14, 1985

Q: Mr. Beck, How long had you been a member of the Honolulu Fire Department in 1941?

A: In 1941 I was a member for 8 years. I went in July 1st 1932.

Q: Were you on duty when the Pearl Harbor Attack began?

A: No, I was off duty and working at my house, digging holes for a fence that I was going to put up. And then I heard it over the radio that we were being attacked be the Japanese, and they were calling all firemen back to duty.

I was stationed at Palama Fire Station which is called #4 Company and I was sent down to ask to go down to Kakaako Fire Station to see Capt. Saffron(??). When I went to Kakaako Fire Station, he told my to take an Engine, pick up a crew, and myself to go back to #4 Company to put it in commission.

Well I picked up a crew, Mr. Charles Hopkins who was familiar with the fire department (he lived next to Kalihi Fire Station which is #6), I had a clerk from the Bank of Hawaii, I had a truck driver from the Honolulu Construction and Drilling Company [*H. C. & D.*] (with a one ton pick up truck), and I got three men from the city and county garbage (refuse company). And they all went up with me, so I was officer in charge and the same time operated the Engine.

We were stationed at #4 and this truck we had from the H.C.& D., we loaded up with hose - extra hose, in case we needed it. So then we got an alarm to go down. There was a call over the station radio and everything to respond to a fire; tank fire at the Honolulu Gas Co. at Iwilei fire station... uh, Iwilei Company. We went down there and they had a Company from Central there before us. So we got there and we were fighting this fire that was a hole pierced in the tank be one of the shrapnel shells. So at the time we were fighting fire we had four Japanese planes came over. They went around, looked at us, never fired any shot, and then they left. Then we put that fire out and then we were sent back to our Station.

So I went back to #4 with the Company in commission and waited until my other members came back from Hickam Field. I lost my Captain, which was Capt. [*Thomas S.*] "Tom" Macy, two men were injured; shot with shrapnel. That's Moses Kaliikane and Patrick [*J.*] McCabe. Well, when they came back there was a hole in the radiator on the Engine, so we fixed it up; plugged the hole, so they could use that Engine in commission. The hose wagon wasn't bombed.

So we stayed there and we had members from ... volunteers from the area that came in and stayed with us. So some of them stayed with us for about four or five days and like I said then we were on martial law and black out which was rough. Then trying to get food from the stores, which was closed. So we survived on what we had and bumming people on, you know, for coffee and thing like that, till we finally got something. It took about three days we got our stuff there.

Q: When that Engine came back from Hickam and you plugged up the holes, what did you use to plug up the holes?

A: I use a toilet tissue and brown soap to plug the holes in

this big radiator. Oh brother, it was a big sore. I used toilet tissue and then jammed it in the brown soap, and then that thing ran. It was in commission. There was a little leaks but she was OK until they finally fixed it all a couple of weeks later. But we had an Engine standing by in case. We used an Engine that I took up from Kakaako Fire Station.

Q: How did the black out affect you?

A: Black out was really rough. I mean uh, they were restricted as far as lights. We had to paint our windows black and black out the things; seal all the leaks, if we were using the lights at night and things like that so... just so that we wouldn't go out and then leave the lights. Then they told us to paint the headlights and tail lights black or blue with a strip 1/4 in. by 2 in. just so we can see what we're doing on the road which is hard with the black out; all the lights out and that's our headlight. The tail light was the same way. It was blacked out with a little strip and all that.

Q: Didn't give you much light did it?

A: No. We never had much light. We had little flashlight and drive slow to see and it was no help to us, but we had to go by the restrictions. We were told that we...

Q: After the attack, did they post any guard or anything like that over at the Fire Station?

A: Yeah, we had a boy from Kamehameha School. He came down in full ROTC uniform with a rifle. He came down. I can't think of his name. He came down and said he was supposed to be our guard down at the Fire Station. He stayed with us for three days before he finally went back to Kam School. That's the only guard we had.

Q: Well, anything else you can think of?

A: Well, of course trying to get food was hard.

Q: What was that like?

A: The stores in front of our place... all the stores were closed, and we got little help from the ... Anyway the neighbors; we went and asked the neighbors for some coffee and sugar like that, which they gave us. But we had a boy that his parents owned the store, so he went and get some supplies and gave it to us. And that's how we lived. We went down to the bakery and they gave me two boxes of bread because they were closing up. They were closed and I went across to the Station to ask the restaurant guy if he had any ham, you know, this meatloaf to sell us. He didn't sell us any, he gave us. He closed his restaurant after that. He couldn't get food. So finally we got this ; then we got help from the Civil Defense, in getting some food that they gave of the men that were in the Station. And that like I said we had men from the Refuse Dept., we had a bank from the bank (one of the clerks), then we had this person (Charlie Hopkins) who was working in heavy equipment for the

Federal people down at Pier 40; but he was with us.
And so, black out was really rough. We couldn't go anywhere in the evenings and finally had to go down and get pictures taken to give us a badge so can go around in case of darkness. This was a way of identifying yourself.

Q: Where did they take the pictures?

A: The pictures were taken down at the Palace ground, in the basement that was under the Civil Defense people.

Q: Those must have been pretty tense days right after the attack.

A: Yeah. You see, it was really hard on the married people. They never went home for the week after that. It was hard on the families too. And everything gotta be done during the day (laughter). At night they had civilian guards going all over and stuff like that. They would stop in the station. The black out was the roughest thing. We had to seal all the windows and all that so we worked in the darkness, except on the desk when you alarm that you turn on, but the thing would be right on the desk. (cannot understand) from the boxes if they hit that box it comes in and they have an indicator on the top that gives you the number. Then we'd have to look into the box. Then they have what they call a running tapes, the primary and the secondary. They would punch the holes in the tape so you look at the primary and you check for the secondary and sometimes it could be off. If it's right then we would have to look in the box, in the book.

Q: To see where it is?

A: Yeah. You see it goes by the number. We had running files... red book, it's uh... files. We had running files. Then we look according to the number on the primary indicator... tapes. Then we look into it and we go to the scene of the number box, you know. It could be our Station. It could be some other Station. So if it's our Station we go.

Q: Well, I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me. It's generous of you and helps our program.

Gerald Heffelfinger #50

February 19, 1985

Q: Mr. Heffelfinger, when did you first join the Army?

A: I joined the Army in 1935, September. I was in the infantry then so I had five years experience in the infantry before I went to Hickam.

Q: When did you go to Hickam?

A: I went to Hickam in August 20th, 1940.

Q: What was your first job over there at Hickam?

A: My first job over there was I went to motor vehicle school and motor vehicle school I was in the motor pool. Then I didn't care too much about working around vehicles so I was taken out of the motor pool and went to the warehouse... supply.

Q: How long did you work there at the warehouse?

A: Well, I worked at the warehouse I believe from around March '41 until October '41. That's when I went into the fire department.

Q: How did you happen to get sent over to the fire department?

A: Well, they have a Sgt. in the fire department that had over ten years service. He was buying out and they needed another Sgt. down there. Instead of making one of the other firemen a Sgt. they picked me out. The Major called me in and told me he wanted me to go to the fire department. The reason he picked me out was because I was able to handle men and get along with men, so he said he wanted me to go down there and take a months honest trial at it.

Q: Were you in charge of the fire department there?

A: I was Asst. Chief working under Chief Benedict. Then when the War came along, Chief Benedict didn't stay there very long because he came out to the fire station that morning when the attack was started and he was wounded very shortly after he came. He was wounded out there between hangar 7 and 11 and then from then on I was in charge of the fire department under a Lt. named Tom.

Q: How many fire engines did the Hickam Fire Department have?

A: Hickam Fire Department at that time had four. We had one outside cleaning it up when the attack started. That was put out of commission right away. One of the others parked in the front of the Station half way into the Station, that was put out of commission also; was strafed. So that left us with only two

firefighters... I mean two fire trucks left.

Q: What were you doing when the attack started?

A: I was outside with the men supervising cleaning the fire truck.

Q: What was the first thing that gave you a hint that something out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well, while we were cleaning the fire trucks, I looked down towards Hickam Pier and right there by the entrance to the channel I could sell a flight of aircraft coming across, it must have been about ten of them all in formation and it wasn't long after we saw them that some of them peeled off and went into Pearl Harbor side and we could hear the noise; the bombing. We knew then what it was. So it wasn't long after that they come across and came into Hickam and the first bomb hit into hangar 7 and they strafed it at the same time they strafed the fire truck. When we saw the bomb coming into hangar 7, that's when we moved to run inside the Station.

Q: Once you got inside the Station what did you do?

A: Well, after we got inside the Station we got the fire trucks... one fire truck procedure was in case of an air attack or anything one fire truck was supposed to take a crew and go around the Base and sound a siren and let them know that it was an alert.

Q: Did they do that?

A: Yes, we did that. Then the other fire truck (they had already strafed and bombed the mess hall) so the other fire truck, we took that and laid out the hose line and went to go over to fight the fire at the mess hall because the other hangars and all was bombed... hangar 7. Wasn't much that could be done with that. It was just about gone already.

Q: What source did you have for water when you fought the fire at the mess hall?

A: We were using the fire hydrant right out in front of the barracks. But later on, the next second attack was when they dropped a bomb, I think it was meant for hangar 7, but instead of hitting hangar 7 it went right into... landed in the middle of the road and broke the water main there. Also, it set on fire the gas line there along Hangar Avenue. We put that gas fire out with foam. It only took us a couple of minutes to put that out.

Q: How long did you spend fighting that fire at the mess hall there?

A: Well, I think it took us about two days before we got all fire out in the big barracks, because it was kind of complicated. We didn't have no ladder to reach the top of the barracks and we saw the roof. We saw this copper, and underneath was wood, and

underneath the wood there was concrete, so it was kind of hard to get at the fire. That's why finally we had to go up from the middle of the barracks and get up on the roof and pull lines up and start to remove some of the metal on the roof so we could get in there and put the water on the wood.

Q: Sounds like a pretty tough job.

A: Oh yeah it was. Because I didn't have much experience when I first went in there. I was only in the fire department 68 days when the War came along. But I was able to pick up the work pretty fast because I took an interest in it after I went in there and especially after the bombing... I got quite a bit of experience then.

Q: Yeah, it's a real incentive to know your job.

A: Yeah.

Q: What other places did you fight fire on that day?

A: Well, we was fighting for a while over at the Hangar with the other fire truck when it came back from the run around the Base. And after the second wave it was, Honolulu Fire Department came in. They came in there and we told them to go in there and fight the fire and we took our truck out and went over to the barracks side to give the other truck a hand. But Honolulu Fire Department had to use a hole in the road where they drafted water out.

Q: Sounds like a pretty confused situation!

A: Yeah.

Q: What thoughts were going through your minds? What feelings did you have while all of this was going on?

A: Well, the five years I had in the infantry before coming to Hickam, that's what prepared me for that day. Because in the infantry they teach you if you're under attack to take cover. And whenever an attack came in, when they come across from the first, or second, or third attack, then you could see which way they were coming. All you had to do was just move a little bit, right or left, take a little cover, and you'd be alright.

Q: Were any of the men from the Hickam Fire Department killed or injured on that day?

A: Yes, there was a fellow named Sgt. Joseph Chagnon and one Pvt. [*Mathew T.*] Bills. They were killed there. It happened in an area by the barracks. Then they had the six other men was wounded. I think one was named Jack McGuire, Raymond Bunn... I don't remember the rest of the names. And then on the last wave that came across, I was standing under a palm tree there. I figured that maybe that when they started strafing, I figured maybe they wouldn't see me there. But somehow or other they must have saw me because one small arms bullet went right through my

helmet at the top... fire helmet, and just grazed my head a little; just had a scalp wound. So I didn't bother much about it; didn't pay much attention to it, until that night about midnight the Lt. in charge, he sent me to the dispensary to have it taken care of. Then I came right back to duty again.

Q: When you think back on that day, what stands out in your mind the most vividly? What do you remember the best?

A: Well, I think that part I remember the best was surprise when we attacked by the Japanese planes. We didn't expect that at that time. I'll tell you, that sure surprised us. I'll never forget that.

Q: What was the situation on the Base at Hickam? Was it pretty confused?

A: Was what?

Q: Was it pretty confused?

A: Well, I wouldn't say it was so confused, but I still... a lot of them, the soldiers, I think it's the reason how they got wounded or killed, they was out there waving at the planes when they come across, and I think the pilots, they just took advantage of that and strafed them.

Q: Were there any American planes that came in during the Attack?

A: No. I believe it was later in the afternoon, that the B-17's came in from the Mainland. They were due in that day and they came in late in the afternoon. I think right just about the last attack, they came in. But I don't think none of them was damaged; not the B-17s.

Q: After the attack was over and the fires were out, what did they have the Fire Department do then?

A: Well, that day on the attack, was the Fire Marshall came out from Ft. Shafter, Col. Bopree(??)

Q: Do you remember how to spell his name?

A: Pardon?

Q: Do you remember how to spell his name?

A: No, I don't (laughter). He came out from Ft. Shafter. He give us a hand supervising the Fire Department. He stayed there the whole day and then the... I believe it was the next day, they have a supply yard down in Honolulu (Ft. Armstrong I believe it was) and we got a couple new fire trucks from there and we... So then within about two months I think we had about seven fire stations open all around Hickam.

Q: That's quite an increase!

A: Yes, it was. Then also, that same afternoon... late that afternoon, they sent us in 65 men. They picked out 65 servicemen and sent them into the Fire Department. So they gave us a hand. After that they stayed right in the Fire Department. We had to train them. So right after the attack we had a lot to do. We had all those new men to train and then to set up the new fire stations.

Q: Sounds like quite a job.

A: Yes it was.

Q: Were thing pretty tense after the attack?

A: Yes, it was pretty tense, especially in the evening of December the 7th. Some of the Navy personnel was a little trigger happy around 9:00 at night. You could hear them shooting the machine guns over there at Pearl Harbor. Thought something was coming in. They left them fly. Then after the attack, every morning, about 5:00, you could hear the Dawn Patrol going out from Pearl Harbor.

Q: Anything else you remember; you have to add?

A: (silence) There was a lot of cleaning up around the Fire Station to be done too, right after the attack. We cleaned it all up and we stayed right there in the barracks, even though there was no windows in there or nothing, but we still stayed in there.

Q: Did the Fire Station take any hits during the attack?

A: There was no direct hit on the Fire Department by any of the bombs, but the front of the Fire Station was all strafed. Close as they came to hitting the Fire Station was about 6 feet away on the last attack. The bomb hit right in the sidewalk and rocked the Station; caused all the plaster to fall off the ceiling.

Q: OK well thank you.

A: OK.

Megumi Yamashita #51
February 11, 1985

Q: Mr. Yamashita, how long had you been in the Honolulu Fire Department on December 7th, 1941?

A: 17 years.

Q: So you had been for 17 years, huh?

A: Yes, as hoseman.

Q: As hoseman? What fire station were you working at then?

A: Number 4 Company.

Q: Where was that station?

A: Palama.

Q: In Palama? How did you first know that something out of the ordinary was happening that morning?

A: That morning I knew from Sgt. Nobiga.(??)

Q: How did he know?

A: He had notice from the police main office.

Q: Did he have a radio?

A: Yeah he had a radio.

Q: Was Sgt. Nobiga(??) at the Palama Fire Station?

A: Yeah, just before he came down to the Fire Station and parked in the carport (not sure of context; very difficult to understand)

Q: Could you see anything from the Fire Station when you looked out toward Pearl Harbor?

A: Yeah. I could see the planes going downward and then the explosion was black smoke instead of the white smoke. Then I think something wrong; something funny happens. (remainder of this text is difficult to understand) ... Then our telephone rang. Then I knew so I came down ...(cannot understand)

** Mr. Yamashita has a very heavy local accent that is extremely difficult to understand. I was unable to transcribe much of the context which is essential to his story.

Allen Smith #52
February 12, 1985

Q: Mr. Smith, when did you first join the Fire Department?

A: In 1939.

Q: What station were you assigned to?

A: Central.
Q: Were you still at Central Station on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: No, I was transferred to Kakaako(??) Engine number... truck number nine.

Q: What were you doing when the attack began?

A: I going to the market for the meals for the day. I just come back and found out that we were being attacked.

Q: Did your Company get a call to respond?

A: Yeah, we responded to uh... I forgotten... anyway it was King and... King and (unclear), buildings.

Q: What was the situation over there?

A: They had dropped a bomb right through the building.

Q: What kind of damage was there?

A: Ah, just superficial.

Q: Was there a fire?

A: It was a small fire. But we were sent back by the Chief because we were needed at that time. Number One and Number Two took care of that fire.

Q: So, did you go back to Kakaako then?

A: Yes, we went back... back and started to cook and then the Stanley Livingston (??) told me, "Do you want to volunteer to go to Hickam Field?" I said, "Yes, I will." So then I shut everything off and I went to see the Asst. Cook according to finish it up you know. Say, "O.K." Got in a two-ton Ford. We go down to (unclear) and we go down to Hickam. We had a heck of a time getting in. We lucky we had the Department car. All we had was our own caps on; that's the uniform. We were in desert clothes (??) not in uniform; clothes that we used to work on our night instead of our various days.

Q: What did you find when you got down to Hickam?

A: The place look like a slaughter house to me. I been there a week previously visiting the firemen at Hickam. But it was just a disaster; all bombed out and the wagons are pumping from a hole in the ground made by a bomb. You know they busted the main.... the water mains. You know I saw all friends and fellow firemen fighting fire. They were just like seeing a lost friend. There was a talk about a planes coming back from behind a (unclear)??; nothing happens. I don't think might I was told.

Q: When you were there did you see... were there still bodies on the ground?

A: Oh yeah, there were bodies all over the place. They had arms and legs in a trash barrels.

Q: Were there fires still going?

A: Yes, they had fires going in the hangar and various other places.

Q: Were you able to hook up your wagon to take it back to the station.

A: Yes, we left there about... the first one we took out was about 2:00 and then we went back for the other one. We got there after 4:00 (remainder of sentence unclear)

Q: Did it take a long time to get back to the Station?

A: Traffic was congested but I had my lights on. My other (unclear) and every once in awhile turn on the fire bell you know. (unclear) cause luckily we had known the police yah, doing the traffic there.

Q: Did you have your siren on too?

A: No.

Q: How badly damaged were the Engines that you brought back?

A: Well two of them the motors were shot out. Then we went right to work on it when we got back. Worked when it was light; couldn't put the lights on.

Q: Why was that?

A: Oh you had practice 'black out' and the Governor had declared black out for that night until the War ended.

Q: It must have been pretty tough to work under 'black out' like that.

A: Yeah. We went to a fire at Elk's Club (someone...) came in. Took us from Kakaako to Waikiki to reach the destination, only 5 minutes. You know they had painted the lower half of the lights on the apparatus and the upper half showed but you have a little shield over it too keep it down. So you know I rode on the fender and I would holler, "Go to your left!" knowing it was

close to the cab you know. And we weren't traveling fast; we was just going 25-40 miles. I know about the speed limits anyway.

Q: When you went down to Hickam on the day of the attack and you saw all that death and destruction, how did you feel?

A: Luckily, you know prior to my coming to fires, I worked at the hospital... emergency hospital, so I was used to all this stuff. I could stand it. But the other guy, had to throw up and I thought Jesus, what a sight... You often wonder how some people can take it and some cannot. In my previous training I seen a lot or blood, accidents... car accidents. You know the reason I went down to Kakaako because one of the fire captains, Capt. Mehner brought back a resuscitator.

Q: Capt. who?

A: Mehner.

Q: How do you spell his last name?

A: Mehner.

Q: Had brought back a...?

A: Resuscitator. It was one, two, three, I think four of us standing around at that time. This was '39. I guess that the Chief had a idea that I knew how to operate it. It was a must at the hospital. So when I got there on my watch, nobody knew how to operate that thing. So every time they ask me to explain to employees. I told look all you doing is doing artificial respiration, but chemically with this thing. That's all you gotta think about. We... if my grand (??) leader what we would do or should do, I told them part of artificial respiration that's all I know.

Q: What's probably the thing that is your strongest memory of the Dec. 7th attack?

A: (something??) and the guys that operated on the fire, you know. You fight the fire on the fire and that stuff (something??)

Q: Well, do you have anything else you want to add?

A: No, I guess that's it.

Q: O.K., well, I thank you very much.

A: You trying to write a book you say?

Q: This is going to be... the tape is going to be kept in an archives...

A: Oh I see.

Q: for people who want to study the Pearl Harbor attack and who

want to write about it.

A: I see.

Rose Rassebo #55
February 27, 1985

Q: Mrs. Rassebo, where were you living on December 7th?

A: Well,on Alexander Street coming on up to Wilder Avenue, near the Sacred Heart Church and the little elementary Catholic school that my boy would go to.

Q: Were you working then?

A: No, I was a housewife with an 11 month old child and a 6 year old boy.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of the attack?

A: Well, surprisingly, we were at church at the children's mass which was at 8:00.

Q: Which church was that?

A: This is the Sacred Heart Church on Wilder Avenue. And before confession, well communion was given, there came an eruption of people dashing to the church saying that any key man or any employee of Pearl Harbor must go done and be there as they're needed. We're being attacked by the Japanese.

So just then as we rushed out, just then we noticed that there were small suicidal planes up above and commotion of that sort and I had but two and a half blocks to walk home. When I got home the children's dad had the radio on saying, telling us to get a hold of some containers, wash them clean, fill them up with water, and have a lot of water on hand, and keep calm, and stay home, not be out in the streets, and not get the car and go traveling here and there, to stay put. And that is what was on the radio all day long until they said that we were under martial law.

Q: As a housewife, I imagine one of you big concerns was taking care of your family under the situation.

A: Well, the first thing was food; that was my first thought. And uh, look into the cupboard it's just the usual stable things that you keep but not knowing what you're going to have and what you're not going to have while you decide that the first opportunity you have you're going to just roam out the stores, you know. And where we are we have the mama-papasan stores that were normally open on Sundays but that Sunday they were closed; and to have enough of everything to work with, soap, besides food, accessories, clothing, washing, what have you.

Q: When was the first time you were able to get out shopping?

A: It was the next day, Monday. I looked around to see how much cash I had and went down about four houses to see my mother then was living in one of these duplexes, and she had a few dollars on her person so she handed my what she had. And the Monday, next

day, why we took my baby's carriage and a neighbor and we rounded the stores for blocks, really walked from 8:30, and we didn't get home until 4:00. We were loaded with what food we could get.

Q: What range? How far a field did you roam?

A: Well, up to Moilili I would say it's about a good mile up to Moilili and clear on down to Pensacola; that's another good mile and coming back, we're in mid- Pawaa Junction as it's called you know. And we found many stores that were very receptive in letting us have what we could find on the shelves. But what disturbed us was that we saw foods going out the back door, bags of rice, cans of canned milk, which I wanted as my 11 month old baby was still on a formula (he was a premature baby) and things going out favorably for their own people, the Japanese. So even with that facing us I think we did very well that one day with my baby and myself shopping as we did, with what money we had.

Q: You lived only a couple of blocks from Punahou School.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember Punahou School being taken over by the Army?

A: By the U.S.E.D.[*U.S. Engineers Department*] yes, and there were quarters, and they had a big dining room, and I believe the building in the back, (what they call the dorm for the girls); that was also taken over too, as well as on Punahou Street going toward town, the Pleasanton Hotel was also taken over by the Army.

Q: Where actually was the Pleasanton Hotel?

A: That's where the Fernhurst is now.

Q: Oh.

A: Exactly, right on the same premises.

Q: And there must have been a lot of coming and going at odd hours.

A: Oh yes. While, I think it was in January... January 4th, was when my baby was a year old. And it was shortly after that, after the black our, he was playing in his crib, and somehow fell over and out of the crib onto one of the metal toys of his brothers (by the way, we had no metal toys while Scott was young but this is one of his brothers), and so falling, he had cut open his ear lobe and a gash on his temple. So I ran down the four houses down the way and got a hold of my mother, and my husband called the ambulance. They came out. I rode in the ambulance (this is black out). My mother had a tag on her car and a light of some sort that they had put on, I guess to show that it was alright for her to be on the road. And we were stopped, oh here and there, occasionally, you know.

Q: Which hospital were you going to?

A: We went to the Childrens Hospital which is at one time the Kuikini Hospital. What it is today I do not know. But I do know it's still standing for some use anyway. And my doctor was with a medical group and he was just finishing doing some surgery. So they called him to tell him I was coming and he then took care of Scotts ear and his cut on his temple. I even remember him giving him a quarter for being such a nice boy. He didn't cry at all.

Q: Tell me, when they had black outs, what did you have to do to your house?

A: Well, uh, we had these globes that just the very center..all of it was painted black but the very center. So the beam of the light went down; it didn't go out. And then we had black heavy denim to put across our windows and our doorway, you know going into the bathroom, bedroom, living room, whatever. And that's how it was because... and then again they had men who went around and what would you say they would be... like uh...

Q: Wardens?

A: Yes. Absolutely. That's the word they used, yeah. And I was caught one night. I was in the kitchen and I had completely forgotten to put that curtain on the doorway leading to the lanai outside. And he was in the next yard so he came across the fence and boy did I get because they were fining people.

Q: Were you fined?

A: No. It was just a don't you do it again, which I said I certainly wouldn't.

Q: So, it was taken pretty seriously?

A: Oh yes! Oh yes! And of course people would have parties and things would slacken and people would be careless and those were the people that were fined.

Q: What was the food situation like in terms of getting fresh food, say like apples and oranges?

A: Well, at that time it was more than a year before I had an apple or an orange, and if it hadn't been for friends from the commissary or uh... people with such that they could share an apple, an orange or two, it would have been, Lord, three years before I'd have a bite of an apple or an orange. But then, we had to stand in line, que up for foods, and I remember the supermarkets would have a sign that would say, oh... fresh meat on a certain day, certain hour. It wouldn't be all day; just for certain hours, and the lines would be around the block. You know, I mean you were limited, just so much meat to get and so forth.

Q: Was that rationing?

A: Yes.

Q: How long would you have to wait in line sometimes?

A: Well, a couple of hours and of course we could get all the sugar we could. Well, there was these friends of ours on the mainland that would write to us and say no sugar... you know, just so much sugar and no more. But we could have all the sugar we wanted. But course, it would irk me, I'd go to the small papasan poi shop and then stand in line and here are these ethnic group, Chinese, Japanese, standing in line for their poi. I really wanted it for my little 11 month old baby. I could do without but it was a food substance for him in place of cereal or starch you know, and then just as it got to me I'd be told that there'd be nothing to be had for me. That I would steam up but what can you do.

Q: Did you work at all during the War?

A: No, I stayed home. My husband felt that there was plenty for me to do at home, which was so. And I helped to babysit; not too many but a few, and of course it would be babysitting that they would come and pick up their babies... not being overnight or in different hours. I just wanted to schedule them, because I had things to do myself. And visiting was not too much to be had, and there was a time there that we couldn't use the phone as often as we wanted. But it got so that it was alright after a while.

Q: Did you do any kind of volunteer work?

A: No. I couldn't. There was enough to keep my home. And then we had to go down and get our gas masks, fitted for ourselves, at different central... what did they call those posts? Different areas that you go to you know to get your papers or they submit you with as I say, gas masks, with the little ones.

Q: Were there different places in each neighborhood?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where was the one that was closest to you?

A: This was almost in town. I would say near the Capitol somewhere. I don't know why but I remember going down there.

Q: So you were issued a gas mask?

A: I was. And Dean was also.

Q: Is Dean your son?

A: My son. He was then six. But the little one; I honestly don't remember what the little one had of anything. I honestly don't remember.

Q: Did they ever issue any of the real small children little sort of like what they call 'bunny bags'?

A: It might have been that. You see, I didn't roam around too much. I was one that stayed home quite a bit. I didn't want to go out any more than was necessary and I didn't want to tag the children along.

Q: So they had gas masks even for the sizes to fit a small child; a six year old boy?

A: Some sort of safety I remember. And of course the schools came in on this too you know; the various schools. They had their exercises and what have you, I was told. I was never there but I was told about it.

Q: You mean air raid drills?

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, the situation must have been pretty tense right after the attack.

A: Well, we had a few neighbors down the street, and there was one particularly as I say, that had their upstairs turned into a shrine, a Japanese shrine, and Mrs. Kuniuki(??) would come down the stairs and she'll say, "Bomb by Japan come. Bomb by Japan come." Maybe we would be under the jurisdiction of the Japanese.

Q: So people really didn't know whether there might not actually be a Japanese invasion, did they?

A: No. No. Not at all.

Q: It must have been pretty frightening in a way.

A: It was... not knowing, you know. Then it was much later that they had people leaving that wanted to leave. I believe they had to wait their quota of some sort, and my neighbor left with her six children. And women were told to wear slacks, no dresses while they on board; good reasons why. But the Japanese I knew, they were friendly. They were in doubt what would happen to them too and a lot of them were nice people. They spoke well and they were going to schools. Some of them were teachers. A couple of boys there were lawyers, you know. They were Americans. Their mothers and fathers were born and raised in Japan and came over here but there was nothing wrong with them at all. They really tried to emphasis the fact that they were Americans. Of course the old folks were different. They were so sure that we would be taken over.

Q: Do you remember building any kind of fortifications, or them building any kinds of fortifications or defense works?

A: All around the area, the Palace grounds, and over at Central Union Church, and where ever there was an area large enough, they built these shelters. And then, I remember now, we were told to build shelters for ourselves. And we couldn't; there was a yard big enough but we didn't want anything dug up there. So for the

safety of the whole area we then went over to Central Union Church, which is on Punahou and Beretania and that was where we felt that we could got for shelter.

Q: Did they have a shelter there at Central Union?

A: Yeah, around that area. And they even had some at Punahou grounds.

Q: Do you remember any other places in your neighborhood; in the Makiki area there that were taken over by the Army or where the Army established bases and camps?

A: No. No, I don't. As I say, I didn't wander around too much, too far. I stayed around our area as much as I could.

Q: O.K., well, I appreciate your sharing your memories with us.

A: Isn't it funny, two weeks ago, I was with Mrs. Winney(??). (she was here at WW II), Mrs. Winney, Lonnie Berenger(??) and who else now, we got together... and this came up about the situation of how it was you know, and we all agreed that we really didn't know from one day to another the very first week, what was going to happen. What would have happened? What could have happened? What if the...

Q: That's a very interesting what if.

A: You see, now Betty Oliver(??) was living off at Pearl City and he was then Commanding Officer. His ship was coming in when they realized we were being attacked. So according to Allan, they changed their course a bit and made it a round about way to get to Pearl Harbor. I don't know what that means. Where would they go in a round about way but I remember him saying that. And when he came in Betty tried to call me. The line was cut off. The whole area of Pearl City was then moved up to Waimano Home up the mountain side. She was ill in bed and Allan, her son, was helping with her. He was then the same age as my boy. When Allan came in, and then he was told...

Q: This is the father?

A: Yeah, the father, Lt. Allan Oliver. He went up to get her and he came to me. He left her at some place, I don't know where, he maybe then took care of her. Then he came to me with his son, and of course, I had Allan with me for a while. And he wanted to know whether I was able to have Betty with me. I wasn't fixed for an additional grown up and a sick one at that. So she was put in Leahi Hospital and there she stayed until she was well. And then they came to stay with my mother who had a two bedroom apartment you know, and stayed with her for awhile. Now she's gone but I still contact Allan Oliver and he's over in Hawthorne area, remarried of course. And he is... I'm going on 74, so he is close to 80... spry as everything.

Q: That sort of thing just really shows you how you know, the big events impact peoples daily lives.

A: And it was through them I had my first apple and my first orange.

Q: It must have been pretty welcome.

A: True so. To quarter and eighth an apple... that's going some. Whereas we would have an apple to ourselves, or possibly a half. To quarter and to eighths! Boy I never realized how welcome belly welcome would mean and be edible at the same time, because it would just be bacon. But this was the belly part and it was fatty. It was very little layers of meat in between, but I tell you what, it was bacon to us. So many things that we could... Then of course my cousin who was a chaplain with the Marines. I have not met this side of the Quinns(??) from Iowa. I was a Quinn, and He came over and he came to the house. He knew where we were. He came to the house and here he was with a Marine Corps, all decked out, with a pipe in his mouth. And he says, I'm so and so and so and so and so and so. Well, I don't know who you are. But when he said, "My mom Rose Quinn and you have the same name." Yeah I said, could you be Dr. Ridell's(??) son? He said, "hell yes!" For a priest he used beautiful words... choice words too. So he came with some ?? , and breads, and buns.

Q: Must have seemed like manna from heaven.

A: I'm telling you. He was wonderful. He was also the one... he told us had they taken that picture you know, the young man of the Iwo Jima that was holding the flag. If they had gone down a little bit, they would have got him.

Q: He just missed it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Missed by a few feet.

A: Well, that bunch of Quinn are a little bit too much this macho type. I'm not that way at all. I still see them. They're over at Fullerton and Anaheim, which I'm not in gathering and seeing my relations.

Q: Sounds really interesting to hear you talk about those days.

A: Well, I'm glad to be alive. But I had some wonderful Japanese friends.

Q: Yeah.

A: Iquinio Beboy(??) was made, 10 years ago, he was with the 442nd, he was promoted, I don't know what rank it is. They're over at Anaheim. They have four children. Lovely people.

Q: Thank you.

A: You're very welcome.

Emigdio Cabico #56
February 27, 1985

Q: Mr. Cabico, where were you working before the War started?

A: I was working at the plantation store.

Q: Which store?

A: Helemano Grand

Q: Helemano?

A: Helemano Grand, I was the store manager.

Q: What were you doing on Dec. 7th, 1941?

A: Well, as I said, some of my friends, that was Sunday, stores closed. We don't open Sunday. But since I opened, I came if I can do a favor (cannot understand)... I said, "O.K.". So, I went out and we... I was putting the ceiling fan. Then we saw about five planes. Was so low. Almost touched the top of the cane field. So we was Wondering how come this airplanes is flying so low. Was really low! Then (cannot understand) I don't know... I don't know. Took us by surprise. Then after maybe three minute, then we heard machine gun... "katakatakata!" that's in the cane above Helemano they were before... before the pineapple cane. Then we was wondering how come machine gun? Then about... about 5 minute we heard the big explosion, you know? So all we can hear was that, So oh loud and "Bong bong bong bong". This was the bomb. They bombed the warehouse and all the (can't understand) that was parked on the field . So I was wondering, hey, how come? So I was wondering, one of my neighbors... my friend said, "O.K. Go home and open your radio." Then he opened his radio and said, "Oh wah wah wah that in Hawaii,I mean America, Japanese". So everybody get excited. (laughter)
So everybody went home. They had on the radio. And then they broadcast Filipino, Japanese, and all, so everybody surprised... everybody surprised. So we said, "Well, what are we going to do now? War! Everybody go home! Make ready, because in case they come Hawaii maybe they going to come and kill us!" (laughter) So everybody went home... everybody went home.
Then after so many days... after that day... next day, then somebody come around don't use no light.

Q: What did you have to do to your house?

A: Well, (cannot understand) ... you have to come home early and cook early, but don't use light. Without. If you do use light there's a guard going around, if you get light in house, they come knock your door, "Hey, your light is on." So you have to prepare early your supper... eat early, in order to knock off the light.
Then after a week or so, they came again. Make a bomb shelter... your own. Everybody surprised! (laughter) Make your bomb shelter!

Q: How did you do that?

A: Well we had to dig, you know! Like my friend come help me out, you know, because I'm alone, so we have to help one another to dig big holes, and you know, bomb shelter... make your own bomb shelter. So that's what we did.

Then after a few weeks maybe, then soldier came in. It's about 500 of them. They put the pen around the playground and the playground is not enough, also (cannot understand) the whole thing. So since I was working in the store, I cannot keep up in serving them, serving them soda for the water. So the Captain say, "Hey, Cabico, you want help?", "Yes!" Oh so they give me about 10 soldier just open the soda water, I collect the money. So many soldier over there you know. They all thirsty you know... you all thirsty. Even the cook he drink because he no can give up... he no can give up. So, well, I say thank you very much because the soldiers come to help me yah? You must think 500 soldier along the camp. How can you expect them to serve them. Everybody like cook, they all thirsty...(laughter)... they all thirsty.

Then after that, maybe after a month, then the Sergeant, the Lt. came to me, "Mr. Cabico," I said, "Yes." "...you folks have to learn how to fight because not only us will fight the enemy in case they come. You folks have to learn." And what we have? We have knives that's all. He said, "No, we teach you how to use the rifle." I say, "O.K! ...use the machine gun," I say, "O.K!" (laughter) "O.K., call all Filipino." O.K., I did. I call all of them, and then we got a meeting. I told them that the soldier, the Lt. will come here and give us instruction how to use the gun. They say, "O.K. Sure. Why not!"

So that Sunday at 11:00 we went to a beach, right? And we practiced how to shoot the gun; then after the gun the machine gun, you know; and then after that, that big cannon you know... that big cannon. Oh you can see the fire... you can see. So we know. We learn. We learned how to operate
those.

Then after that they tell, "Oh, Mr. Cabico, we have to learn how to march." I say, "O.K.!" But after everybody come home, everybody work, they say O.K. Well when they come home I have a meeting again. I tell them, "O.K., we got meeting." They say, "Why?" "Oh, we got to learn how to march!" Oh the big crowd showed up (laughter) how to march, how to walk. O.K., then they... you know, since I understand very well; they don't understand, so I had to dictate how to execute, right face, left face, (cannot understand) so we did do that. So every Sunday, we have parade... just like parade of march through all the sugar, all they watching us how to parade. Then it happened that they also make different camp... they did also make different camp.

So one day everybody which one the best foot... best marching. So we participate in the contest (cannot understand). Oh! Plenty people... plenty people, all soldiers... plenty people. So we didn’t ask who got the first prize, but I know because we were practicing first eh? So, we know already. I commanding in Filipino, so when I say, "Right face!", eh we were over there! "Left face!". eh go that way... everybody (laughter) We had good fun you know... we had good fun. So that how we... as far as I know... as far as I know.

Q: When they give you folks the rifles, was there any trouble between the Filipino people and the Japanese people living over here?

A: Uh, no, when they heard the news, especially the broadcast on the Filipino radio, that the Japanese were (??) in the Philippines. So this Filipino, they get mad. I'm going to kill this Japanese. They kill my father. I said, "No, don't do that. If you do that you going to be in jail all your life. Because this is America now... remember this is America. So they cannot do that. If you kill somebody, you go in jail for nothing. So you better not." So they cool off on account of me. I advise them don't do anything. After all, the old Japanese, they all nice to us, as friend, as usual, you know we came to the store. We're all friends. No hard feelings, because I don't have no hard feelings that's why. Because the War is in the Philippines, not here in Hawaii.(laughter) So everybody cool off. So everybody depart. Feel happy. No trouble... no trouble. Anything else you want to know?

Q: I can't think of anything. Well, going back to.... one other thing.... going back to on the day of the attack. Did you try to get outside at all and see what was happening? Like drive around or anything?

A: We tried to walk you know? As I said eh, since the Kam Highway we wanted to drive. But since all the truck passing by and one policeman say, "Hey, go home! Go home! Go home!" So everyone went home. So we like watch the car, all the big car, all the cannon, and all what not eh? Soldier are passing by loaded with soldiers, we like watch. But I think it was one policeman I think tell us, "Go home. You cannot cross the road." So everybody went home (laughter); each individual. So that's what as far as I know.

Well of course during the War we cannot go out because when they put the gasoline ration, only pay dollar one month. How we expect to go only paying one dollar one month. So we just around the camp that's all... that's all. Because only ten gallons a month. We cannot go out.... we cannot go out. We cannot go out with ten gallons. Go out to restaurant, Helemano, come back that's all, with the ten gallon a month. That's the ration.

So during the War we are happy because some of the people they wanted to go out someplace you see you cannot go. Then toward the end of the gasoline ration, then that's the time. Now(cannot understand) we don't know about Honolulu. We don't know about Honolulu, especially all the Filipinos. Only they saw Honolulu when they reach at the pier. That's why they know Honolulu. So they are interested to go to Honolulu. It happened that one businessman (Japanese) he get three car, Alleluia. He's my friend. He told me, "Cabico, if you are interested to go to Honolulu, I have three cars are available." So we took all the Filipinos to town cause they like go Honolulu. We did... we did. You see, those days very cheap only 50 cents to go back and forth. That's how we learned how to go to Honolulu. Then he told us again, "You like to go to the business lady?" We said, "Sure, why not!" He said, "O.K. I have to learn the way." Well of course, it would be Saturday sometime. Friday night we go.

Saturday night we go. Saturday night we go. Then I leave all the room... I leave all the room. Then after that I go to my car... my car see. I go to my car. Well, I don't worry already because I got plenty passenger. (cannot understand quite a few sentences) I charge them only 50 cents. This time I charge them 50 cents. So … (can't understand) I tell them "I'm Filipino, you like me", they say, "Yes". "So when we get to the Honolulu what kind of meat you like. You like white meat" (Laughs). Yes we have no problem. So we went to the Ala Moana Hotel(?) So the lady who (cannot understand) over there, O.K., whenever one passenger she give me one dollar... she gave me one dollar.

Q: Each one?

A: Each one. So I'm lucky because you know I got five dollar... I got five dollar. I say good. I don't worry my monthly payment on my car because I make money... I make money.

Q: How much did they charge each day?

A: Five dollar. Eat one pound get five dollar (laughter). So I make money... I make money. It was good fun. Then you like cheap kind meat. Say how much? Two dollar. Say O.K. we go. Maybe we win again. Maybe we make fifty cents. (laughter) They give me 50 cents... I make more money. So I (don't understand) white meat, I make more money, make more money.

Then after that, you know being a plantation grand store manager. Then they told my again that Cabico, uh, will you tell us what (cannot understand)... We come.

Q: Out from town out to here?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah... we come. He say, "Oh, how much (cannot understand)... oh one dollar the white meat". He say, "O.K." Easy one yah? I told all the Filipino O.K., after pay today, tonight they going to come... I call them up. Oh, they come. Then after so many months we doing that, I read in the newspaper that this is against the law. (laughter) I read in the newspaper is against the law. I ask (??). So I told those people I don't solicit nobody because once you get caught... too bad. Since the soliciting have been trouble, I don't want to involve because after all I'm grand store manager (Laughs) maybe, I get fired from my job. So we stopped.

So, they come. They only ask me sometime. They call me up. Only one telephone in the camp, only in the store. They call me hey Cabico, when will be pay day. Oh Friday. So we come again, so now it's up to you guys now. I don't interfere now. I escape because after all it is written in this paper it is against the law. But this year not so strict maybe, how come in Honolulu ... no more police man, no more squad come around. But I read in the newspaper that is against the law... against the law. But so far, how long we doing it in the cab. But besides here I don't anymore (laughter). After all I'm grand store manager then I get caught solicit (cannot understand). I get involved uh? I don't like. So we stopped. The only thing, when they called my up... they called me up said Cabico, when is it going to be pay day "Do you want to fool around", I say.. O.K. tell them. No, no I

don't want to tell them. It's up to you guys. If we get caught we get in trouble. How you know it. From Cabico, say I no like... I no like any more. The only thing I can pay is what they paid. (cannot understand) Well, that's all.

Q: Well, that's really interesting.

A: So those days no more, no more, no more reprisals those days... no more. So what I did since I understand very much. Say why don't we sometime garden together and we do it ourselves. See some of the boys can play the guitar any kind. Say why don't we do something like one club. Yeah but when we get done like that we no more girls. Oh well we go around plenty girls go around. In those days all Filipino girls or other girls. So everybody have to find their own partner in order we get social done (laughter). Well, when they come, well we dig up. We have just like a party, just like picnic. We dig up one dollar each in those days, meat is so cheap, so we can afford to buy meat, buy pork, all kind, we make them feel good. Uh! The partners and the parents, you know the girl make them feel good. See, that's how we meet, that's how we (can understand) in the camp...

Now later on, I was assigned to Kawailoa... I went back to Kawailoa. Then no more same thing. No more reprisal. So what I did... what I did, I told them (cannot understand) So we did in each camp get one (cannot understand). So each Sunday big crowd in the playground. (Laughter)(can't understand) we challenge each other. Then I told them enough, enough. What about volleyball? Sure! Sure, young boy they play volleyball. So we make again volleyball in each camp. So I do all the arranging what can we play. Every Saturday night, oh big crowd. (cannot understand). Then afterward I think the plantation make money, huh. They build up theater for them in a tent. In those days only ten cent to go in the theater. Then afterward they make a tennis court. We don't know how to play tennis. But I told them we have to learn... we have to learn. So and the leader said you have to learn; buy the racket and all so I work in the store. The more I sell the more I make more money. Sell all the racket (laughter). So they learn fast how to play tennis. So we challenge again. Then after a while pretty soon they not make money. They build one game, skating game you know, skating inside the you know...

Q: Roller skating?

A: Yeah. Roller skate and dancing and all like that and everything in there you know. (cannot understand)so kind they make money. So we pool and swimming pool you know. So we had good fun in the camp. We forgot all about the War(laughter)... forgot all about the War. So we get good fun. (cannot understand) that's as far as I...

Q: Well that's interesting. That's interesting. I'm really glad I talked to you.

A: (laughter) O.K. really.

Q: O.K. thank you.

A: Well of course, the first time I get, how did I came to Hawaii. And uh, I told them the story. You know, when I came to Hawaii, I was only 16 to 17 1/2. Then when I went to Manila and they reject me because I'm too young. They no like me because I'm too young. Because the high age people, 21, 22, 23, I don't have any personal contact. So you know what I did, I like to come to Hawaii. I went back home, because they told me that you get permit from your parents consent, and signed by the municipal (can't understand). So I did. I went back. I went back to my parents and I told them that I will borrow my brothers pack (cannot understand). They said why? Because they no like take me because I too young. So what I did I took my brothers pack. I used his name and put mine on. Then I went back to Manila and I showed (they don't know me anyway) I showed them I'm 31. My name is Saguario(??). Then they believe me. That's why I go to Hawaii (laughter). You see, that's why I came to Hawaii. Otherwise I cannot come to Hawaii.

Q: What province were you from originally?

A: Near Pangasanan.

Q: Oh, up north.

A: In the middle top of Luzon. That's how I came to Hawaii because used my brothers name, Saguario(??) Now when I took the citizenship then I changed my name. It was on the application, "What is your real name". What name you use when you came to Hawaii. That's why my name Amillio Cabico. See all my people they change that in the office. (cannot understand)(Laughter). You see, (can't understand) I was lucky that we made into Hawaii. They put me as clerk, because when we arrived here in Hawaii, when we arrive here in Hawaii, about 65 people together, then when we went to the office they cannot, Haole, Japanese write our name, spell our name. So we had hard time writing our name. So we ask who can write. So I raise up my hand. So I write all the name. Then when they saw my penmanship was so fancy ... they said Wow. Did you graduate in Santo Tomas University? I said no. How come you can write so fancy? That's how, the way I wright. It is my handwriting. See they don't believe. What grade
are you, I don't eaven graduate primary grade in the Phillipines. No, no, no, you are telling lie. You better tell the truth.
I'm telling you the truth , I did not eaven graduate primary grade, O.K I was in the 4th grade, O.K. I was promoted fifth grade, I attended 5th grade three months, then I came to Hawaii, people don't believe, I'm only attended three months 5th grade in three months in the Phillipines. They assign us to Kauailoa(??) and then they told me that tomorrow don't walk because we coming to pick you up it's over by the manager O.K. Then that was Monday morning I think they came to my house. The policeman come. Hey, Cabico, you going jail, Why! Because you not telling the truth, you telling lie. Hey no,no,no, I'm telling the truth. You going jail boy. Well, I was so scared but what I did. I didn't do nothing. O.K., they took me to the office, interview by one of the superintendent. O.K. what kind job you want. [*I say*] "Any kind of job as long as I get paid". He said what kind of job. You like work in the office. 'No, I can just fill anyplace as long as it pay". And he said "Can you take the test". Yes. If you pass the test then you qualify to work in a store as a clerk. I say "Yes". So I did. We had about eight

take the test. We went one room, it was about eight hours. So written test. Oh I was thinking it's so simple... so simple. So I finish this within one hour. Oh no one hour, I make it quick, not even ten minute I finish because so simple uh? And that was how I write fancy kind... fancy. Well, you know, I don't know so much English uh? So yeah, so they said write Honolulu (cannot understand), write your name (cannot understand)... (laughter) (Cannot understand) review why should I review, finished , don't need review (cannot understand). He took my paper. He say O.K. (cannot understand) (Laughter) some of them 7th grade, some of them 6th grade, some of them 8th grade. How come you have such a low grade but you finish so quick. So they was surprised again. See how I finished so quick and my handwriting. O.K. (cannot understand) this people (cannot understand) manager in the plantation want a job. Then the policeman say "Ah!, boy, you go jail today". I say how come. Then O.K. Manager want to see you. So is that right your going to put me in jail not telling the truth? He saying no me only kidding you (laughter) They kidding you, how come they sent you to [*take*]the test? And your handwriting so fancy. You graduate from the Santo Thomas University. I say no sir. You no believe. Take me home and I will get my monthly report Card (cannot understand). So I went home. Then I get my card, then they believe me, I was in low grade never go to college (laughter).

Then they put me in the store right away as a clerk. That's how I got my job. Now the worst part again, in that store there were about seven men working and they all [*were from*] Visaya. And I'm Illicano, and we cannot understand each other because they are Visayan and I'm Ilocano. So we can understand each other by talking English because we know how to speak little bit English, little bit Japanese. Now the problem again, those Visayan people they was so jealous. They no teach me the price, the item, the price, they gave me a little mop. So I went to the grand manager How do you expect me to sell if you don't put the price on the item. How do I know the price. He said well you have to learn, you have to learn. Well if that's how you fell, my goodness, then well O.K. Now when Filipino come it's about 200 one time come to the store, they all Ilocano. They all come to me because they know I'm an Ilocano. How can I serve them if I don't know the price of the item, the canned goods. I don't know because they don't teach me. So naturally I got hard time. I told them I just start to work today. I don't know the price Vienna sausage, I don't know the Spam, the price(cannot understand). Then I went say how come the other people no sell. They cannot understand one another. They took this letter to the Ilocano,they don't know how to speak Visayan, they talk English. They don't know how to speak English. So I tell him why don't you teach Tagalog maybe they understand, why don't you folks talk to them in Visayan, but I'm not Visayan you don't understand our language to either. So (cannot understand). When I learn all the price, every item I put down, because I ask. If you don't teach me I go report you. How can you expect me to sell if I don't know the price. Then I learned after three months, I knew every item in the store. I memorize all the price. Then I complain. I wrote a letter to the manager... the general manager. I got hard time in the store because mostly all [*store workers*] are Visayan, and I take care of all the Ilocano, I got a hard time. How do you expect me to, 100 come at one time, how do you expect me to sell, these people [*Visayan store workers*], always talking story in one corner? I work hard. Then the manager come, "Is that right Mr. Cabico" yes I got hard time, "Oh!, If that's the case", yes they already come, they already come Visayan pepople. And then I can't sell the Visayan because I didn't learn the language. Within one month I learn the language, Visayan, I cam speak Visayan language, but regardless Visayan, I can sell them, I can sell them. There is a language I can, because I learn the language so fast, I learn so I can sell the Visayan, Ilocano and Visayan. So that's right next day, three fired. Four left. Another

day, three fired. (Laughter) Then the manager ask me who you want, I want Ilocano to come, Ilocano to come. O.K., so they hire Ilocano. So I feel good because Ilocano, I teach them the price and all (cannot understand)they learn. Then only the branch manager stayed back, because it’s long time he’s manager. Then after one year he does something wrong, he gets fired. That's why I am promoted as a manager. Being Filipino without education, it was the top (laughter). I'm on the top. By working honestly and very courteous to the customer that's how I got promoted, that's how I got promoted.

Q: O.K., well good.

(end of tape)

Florence Washburn #58
March 18, 1985

Q: Mrs. Washburn, what kind of work were you doing in 1941?

A: I was doing accounting work with the recreation office in Fort Shafter.

Q: What did that sort of work involve.

A: It involved taking care of all the post headquarters and enlisted men with their recreational activities. We were in charge of the theater, the bowling alleys, the post library. We also had the enlisted mens club. We had sports; the major sports we had were baseball and football. We competed with other service men on different bases like Schofield, Hickam Field, (there weren't too many at the time of course.) But we did have sports competing with other groups on the Island.

Q: Where were you living at the time?

A: I was living at the time up on Round Top Drive, and we had a house that was high enough to overlook the whole Island, and we had a beautiful view of Pearl Harbor, Mt. Kaala, the Waianae Range, Hickam Field, as well as the Coast Guard area and all of Honolulu. It was a beautiful view.

Q: Do you remember looking out from your house on the morning of December 7th, what the weather was like that morning? What kind of day was it?

A: The weather as I recall was a beautiful day because I was as usual on the weekends, I usually wait and watch the dawn patrol come in. That was one of my favorite things to do on the weekend when I was home, because it was such a beautiful sight seeing these planes come in over the Koolau Range, the Waianae Range. And this one morning, it was a beautiful view too and I saw the planes coming in as usual on time.

Q: About what time was that? Do you recall?

A: It was just about daybreak. I would say a little after 5:30, pretty close to 6:00 in the morning. But then I noticed something unusual happening and it looked at though they were coming in unusually fast and then I noticed shortly after that, the anti-aircraft guns being fired. Of course we had a lot of those in those days and I got quite concerned then.

Q: Why did you get concerned?

A: Well, it was unusual from the regular dawn patrol that I watched coming in almost every Sunday morning. I had never seen anything like that happening; all these rocketing of smoke or whether it was artificial or real. But the anti-aircraft guns,

we fired, I watched them on practice. But this was very unusual for a Sunday morning... and at the same time when I noticed a lot of traffic coming up on Round Top which is also very unusual for a weekend, or Sunday morning. And watching the cars going up and up to the top of Tantalus, I noticed there were a lot of Orientals. At the time, I didn't know what was going on. But there were a lot of cars going up there. And I continued to watch and I called Margaret Deitz(?) who I was sharing a house with and I told her to come on out. I said there must be something wrong. I said look at all of those guns going off. I said there's something wrong. So she ran downstairs (it was a two(c)story house)... she ran downstairs and by our garden and we looked out from the ridge where we could see everything and she said, "Oh my God, I think we're being attacked!" I said, "I don't know but there's something wrong." And...

Q: As you looked out, excuse me, as you looked out over Pearl Harbor, what did you see?

A: I could see it more from Hickam field where those anti-aircraft guns were coming. But from Pearl Harbor at the time, it was just covered with smoke. I didn't see any explosions at the time. And all of a sudden as we looked up there was this plane that went overhead over uh, Tantalus and Round Top, and when we looked up there was a raising sun underneath the wing. And I started to call her. I said, "It's a Japanese plane." And she said, "Are you sure?" And I said, "Yes the Rising Sun is underneath." And then we turned the radio on and then we started to hear the broadcasts about our being attacked an all. And then we saw all the explosions going on in Pearl Harbor. We didn't know at the time whether they were ships, or whether they were rockets, or whatever was going on, but we could see all the smoke... black smoke going up into the air. Then we saw planes up into the air. And of course by the time... oh by noon, or a little after that, things had simmered down, There were no more planes but we could see the smoke continuing forever.

And then we were being called over the radio to those who could come back into their posts. And I called in then, to Fort Shafter and asked if I could come in, or if they wanted me in and they said, "Well, come on later this afternoon. But we will send a driver for you." And so I... then I asked Margaret Deitz(?) that I would move down into town and that's on Wilder in the Makiki area; that I had better move down there. It would be more convenient for the military to pick me up rather than coming up to Tantalus and Round Top and try and find us, which she did. She took me down and I stayed at the Colonial Hotel there.

Q: Where was the Colonial...

A: It was right on Pensacola Street. And she also moved from her house because she was frightened, over to Tantalus Drive with her sister. We had a beautiful home on the top of the hill there. And I got settled in the Colonial Hotel and later a driver was sent for me and I let them know that I was there and they picked me up and drove me into the post.

And at the time Tripler Hospital was just across the street from Fort Shafter, and they were in need of a lot of help. And so we started pitching in doing what we could do. And they were bringing in bodies

evidently from the lagoon area where people had gone out fishing that morning and it was a regular routine for a lot of families to go out fishing in that area there. And so bodies were being brought in and we were helping at Tripler Hospital, the best way we could. And finally by the end of the day or late evening I also had a Red Cross girl that was on the post that was helping (we were both very good friends; she lived in Waikiki) and we were busy helping, whatever they needed us to do... moving bags. And then I noticed a lot of these duffel bags in the hall way. Didn't know what they were, but they were being brought in and filed there. And about... oh it was after dinner. We didn't eat. I couldn't eat. I fell asleep right in the hall way against these duffel bags and I just went out. And when I did get up, I found my back wet, and a cold eerie feeling against my back and I was... So I started to look around and felt the bags, only to discover that there were corpses in a lot of them that they had brought in.

Q: How grizzly.

A: Oh, that frightened me. But then not enough. I was still evidently in the state of shook or something, but I continued. And then later on I was driven home.

And the next day, of course they brought me back into the post and it was then that they tried to do a lot of the clean up and all. But I stayed right in Fort Shafter and continued to help out there.

And then, oh, within a matter of days, they had evacuated they had evacuated all of the Engineer Corps out of the posts. A lot of the civilian employees were moved out except for myself, the librarian, and the Red Cross worker. We were the only three civilian employees left on post. And the others, a lot of the employees in the Signal Corps were moved out of the post too. Those were orders that they move right out. The Engineers was relocated on the Punahou campus now, and the Signal Corps was moved outside of Fort Shafter on the Middle Street area entrance there. That's where they were. And of course the car that was furnished for me was through the Signal Corps. They handled the transportation.

And I went on with my regular daily duties from day to day after that. But there was that one and only incident and the neverything just went off.

Q: As the tempo picked up and more and more troops were broughtto Hawaii, there must have been an expanding need for therecreation program.

A: Yes, there was more and more work for me, but I enjoyed every minute of it. I started organizing, well, you would say a hostess club, where I contacted Punahou, McKinley High School, Roosevelt High School, Lewers and Cooke (that was a very big company at the time), also there was another company that I contacted and we had them organize the counselors at the schools, were in charge of all the girls. They were seniors, most of them... a few juniors. But they were authorized by their parents and we used them as hostesses on the posts, when we had dances and all, to meet some of the needs. We had quite a few of them. I had 600 girls and transportation was supplied by the Signal Corps; Police Dept. participated where we used to chaperon them out to Haleiwa. There used to be a beautiful Officers Club there right on the ocean; in Haleiwa Bay there.

Q: O.K., you were mentioning about the Officers Club out at Haleiwa.

A: Yeah, and we would take the girls out there and they would

dance with a lot of the officers out there and when it was over we were escorted back. And it was black out at the time. We were escorted back by the Police Dept. and each girl was taken and dropped off at her own home and then the chaperons were the last ones dropped off. And after that was through, my work was through for the day. But then another day began and as things settled, we started picking up on games... football, more so baseball. We had a lot of pro baseball teams who had been the pro teams, playing with us. We had a lot of boys who had been drafted and called into active duty from college. So we had a very very good corps of young people at the time. Families were very cooperative here and entertaining them in their homes. I had no problem. I used to let them have the boys who were off duty on their days off. I'd let them go to my house and make themselves at home. We had no trouble with service men in those days. They were a very fine group of young people.

My work was... I also prepared special parades on the post to entertain them, which was typical of Hawaii; like on the 11th of June Parade where we had floats and all. Kamehameha School voluntarily participated with us in putting on the shows with the girls. I also had... I was allocated so much money to spend each month, and of course with the Government, if you don't spend that, you lose it the following month. So what I couldn't spend, (it was very hard to get recreational equipment at the time because things were so tied up), and what I couldn't spend I would tie it in entertainment; like all the outstanding entertainers we had here, like all the Hawaiian entertainers (of course a lot of them have passed away) and the different hula troops that we had. And then along came the 300th Battalion with Major Marshall who was in charge of them. I don't know whether you're familiar with him. He was one of the outstanding band masters with the Harlem band that they had, and he was the Major in charge of the all black unit that came into the Islands for the first time, and they were stationed out at Sand Island. And so we had a big luau for them on the post at Fort Shafter (had it in the gym.) The people here were very cooperative and volunteering their services in putting on the luau and all. We had Hawaiian entertainment and all like that. We also in fact, Hickam Field Signal Corps used to come in and ask us for help too, although I was supposed to take care of post headquarters only. There were other organizations in dire need of entertainment. And wherever possible, with the approval of my commanding officer, we went ahead and supplied them with the needed materials. And uh, it was a very busy moment for me, but I enjoyed every bit.

Q: It sounds like busy years for you.

A: It was.

Q: I guess the black out must have made things even more difficult with all the things you had to do at night.

A: However, it was very good because people stayed in and there weren't people all over. I think the only ones who violated it were those who were going from club to club or something like

that. But they were in the military so it didn't matter. But I abided by every rule and regulation that was set down and as a result, I mean they trusted me with a lot of responsibilities and I continued. Then eventually came in all the entertainers from the mainland. I had Bob Hope. I had Martha Ray. They put on all their performances in the theater, (Fort Shafter Theater) and there were many of the old timers who have passed on that came into Fort Shafter. They all stayed at the Royal Hawaiian because the Royal Hawaiian was taken over by the military, and we housed them at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And then we'd go out and pick them up in one of our vehicles, with my driver and bring them onto the post. And then we had them up at the Officers Club for lunch or something. But in many cases, they were very happy to dine with the enlisted men in their kitchens and all, which was very nice. We had a few who didn't want to, and of course we didn't do anything about that. We took them up to the Officers Club.

But my responsibility was the enlisted men. But often I would have calls from Schofield where they wanted a dance party or something for the young officers who had come in. And with the approval of the Commanding Officer, we did go out and they were a very fine group of men. As I say, we had no problems at all.

I had strict orders with my girls and with the chaperons, that when we hit the dance hall, the gym (we used Schofield Officers Club a lot) when we hit those places, no one leaves those places until they go into their vehicles, because they were young girls; and they were very cooperative. Occasionally we had a girl who would sort of stray away, but that's normal, and I was always there in time to catch them before they even got out.

But the men that we worked with during that time were a very, very fine group of young men. A lot of them as I said, were taken out of college and shipped out. Because I had three brothers who were also pulled out to service, and so I knew what it was.

Q: Those first few months after the attack must have been pretty scary with people not knowing what's coming next, uh....

A: Yeah, well, I think we... as far as I was concerned, being right in Fort Shafter, being tied up with a lot of the officers which you need to, I was perfectly comfortable and all. Although we did have a lot of enlisted men who were on edge; who were quite jumpy.

At the time we also had all the letters... what do you call it now.... they were.... oh..... they were censored, and of course I helped. The post office was just across the street from my office, and when they needed help, there were times when I helped them with censoring of the enlisted mens letters back to their families. And it was rather cute because a lot of them would tell their parents that we were being attacked. The planes are over head. But there was no such thing happening. It just happened that one day, but this was several months after these young people came in and they, you know, they would put these things in their letters back to their families. And of course those were all censored. But it was very interesting to see how they felt about the War, even though they hadn't seen the Attack. They had their own hallucinations of what happened and so forth.

Q: What sort of things do you remember? Any of them?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Do you remember any of those particular stories?

A: Well, uh, as I said, they would tell them that the Japs are overhead and we are being attacked. We have to take cover. And no such thing was happening. Just things like that, that was going on. Uh, nothing about the natives here or anything.

And of course when we had the first black Battalion come into the Islands. And that was a little disturbing to some of our white boys in service. But they wear down and eventually they got to mixing with them. It was disturbing to some of our people here too. But it didn't bother me at all, because they were people here fighting for our country too, like my brothers were, and I didn't think that we should discriminate against them. But there were some of our local people who didn't like the idea. But after getting to meeting them, and that's why I threw a big luau immediately. And some of them performed, music was entertained, and I had Major Marshall sit at the head table with me and my Commanding Officer. My Commanding Officer was from the south.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: Yes, it was Colonel Leard(?) and he thought the world of me. He was a wonderful person. And he was a little bit disturbed. Whatever I wanted, I would call him and I'd say, "We're going to do this." "Fine." he said, "I'll be right behind of you."

But when we had that luau he said, "I'm not going to sit there." I said, "I don't care what you're going to do, but you're going to sit next to me, and Major Marshall is going to be on my right." And he said, "O.K. I won't argue with you." And I really didn't have any trouble with him at all.

I had a pass to the Officers Club any time I wanted and entertained friends up there any time I wanted. But I never took advantage of any of them. I did go up to the Club every day for lunch. Sometimes for dinner, depending on the hours that I was on the post.

But for the first time we had intermingled a lot of our white soldiers with the black and it went over great, and we had it in our gym up in Fort Shafter. And after it was all over, of course my Commanding Officer said to me, "That wasn't bad after all!" And the Major, being of an educated caliber that he was, he was very, very courteous, polite, and just spoke when he was spoken to by the Colonel, and enjoyed very much the entertainment. And the men were well behaved and I was very happy, and proud of that. And they were all stationed on Sand Island where the Coast Guard is now. They were out in that area.

But everything.... I guess the good Lord was with me; everything went very well with all of the work I did, with the entertainers I had. I had no trouble at all. I had total cooperation from schools like Kamehameha and needing help to serve, or to perform activities. Even their parents volunteered their services to come out and participate. Punahou School was another that was very much, uh, where families entertained the service men. Central Union Church was another very fine source of... uh,

I was very active there before the War and they entertained a lot of our service men. Those who were off duty, they would have them down at the church for lunch or to intermingle with the families here. They did an excellent job and although there were other organizations that did too, but I'm not too familiar with them. But those three, Punahou, Kamehameha, Roosevelt High School parents there too, they were very, very helpful, entertaining our young men.

One of my duties was to travel around the Island too. Today the thing that amuses me is right across the Castle Junction where Hawaii Loa School now stands, right in that particular area, we had a whole group of service men in there. We had concrete bases and then tents over them and it was the Signal Corps that was in there too. Today a lot of people are saying they must have been some old ancient heiaus. They weren't. Our men were stationed in there. Out in Kahuku, where they have the Park now, that was another base for our service men and it was one of my jobs to drive out there and see what was needed and the way of recreational commitment. So I covered all of that area and then all the way out into Mokuleia, where the Dillingham Field is now. We had men out there too.

One of the incidents I had was going up to Koko Head. You know they still... that run way that goes up, that car that goes up, I went out there with a 2nd Lt. that worked in our department and he was a very fine boy. He was from Chicago, of Jewish background, and he loved to play with cameras. And so I said to him, I said, "Lt. Olson, why don't you someday start a camera club for our boys, so they could have a place to go and develop their pictures and learn about taking pictures." He said, "That's a good idea." So we also started a camera club in Fort Shafter and he was solely responsible for that.

He even managed to get a trip to go back home and pick up.... because cameras were very difficult to get here, he went back home, I think his mother or his grandmother was very ill. So he went back to see her and then brought back a lot of cameras and
things where our men were able to buy their own cameras and then take pictures and all. And that was a very, very good recreational activity for the men. They loved it. We had men from out of base asking if they could come in and use the camera club. And of course he did permit them to come in only after the regular men were taken care of.

But there was always a lot of room for the outside service men to come in and we went up one day, another Lt. and the Dept. of 1st Lt., we went up one day to KoKo Head to see the boys on the top of KoKo Head to see what we could get them. There wasn't very much we could get them except maybe a volleyball, or some games, or things like that. I did have a baseball bat and a ball in my hand and we got on this cable car and headed up. We went half way up and of course the Lt. was sitting in the front seat. I said, "You better sit in the back. I'm sitting in front." And so he sat in the back. I sat in front. We were half way up and it broke. We went flying down to the base of it. Fortunately I was in the front.

Q: Must have been really frightening.

A: It was frightening. After it was over, we landed down the bottom there and my seat just crashed right into... but we were jolted pretty good. But outside of a few bruises it wasn't too bad. But that was an experience for me; a horrible one.

And uh, there were other incidents where we went up into Nuuanu Valley. We used to go up there and gather tei leaves and I would get some of the service men who were off duty to learn to gather some of the things from the forest and how to proceed in the forest and all. There were certain taboos that we had.

These were taught to them, to respect the land and the property and all. And we went up into Nuuanu Valley, the Old Pali Road and went across the streams there, where they used to have the mud slides (which we don't have any more) and taught them some of the experience of mud-sliding which they enjoyed very much, and gathered our tei leaves, banana leaves and all, and brought back to the post when we were preparing for a luau or something like that. It was really an enriching experience against what came later.

Q: Well, I thank you very much.

A: I don't know what else I could tell you.

Q: Well, it's very kind of you to share what you have.

A: It was a very happy experience with all of our boys...

Q: Good.

A: ...and we learned a lot. We shared a lot. In fact, one of my brothers was in the first group of SeaBees that went out of here. His Commanding Officer came out of Ft. Huneme. We became very close friends for many years. He still lives in Sacramento, California, and he is now 83 years old. He comes back occasionally and visits with me. And when he does come back, we go to every base and sort of retrace the steps of WWII, and it has brought many friends also.

Amy Kimura #60
March 20,1985

Q: Mrs. Kimura, how old were you in 1941?

A: 8th grade.

Q: Were you going to school then?

A: Uh huh.

Q: What school did you attend?

A: Waipahu Intermediate and High School. But I was working as a school girl during the week days on the campus.

Q: As a school girl what did you do?

A: Did the house chores and cooking for the couple who was school teachers.
Q: Oh, so you worked on the campus there?

A: Mmhmm.

Q: Where were you living?

A: Ewa Puuloa

Q: What do you remember about the morning of December 7th, 1941?

A: Well, the night before we got back late from after basketball game.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: Then when they started to bomb and the planes were flying over, Dad went out and he came back and he said, "This is not a practice. This is a war." he said. Then he picked up the shrapnel and said this is from the bomb and everything. Then we all went out. He said, "All you dummies get in the house." So we had to get back in the house. But we saw some planes chasing each other and tripping backwards, going down, up it goes, turning around, chasing back and forth. And we saw a couple of planes going down behind our road, our section. It's called the Center Road. It's end of our property. In the mean time the pygmy people came back with all empty truck camouflaged and said, "This is a war."

Q: Which people?

A: The garbage people... pygmies. We have some pygmies way inside of the Ewa Puuloa. Ewa Puuloa was a farming country.

Q: As a young girl, what did you think of all this?

A: Well, at the beginning, we didn't feel anything. But after that, when out on duty, Dad was a WWI veteran and they called him at American Legion at Ewa Station. So he went out. When he left the house, we didn't feel anything. When it down to sun dust, we thought we lonely in the dark house with only four girls(mother and two sisters, and myself).

Q: So you stayed in the house the whole day, did you?

A: Yeah, whole day, all night, pitch dark. The only thing we can see is the Army and Navy trucks going back and forth in front of our house, with the very low dim lights.

Q: How long was your dad stay away?

A: Two nights. Then he came back because we were told that we would have to evacuate and we didn't know if Dad was coming home or not, because he says he's going directly to work in the morning. So we decided we going to hitch hike out to Waipahu Town. Once we get out to Waipahu Town, we have some friends and relatives in Waipahu Town, so we got things ready and left that afternoon with the Defense working truck. We stopped a Defense truck, asked for help. So they took us out to Waipahu. In the mean time I saw Dad coming home. I said, "Mom, that's Dad!" But we just crossed each other and we went to Waipahu, but we left a note on the door that we in Waipahu. Pick us up in Waipahu. Then next thing, Dad came back with our neighbor. Our neighbor was a half a mile away; a couple from the Big Island, had no place to go. So he brought them out. So we stayed in Waipahu for awhile. Then we got evacuated to Honouliuli Japanese School.

Q: What were conditions like over there?

A: Well, it was a Japanese School; one round building. The evacuation center was open at Ewa Japanese School, but we decided to go to Honouliuli Japanese School because the community. Dad knew the community well. So we went to Japanese School.

Q: About how many people were in the school there?

A: I don't know but by the time we decided to go to the Honouliuli Japanese School, half of the group came in to the Japanese School so it was... two classroom. So one was used for kitchen and one was used for bed; like an army barracks. Everybody set up together, in one big room.

Q: How long did you folks stay there?

A: We stayed about half a year, because the farmers were going back and forth to work.

Q: Did you go back to Ewa, back to your home after that?

A: No, then the Navy took over our property. We got paid by the Government for our property at the cost price. We were fortunate they didn't condemn our property like they did other sections,

because we had a good lawyer on our lots, eh?

Q: Where did you move after that?

A: Then we moved out to Wahiawa. I stayed with my grandfather, with five uncles. My parents went with other aunties so... but I went to Grandpa's because Grandpa needed help.

Q: You had mentioned that someone told you to evacuate your house up in Ewa. Do you remember who it was that told you? Was it the military or...

A: No, from the police department.

Q: Oh, from police department, O.K.

A: So we were evacuating, giving us I.D. cards to go in only during the daylight time, hours, eh?

Q: You also mentioned that your father who was a WWI veteran was called up with the American Legion. Did he ever tell you where he spent those two days? Where they sent him?

A: No.

Q: No? Alright. What was his first name?

A: Kiyohide.

Q: Could you spell that?

A: K-i-y-o-h-i-d-e

Q: O.K. Now on the day of the attack, were the planes coming right over your house.

A: Right over our house, because from Ewa Puuloa, that's West Lock side Ilikopue(??), right across to Barbers Point, eh? We were in about the center.
Q: What direction were they coming from, did it seem to you?

A: Pearl Harbor section.

Q: So they were going...

A: They were going to Barbers Point, made a clear route into the ocean, and back again to Pearl Harbor.

Q: So it's almost like they were circling...

A: Circling around.

Q: I see. Could you see the Rising Sun on their wings?

A: Rising Sun, American flag, and at times we could see the pilot and copilot because it's so low, eh? But we were fortunate in our area that we didn't have any casualties.

Q: Was there any shooting in your area?

A: Uh huh.

Q: Any damage to any of the houses?

A: In the back lot, or the Center Road, they had a couple of damages, but we weren't allowed to go. We were told in the beginning not to leave the home. My Dad's communication was not to leave the home, and then, that was on the on Monday, we had some um Marines come over to check our homes with bayonet. At that moment, we were afraid because we were only four girls in the house, O.K.? With about half a dozen of the servicemen came in bayonets, and big husky people. So the neighbors were kind of afraid too. We didn't know what was going on and uh... we didn't think about Dad discharge paper at that moment. But they searched our house from the attic to the bottom and around the... the homes were new, so everybody had bombs to dig out yard. But our dynamite was taken December 7th by Waipahu plantation police man. They come down because they know we have some left over dynamite. So they took our dynamite away. So we were clear. We didn't have no ammunition in our yard. But we did have some dynamite because we had to dig our own yard.

Q: I think I asked your father's first name but I didn't ask his last name.

A: Kimura.

Q: Oh... Was your father pretty calm through all this?

A: He knew about it. He was a very calm man.

Q: Must have been pretty reassuring to have somebody there who was calm.

A: Yes. Then he did a community job a lot too. Can't get excited at least 200 take that daughter down from your neck, with all the shrapnel flying, yah? He picked up a shrapnel before he say this is a real war. He said Americans are not that stupid to use this kind of ammunition. So we.... really frightened.

Q: I imagine it must have been; especially being a young girl and all alone. Things must have been pretty tense right after the attack, and uh...

A: The worst time when they came to inspect our home you know, and as they came down, our section was a neater section already. At the end of the section they did quite a bit of knocking things down and they knocked quite a bit of the shrines... Buddhist shrines as I have it in the back of mine. But Mother just held onto it. See what is a law suit. It doesn't even say freedom of speech, freedom of religion. And you look at Mother and you see it was agreeable. He say yes. So they didn't knock our shrine down. But in the evening when they had the second attack, it sound crazy but the something was new to us was really

fabulous. But Dad says after we talked about it, Dad says, "What did you girls think was fabulous?" Fireworks. Then he says, "You think it was fabulous when people were dying?" Yes Dad that's right too. But...he says, "No buts about it. That's war." Then Dad got to be a... they didn't want him in the service because he was a little too old. So he was working at the railroad. But he was given permission to go in Pearl Harbor because he was a veteran. (next sentence too difficult to understand)... with the railroad company.

Q: O.K., well, it's sounds like an interesting story and... can you think of anything else?

A: No, I hate through again... after I see what's going on. If you think the pilots and copilots is part of your family, how do you feel about it? That struck into our lives after talking to Dad, yah? We said it was fabulous night works, but after sitting down and talking to him our minds were all changed.

Q: O.K., well thank you very much.

A: Your welcome.

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March 20,1985

Q: Mrs. Kimura, how old were you in 1941?

A: 8th grade.

Q: Were you going to school then?

A: Uh huh.

Q: What school did you attend?

A: Waipahu Intermediate and High School. But I was working as a school girl during the week days on the campus.

Q: As a school girl what did you do?

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Q: Oh, so you worked on the campus there?

A: Mmhmm.

Q: Where were you living?

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Q: So you stayed in the house the whole day, did you?

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because we had a good lawyer on our lots, eh?

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Q: O.K., well thank you very much.

A: Your welcome.

Nancy Haynes #62
March 27, 1985

Q: Mrs. Haynes, where were you living in December, 1941?

A: In Waipahu.

Q: What were you doing on December 7, 1941?

A: Uh, let's see... that was Sunday morning and well we were just starting to do our laundry.

Q: Can you tell me about the events that occurred then?

A: Uh, it's... maybe it's difficult for you or anybody else to realize that the plantation was really like a plantation house back in the South I suppose, with no electric water heaters or... So we used to heat our water for laundry on the outside in the yard. And so we started the fire; that's when we saw the planes. And people had just came out of the houses all excited.

Q: What were peoples first impressions?

A: Manuevers. Because they were having manuevers all the time, but not with that many planes.

Q: How old were you at the time?

A: Eighteen.

Q: Eighteen? And uh, what was the first indication that you had that it wasn't just manuevers; that it was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: Well, we turned on the radio and that's where we found out what was going on.

Q: What was the reaction of your family?

A: Just shock. My brother was oldest in the family, and my mother, and I, and we were all surrounded. We lived in a Japanese camp. We called it Japanese camp, Spanish camp, Filipino camp; it was segregated. Anyway, um... they all came out and all excited, and just unbelieving, you know. I mean it's just something you don't believe, although you... we talked about and embargo and everything else. So something was bound to happen, yet when it did happen it was just unbelievable.

Q: Was there any damage to any of the houses or any casualties in any of the people living in the camp?

A: No, but just about a mile away there was a baseball park and there were some kids from our neighborhood who were on there way to play baseball. And later on we heard that the planes strafed

the kids and one of the kids died later from the strafing. I guess he was the first casualty from Waipahu.

Q: As you looked out toward Pearl Harbor, from Waipahu, what did you see?

A: Just smoke... nothing else. We couldn't see anything else.

Q: What happened later on that day?

A: Well, we were all scared so we just dare not do anything. So later on we got brave and went out to look and there were laying barb wire here and there. So we went back home and before you know it they said to have black out, and we couldn't leave the house, and ....

Q: What was black out like?

A: The next day we had to all go down and buy denim, or black fabric and hang them over the windows, so you wouldn't have any lights showing.

Q: Did you have to... what about driving at night?

A: You just don't do it.

Q: Were there any special restrictions put on the people in your community after the attack?

A: Well, there were so many scare stories, and then martial law was declared. So my neighbors, being Japanese and knew that I had gone to Japanese high school came over and told me I should destroy all my books... Japanese school books. I mean there's nothing there. It's just a Japanese... like your geography book, or history book, or whatever. And to this day I sort of regret that I burned them all but in the... you know, you just afraid of anything like that so you just burn everything connected to Japan. Although your American and yet FBI was a scary word at that time (laughter).

Q: Well, there must have been a lot of rumors going around at that time.

A: Yes, uh huh, there were.

Q: Do you recall any of them?

A: Yes, they say, and the Japanese community was sort of very... uh, the older generation. They celebrated Emperors birthday, and they had Japanese flag. We didn't have the Japanese flag but we had the Emperors picture. I think every family had one... Japanese family. So we burned all that; nothing to connect you to Japan. Although we were Japanese Americans and still you just didn't do that.

Q: During the... were you in high school at the time?

A: No, I had graduated when I was sixteen.

Q: What did you do during the War?

A: I was married. I got married soon after that. And um, it was Depression in those days. You know, jobs were scarce, so I just stayed home and tended the garden. Everyone had a victory garden growing.

Q: Did you do any Red Cross work or anything like that?

A: Not in Waipahu, no. There were a few Christian churches that rolled bandages and all that. But there were very few, and I was brought up Buddhist so I didn't volunteer or anything like that.

Q: Can you think of anything else that might be interesting for somebody, say years from now who wants to know about that period?

A: Well, the interesting thing is the churches. They closed the churches; the Buddhist churches. Like they did in China, you know, during the cultural revolution. All the Buddhist churches were closed. Well, the same thing happened in Waipahu and I'm sure all over Hawaii, and the ministers were all interned. And they felt that the ministers were the link between Japan and the people. So they were interned which was kind of sad because all they did was preach Buddhism; that's it. And so when my brother was sent to Germany, my mother, being a mother, had to pray, you know. I mean she had to pray for safekeeping, and there was no church for her to go to. So she turned Christian and went to a Christian church. I thought that was the biggest thing, you know. And uh... I think most mothers would understand that.

Q: Was your brother in the 442nd?

A: No, he was in... he went in later. And my mother was very religious, and every time someone died from the 442nd [*Regiment*] or 100[*th Battalion*], they all went to church and prayed for him. And so it was funny being surrounded by all this Japanese first generation, and my poor mother not knowing where to put her allegiance or loyalty. Here her son is in the American Army and yet she is surround by neighbors who is always talking about how great Japan is. And so she just kept her mouth shut.

Q: Sounds like there was a real split in the community?

A: There was, yes, uh huh. I mean it's natural... understandable I think. Did you ever hear anything like that?

Q: Yes, several of the interviewees I've talked to have mentioned that.

A: I had a teacher who was born and raised here in Hawaii and was sent to Japan when he was about 13 or 14, and he went to high school there. And he was inducted into the Imperial Army. And when he came back he became my teacher... 6th grade teacher. Let my tell you, we got brainwashed. We really did. Everything was for the Emperor. You should be this way. You should by that way.

And it's surprising that my classmates used to laugh about it, and they were the ones that volunteered for the 442nd. So his brainwashing didn't do much good (laughter).

Q: Doesn't sound like it.

A: But it's funny thinking back on those things, how he was and... well he taught us the better part... the better side of Japan; being industrious and working hard and doing your best, and things like that, sure. I think we absorbed a lot of that, but as for dying for the Emperor and all of that (laughter)...

Q: That didn't take huh? O.K. I really appreciate your giving me some of your time here and talking about that.

Shigeo Yoshida #63
March 27, 1985

Q: Mr. Yoshida, would you tell me a little bit about how the Emergency Service Committee came to be formed?

A: To do that I'll have to go back a little to even before the War, when there were some citizens who were interested in what might happen during the War should it come and who quite convinced that war was more or less inevitable. And in this group, more recently were such men as Hung Wai Ching, Miles Carrie(?) (principal of McKinley High School), I believe Dr. Lin(?) was a member of it too, and then a couple of three business men. And they met frequently, uh... They assumed the name of The Committee to Preserve Racial Unity; and that was his goal, to work ahead of time to see what could be done in preparation for that should the War come. And when Bob Shivers head of the FBI came along, (he arrived here about a good half year before the War started) we invited him in and he took quite an active part in it.

So there was this Committee that I know of active before the War... well before the War, preparing for the day when the War might come along. Then as the war clouds threatened...

Q: Excuse me, can I ask what were you doing in those years?

A: You mean my job? I was a school teacher.

Q: What were you teaching?

A: Let's see, this is about 1940...when did the War start, 1941?

Q: Yes.

A: About 1940, I was at Liliuokalani School... Liliuokalani Junior High School. I was a teacher there.

(voice in background)** It was after. You were there in the 30's. So you were at Central Intermediate after that and then you became principal at Ala Moana.

Yeah, I was intern supervisor at Central Intermediate School.

Q: I see.

A: Teachers in those days were required to take five years of training, and during the last semester of training, they came to the public schools for that whole semester. And I had about five or six each semester and supervise them in their training.

Then when the War came along, I was appointed principal of Ala Wai School and that was the first principalship that I had, and by that time the War had started you see.

Q: I see.

A: So I went directly to Ala Moana School from Central Intermediate School.

Q: When the Emergency Service Committee, or the Committee to Preserve Racial Unity was first formed, was there any kind of official sponsorship?

A: The Committee to Preserve the Unity had no official sponsorship. However the Committee that grew out of it, The Morale Committee of the Office of Civilian Defense, had of course the Office of Civilian Defense as its, what you might call it's supervisor. Then when the War came along and Hawaii was placed under Military Governor, then we were attached to the Military Governor's Office.

Q: I see. And who was your immediate liaison in the Military Governor's Office.

A: Well, officially it was supposed to be General Green who was the Civilian Military Governor. He had charge of Civilian Affairs. But the more immediate contact that we had was a man that had charge of military intelligence. He was in charge of civil intelligence also, and that was [*Lieutenant*] Colonel Fielder.

Q: Could you describe [*Lieutenant*] Colonel Fielder for me a little bit; his attitudes and his personality?

A: Well, "Witch"(??) as we called him (that was his nickname), "Witch" came from Georgia. He was a star quarterback at Georgia Tech. or University of Georgia, and he arrived about the same time as Shivers arrived; maybe a month or so later. And coming from the South, it was amazing to see how they had not brought with them those racial attitudes that were common in the South. And they were... he was one of those along with Shivers, who was out to learn all they could by themselves; learn for themselves what the real situation was here, and what might develop out of this war should it come.

So he was, first of all, a very friendly, approachable, and open minded person, and I think it was to greater of all of us that he was in charge of military intelligence. Because later on when the War came along and people had to be interned, he was the Chief Military Officer in charge of that whole thing.

Q: How did he handle that?

A: Well, we worked very closely. By we, I mean the Morale Committee and the Emergency Service Committee, worked very closely with [*Lieutenant*] Colonel Fielder. We had frequent informal meetings before the War and after the War started. Uh... meetings in which they were naturally more interested in our concept or our evaluation of the situation, as far as the Japanese population is concerned.

Because at that time, the thing that the military was afraid of most from the Japanese population was the possibility of sabotage. That was their main concern. As it turned out that was the least of the things they could have been concerned about, because during the War, there was not a single case of confirmed

sabotage concerning the Japanese population. But before the War and soon after the War started, that was their main concern. And to have people like Fielder and Shivers as our main contact, open-minded as they were, it was a blessing I think. I don't think things could have been handled as well as they were handled without these two people in their positions.

Q: It must have been a very difficult time for the Japanese community in Hawaii.

A: Yes, it was. It was a very difficult time; especially for the aliens, but also for the civilians. Just the fact that we were by blood, affiliated with the alien country. That in itself was enough to make people look at us, as if we were the enemy too. So it was the most difficult part. And when the Military Governor's Office came into being, they had uh...(I don't know what they called them... officially), but they had official pronouncements which restricted the people with Japanese ancestry in their civilian activities far more than they restricted the rest of the population. And that in itself was very difficult to deal with.

Q: In terms of... you spoke of the work of your Committee as a liaison between the military government and the community, and I was wondering could you tell me a little bit about the work that you did with the community? Did you have programs established? What sort of messages and information did you carry back and forth between the community and the...

A: These meetings were carried on primarily by the Emergency Service Committee since the Morale Committee was a bit more detached from the population itself and essentially it was to clarify misunderstandings arising from the directives of the Office of the Military Governor, restricting the Japanese in their activities. It was to build confidence in the school(??) in the fairness of the military authorities. We pointed out to them that this is unfortunately a war situation and some kind of restrictions will have to be made on the civilian population and especially the civilian population that was directly affiliated with by blood... directly affiliated with the real enemy, and that sort of thing. We held meetings in different communities, and then the Morale Committee also organized similar committees on Kauai and Maui. We couldn't get one organized on Hawaii because the military office there was not very pleased with having us organize a group like the Emergency Service Committee that was organized here. So those people out there had some help needed so we went to their meetings too; more or less to do what I have already have described to you.

Q: I wonder if you could tell me a little bit about the organization of the Varsity Victory Volunteers, and I understand that you were the drafter of the petition that was sent to [*Lieutenant*] General Emmons.

A: Well, you know that as soon as War was declared... uh... what do you call that uh... there was organized the...

Q: The Hawaii Territorial Guard?

A: That's right. The Hawaii Territorial Guard was organized and the boys of the University, they were also invited to join them regardless of their racial ancestry. But soon after the War started, the boys of Japanese ancestry were dismissed without any explanation as to why they were being dismissed, and that of course caused a great outbreak among the Japanese boys who were so dismissed. And uh, I suppose they had their own meetings, informal meetings at the University and elsewhere about it, and what they could do about it now that it was a fact that they had been dismissed. And just about that time a group of University students happened to be in the Office of the YMCA Secretary, and the YMCA Secretary (What was his name?)

(voice in background)** Hung Wai Ching

No. the one that was... the haoli fellow.... Anyway, he phones us (by us I mean the Morale Committee) and told us that there was this group of University students rather heartbroken about the whole affair and asked us if we could help them see some things through and take it from there. So we told him to send the boys down to us and we'll talk to them and see what else we can do. And that's when a group of them (I don't recall whether Ted?? was in that group or not, but anyway) there were four or five of them that came down.

Q: Where did you meet?

A: In the office of the Morale Committee.

Q: Where was that located?

A: That was located in the Central YMCA office.

Q: I see.

A: So, we talked to them and tried to probe their feelings. They were naturally very disappointed. They couldn't understand why they had to be isolated and dismissed whereas nobody else was. And as we talked with them they expressed their desire to do almost anything to do almost anything in order to serve the War effort, and they would like to know whether the Military Governor would uh... the Commanding General would take them in to any effort of that kind that might be offered by the boys. And that's where the idea of a petition came along, and I had helped along with the drafting of the petition. But it was simply of putting down in writing what the boys themselves had expressed, see? You couldn't expect a group of interested kids to tackle a job like that; preparing a petition, that's not too easy thing to do. So that was my part in it, and the part of the Morale Committee, insofar as a relationship with the Triple V, or the VVV was considerate.

Q: Did you during this period ever meet and talk with [*Lieutenant*] General Emmons... the Military Governor?

A: No. Not during that period. It was later in the War, uh...we may

have had one or two meetings with [*Lieutenant*] General Emmons and one or two with General Richardson who followed him. But our work was primarily through [*Lt.*] Col. Fielder.

Q: Did you ever have any contact with [*Lt.*] Col. Bicknell?

A: Yes, [*Lt.*] Col. Bicknell was part of the Intelligence Office under [L*ieutenant*] Colonel Fielder and he being a civilian, we knew of him and you got to know him quite well. But he was, in everything that he did, an assistant to [*Lt.*] Col. Fielder.

Q: So he took he cue, pretty much, from [*Lt. Col.*] Fielder?

A: Yes.

Q: I was wondering, did you also work with Jack Burns during this period?

A: Yeah. Jack Burns was in the Police Dept. at that time and he had his group of people in different communities uh... picked to report to him, and do essentially the sort of thing that we were doing in the Emergency Service Committee. Well he was our liaison also with the Police Dept. and with the military. You see, right after the War started, people of Japanese ancestry could not have any meetings; any get together more than say a dozen people were involved. The idea of a meeting with the Japanese segment here was far from what they anticipated might happen. So we had to have either a military officer or liaison officer in the person of Jack Burns in order to conduct theseÜ meetings. They made it kind of an official thing.

Q: I see.

A: That's how Jack Burns came into the picture. Not only that, he was quite concerned with the situation itself and he had something to do I'm sure with helping Fielder see the situation, evaluate the situation as is and advise him as to what to expect.

Q: You've mentioned different Army Officers and during this period I wonder, did you ever have any contact with people in Navy Intelligence?

A: No, not directly. When we organized the Committee for the... to preserve racial unity, I don't recall whether we sent an invitation to the Navy Intelligence. We might very well have, but they never joined us. They never had an Officer in the Navy comparable to [*Lt.*] Col. Fielder, insofar as the contact with the Japanese population is concerned. The Navy wasn't very interested in what we were doing, except to keep a surveillance I suppose; to see that we didn't get out of hand either. So our contact with the Naval Intelligence was very, very far. I don't think we had any that we might call direct involvement with them.

Q: I see. Well, I think you've given me quite a bit of information here. Is there anything else that you can recall that you think might be of interest to people studying this period and this whole question of loyalty and suspicion?

A: Well, that's a rather involved question and I'll have to repeat some of the things I've already said, but there were some key people besides Shivers and Fielder, who made it possible. Hung Wai Ching was a key person. Being of Chinese ancestry he could do and go places where I couldn't, for instance. So he was very helpful in that respect. Well, I think I've covered about everything that I was involved in.

Q: Well, I very much appreciate your taking the time to help me with this and I hope I haven't been an imposition on you.

A: No, that's O.K.

Myron E. Haynes #64
March 27, 1985

Q: Mr. Haynes, when did you first come to Hawaii?

A: In November, 1940.

Q: How did you come to be in Hawaii?

A: I was mobilized with a California National Guard Unit in September of 1940. They were sent over to Hawaii in November of 1940.

Q: What Unit was that?

A: 251st Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapons.

Q: How did you and the other men in the 251st feel about being mobilized?

A: It was kind of an adventure. I had just gotten out of high school in 1939 and kind of on a lark a number of the guys in my class went down and joined the National Guard to go to summer camp in 1939, and then later on we had some war games up in Washington (in the state of Washington). And at that time we heard rumors of a possibility of mobilization and I don't know, we were kind of looking forward to it. Nobody had a job. Nobody was particularly interested in going to school, (very many of them anyway.) I was going to junior college. And we thought well, there was rumbles about the draft and all that sort of thing at the time, and so I thought well I might as well go ahead and go and get my year in and get it over with. Then I can come out and go about the business of trying to find a job.

Q: Do you remember how you came over to Hawaii? Do you remember the ship you came over on?

A: Yes. The *Leonard Wood*, U.S. Army Transport.

Q: What were accommodations like?

A: Uh... I think I was number five bunk (laughter). It was a typical army transport. I think it was about four or five bunks high in the hold.

Q: What sort of weapons was the 251st [*Coast Artillery Regiment*] equipped with?

A: Well, we were a Regiment. Our First Battalion was in San Diego and they had 3-inch guns (anti-aircraft guns). Second Battalion was three Batteries in Long Beach, one Battery in San Pedro, and we had 37mm... well, we got 37's when we got here. When we were in California and mobilized, we had .30 and .50 caliber machine guns, and then when we got to Hawaii, we were issued 37mm anti-aircraft guns.

Q: When you came to Hawaii, where were you sent?

A: Initially to Fort Shafter. Uh, the camp at Malakole was just under construction. The First Battalion from San Diego had left what about two weeks earlier I guess it was. They came on the *Washington* (the liner *Washington*). She had been taken out by the government but hadn't been converted to a troopship yet. So they came in state rooms, and real plush. Here we come on this army transport. But we initially went into a place they called Centipede Gulch in tents at Fort Shafter. We stayed there...

Q: It doesn't sound very inviting.

A: Everybody shook all their clothes out, turned your boots upside down and everything when you got up in the morning. You know you're liable to find an 8(c)inch centipede in there if you didn't. But I had forgotten how long we were there actually. And then we moved out to Malakole and were living in tents out there for a while, until we got barracks up... there was an editorial, or and article in the Star Bulletin I guess it was; at the time they nicknamed our outfit the “251st Coral Engineers” because we had to build our own camp, and that's actually, basically what we were doing when the War started. We hadn't finished it yet.

Q: What sort of accommodations or facilities were there over there?

A: There were wooden long barracks, I'd say probably 100 feet long (maybe even a little longer than that), possibly 20 feet wide, with the doors in the middle of the barracks and one on the end. The front end of it was partitioned off for either office space, supply room, or Senior NCO's quarters, or something of that nature. There was about...let's see, I'd say eight bunks probably, on each side, and on either side of the center; probably sixteen bunks on each end... or something along in there... or maybe more than that. It's been quite a while. I don't really remember. All wood, half way up, and then a screen with drop down shutters, mosquito nets...

Q: Were mosquitos pretty bad out there?

A: Oh boy and how!

Q: Was there a lot of Kiawe?

A: Yeah, we had to clear that out. I did a little bit of everything out there. At one point while we were clearing the trees, all of us were engaged in that. At another point I was operating a jack hammer, putting in pipelines for water and sewers, and such as that. I was a carpenter, framing in the buildings, putting roofs on. The last job I had was... we were right at Barbers Point, just roughly where the Standard Oil Refinery is now. That takes up about half of the area we had. We were stretched out along the coastline there just north of the lighthouse, and we had a lot of nice sand, but we didn't have an

area we could swim in because of the coral so close to the surface. So we were trying to develop kind of like a swimming pool in the coral out there. So the job I that had at the time the War started was making up bundles of dynamite and swimming out in, and sticking them down in the faults in the coral, and come back ashore and shoot them and blow the coral out to try and make an area so we could swim there.

Q: I see. What Battery were you in?

A: I was in Battery F.

Q: Was that a 37mm Battery?

A: Yes.

Q: Why don't you describe for me if you would, what happened on December 7th.

A: Well, I had decided to sleep in that morning. I wasn't even going to go to breakfast. I had been out the night before. We were up in Waipahu actually helping wet down a fellow who had just got promoted, so we were a little getting back into the Base. It was about 3:00 I guess, and so I had decided, well, Sunday I won't even bother to go eat.

And while laying there in bed, we heard some aircraft machine gun fire. Well, as I say, we were right on the ocean front over there and we had firing ranges where we would fire out over the water at towed targets (aircraft towed targets). And for a few days prior to this the Marines from Ewa Marine [*Corps*] Airbase had been over there and they had 2 1/2 ton trucks with mock-ups of the rear cockpits of their airplanes, with their aircraft machine guns in them, and they had been firing at towed targets. So we immediately started cussing out the Marines.

Q: We're talking about towed aircraft targets?

A: Yeah, the airplane would tow on the end of a cable. It was like a wind sock, and we would fire at them as they went by, you know, with machine guns or 37mm. Well, the Marines had been using these aircraft machine guns mounted in the back of the trucks, and we immediately started cussing out the Marines for being out there so early on a quiet Sunday morning.

And then somebody... the way the barracks were arranged, they were four in a row and the latrine was on this end.

Q: Which end was that?

A: That was on the ocean side.

Q: On the ocean side.

A: O.K., on the mauka side was the mess hall. So there was a latrine here, and then four barracks, and then the mess hall ran this way. So to get out of the barracks you had to walk to the center and start out, and then go down to the street (the Battery street) and around whatever barracks were left. If you were in

the fourth one, you had to walk around the first three and then up to the mess hall.

So as he started out the center door, he said, "God, I wonder what's going on. It looks like shell bursts. I wonder if they're having some kind of a manuever or what's happening around by Pearl." And somebody else got up and walked out the door and they're standing there looking at it and they said... another guy says, "Well, by God there's airplanes flying through those bursts!"

So about that time I begin to get a little more curious and I got up and walked down to the door and we were standing there watching it, and sure enough you could see the bursts going off and I guess these were some of the three-inch from the ships. And about that time we heard a machine gun (aircraft machine gun) go off again and down the line of the barracks right at.... like I tell the people here, if I was on the roof with a broomstick, I think I could have hit the guy... came this Zero, strafing the line of barracks and right when he banked up to take off, we saw that big red "meatball". And everybody went, "Oh God!" We knew what was happening then. There wasn't any question about it.

Q: Oh boy, that must have been quite a feeling there.

A: Another probably a couple of months at the most I would have been out. My enlistment had expired in the National Guard but we were automatically extended and they were beginning to release a few guys whose enlistments had expired (their initial National Guard enlistment) Well probably, fortunately I again... I feel all through the War I was very lucky, but those that did get out were immediately snapped back up and most of them ended up in the Infantry, so I stayed in the artillery in anti-aircraft.

Q: Tell me, what did you Battery... did your Battery get organized and take up a position?

A: Uh, of course there was an immediate complete shock to everybody and when we realized what was going on, everybody started getting into their uniforms (their fatigues) and gathering up their weapons, and helmets, and gas masks, and everything that we had, and started getting out into the street. And one of the lieutenants came by and he's blowing his whistle telling everybody to fall in, and everybody's telling him where he can stick it. They're not about to fall in out there (laughter). They're diving underneath the barracks and when the planes would go by and... our big problem was we had no ammunition for our 37mm guns; didn't have a round. It was all at Lualualei about ten miles down the road in Nanakuli. And our 37 and 50 caliber machine guns were torn down in the ordinance shed. We had boxes of ammunition stored off at another location out there by the firing ranges, all boxed up loose. The... it had to be loaded. We had hand loaders that would load ten rounds at a time and ...

Q: Is that 37mm ammunition?

A: No, that was .50 caliber; we didn't have any 37 at all. The only thing we had to retaliate with was the old 1903 Springfield rifle that we were equipped with. Everybody got a few rounds of that ammunition as they were loading in the belts for the .30

caliber machine gun. When the planes would come by, we'd bang at them with the 03's. And it seemed like everybody just got their machine guns in operation at almost the identical moment. Uh, you would hear rifle fire and these planes were just going back and forth at their will and strafing us. Then all of a sudden it just seemed like everybody got machine guns in action and we were officially credited, I understand, with downing one and possibly one other plane. Uh, we didn't get any bombs. They were picking us up probably on their way back from Pearl or Ewa Marine [*Air*] Base, or wherever they were. Uh, and when we finally did get some firepower in the air, very shortly after that they left.

Q: Well did your Battery take up a field position?

A: Yeah. We should have been on Ford Island. We by batteries gun positions were one Ford Island. We were anti-aircraft defense for Pearl Harbor and Ford Island (or part of it.) We moved out when we finally got organized; got our trucks down, got guns hooked up, and we moved out into an area over in Aiea. Of course then they had all sugar cane fields... over about where the Kam Drive-in Theater is (in that vicinity.) We moved back up into the hill up there and established a gun position. Some of the other guns from our Battery were over where Richardson Center is on the bluff over there. I'm not exactly sure where the rest of them went that particular day. We stayed there that night and then moved out to Ford Island the following morning.

Q: How did it take for them to get ammunition to you?

A: It was quite late in the day before we got our first 37mm ammunition.

Q: The day of December 7th?

A: Yes. uh huh.

Q: That night, the night of December 7th, when the planes came in from the Enterprise, did you see the firing on those planes?

A: Yeah. In fact we participated in it.

Q: Could you describe that?

A: Well, we were like I say, up there in the field where we were looking right down into the Harbor, and we saw these planes coming in. They were coming in with their running lights on and they were making a sweep around. And of course we had very poor communication. In fact I don't where our communication even went to; I guess probably to our Battery headquarters, and that was about it. I don't know where they were hooked in to.

But we saw, as I remember it, one single strand of what appeared to be machine gun tracer bullets going up into the air, and within seconds I never saw such a cone of fire anyplace before or since in my life. The place just exploded and everybody was throwing everything that they could throw into the air. And how any of those planes got out of there I'll never understand, but some of them did and unfortunately some didn't. I understand that one of our Batteries, the one over here

in Richardson Center, was involved in hitting one of the planes as they made the sweep past there.

We later heard, of course, there was all kinds of rumors going around and stories, but we were told that when they came in that they were supposed to have blinked some sort of recognition signal. They came in with their running lights on and the wrong signal was given and somebody out there opened fire on them and that's all it took, you know. Whether that's true or not I have no idea. It was a tragic thing but one of those things that happen.

Q: Sounds like things were pretty confused.

A: Oh... completely confused. Uh, I'm glad we didn't try to get out onto Ford Island that evening or that night. We probably wouldn't have made it. They... of course they had... we found out later that there were many, many of the survivors off the ships, that you know, they would gather a group and give them a gun, and show them how to load it, and how to pull the trigger, and say now this is yours, you know. Of course some of these guys, particularly the sailors from some of the crews had never been exposed to a gun in their life; had no idea what it was all about.

When we finally did get out there, part of my job was to check on all of the gun positions on Ford Island, and then we'd have to travel from one to the other and I probably got challenged every ten feet going around Ford Island you know. (laughter)

Q: Must have been a lot of tension, a lot of rumors going around...

A: Yeah there were. There were paratroops had been dropped, and that the Japanese were landing troops on the North Shore, and oh there was all kinds of things going on that day, and of course none of them true.

Q: Were you married at that time to your wife?

A: No. I was 19 years old when the War started. I had enlisted in the National Guard when I was 16. I was still 17 when we were mobilized by a couple of days, and sent over here. And then I had turned 19 in September, and I went back... well I stayed here at Ford Island until about March, I believe it was, of '42, and I got transferred.

There was a Regular Army unit here, the 98th Coast Artillery. We formed a 3rd Battalion of the 98th; an automatic weapons battalion, and we went to Schofield Barracks and we were training them. We got 40mm in you know. We had the new 40mm by that time, and we were in training. We had very, very little equipment. We had a wrench that would take the barrel out of the gun, and I think a couple of pipe wrenches and a screwdriver, and I think that was about all the tools we had. We had to take these guns apart, clean them out, train crews (and I had never seen a 40mm before, but based on what I knew from a 37mm, I had got promoted.) I was a corporal when I was in this 251st. I got promoted to Sergeant and we started training.

Well, we stayed there until the battle of Midway came up. It was eminent. They moved up out to Dillingham Field out at Mokuleia and

they had two, as I remember, two fighter squadrons and a bomb squadron out there. We set up anti-aircraft defense because they thought they were coming here. If they hadn't stopped them at Midway, they would have been back here. But we had to continue our training and everything else after we got dug in out there.

And I stayed here until June of 1943, there at Mokuleia and then I went back to California, again on a cadre to train a new battalion; and that one they called the 798th Automatic Weapons...(they had dropped the coast artillery in between time) Automatic Weapons Battalion. We completed about a year of training there, including training with the 4th Air Force and armored troops up a Camp Cook, and we were out at Edward Air Force Base, training with the Air Force.

And there were 32 battalions in training at Camp Hun near Riverside, right across the street from March Field, where the air base is. And at one time every unit out there received a telegram to suspend further training pending further orders. About a week later we were one of two battalions ordered to resume our anti-aircraft training. The other thirty were all shipped to Fort Hood, Texas and trained for six weeks in the infantry and sent to Europe (laughter). As I said earlier, I felt I was very fortunate throughout the whole War. I went to Europe for a year, still in the anti-aircraft artillery, and ended up in Salzburg, Austria.

Q: Well tell me, as someone who has worked with both 37mm and 40mm anti-aircraft guns, how would you compare the two weapons?

A: Oh, the 40mm was much better. It had a lot more range, had a bigger shell of course, was easier to handle, had better fire control equipment, and everything else. It was a much better weapon.

Q: Well, thank you. I appreciate your..

A: I got a couple of other points I might tell you about if you'd like?

Q: Oh sure! Yeah please.

A: Cause I get started and I don't want to quit you know(laughter.) Uh, while we were out here on Ford Island and we were... do you know where the communications station is they built during WWII, where the old admirals quarters, the CO, the airbase?

Q: I'm not really sure.

A: It's on this end of it. Ford Island we'll say goes this way; the runway here, O.K.? And the *Arizona* Memorial is here. It's on this end. There's a big old house and there was a two story house.

Q: That's the east end?

A: Pardon?

Q: The east end?

A: Uh huh. Uh, the *Solace* used to tie up right straight in front of us out there. O.K., we sat there and watched the efforts to get that 5th mini sub that came into the Harbor out there a few

days after the War started.

Q: Oh! Why don't you tell me about that?

A: It had apparently got under the *Solace* and they knew it was there and they were trying to get it but every time they would start up the *Solace* and move it, their sub would move with it. So it just moved around from place to place. So finally they decided on a way of getting it. They, uh, first we didn't know what was going on; then we finally got the word from sailors on what was happening. So they hooked up some cables to the *Solace* and a couple of tugs and they towed her off, and two PT boats made across and kicked the ash cans off the tail end and scratched the last one of the mini subs that was out there. It was kind of an interesting thing to watch.

The rest of the time we used to sit out there with the scopes on our range finder and watch the nurses sunbathe on the *Solace* (laughter). But uh... (sigh) That's about it I guess really. I can't think of...

Q: O.K., well, as I said, I appreciate your taking the time to sit here and talk to us.

Dwight Uyeno #65
March 28, 1985

Q: Dr. Uyeno, how long have you been in the practice of dentistry?

A: Since 1926, so 58... so about 53 or 4 years.

Q: How long had you been in practice in Hawaii in 1941?

A: Same. That's the whole time since 1926 right here in this office, except this is North King Street.

Q: What were you doing on December 7th, 1941?

A: Well... see... I had the fifteen acre farm out in Lualualei Valley up in Wainae. On the day of December 7th, 1942, I picked up a group of boys that used to go with me all the time to help me improve this farm. So I had a fellow named Wombo Yamasaki(??), and Tinai Tinemoto(??), and I took my father that day, and few other boys... three other boys went in another car(three brothers) and we all went out there at about 7:00 in the morning. And just about 7:30 or 7:45 I noticed an unusual movement of planes from the west going toward Pearl Harbor. And the thing that I noticed at that time was that just about the time period between my seeing the plane, and I figured they'd be around Pearl Harbor, there was a lot of shooting you know, firing. Things I thought unusual for a Sunday morning to have this unusual aerial condition, and I didn't bother at all.

So we were working on my farm and it was about after 8:00 and then about 11:00 a Hawaiian lady living only about a half a mile away from where my farm was telling me, "Hey Doc! Go home!" I said, "What's the matter?" "We are at War!" "You crazy! We're not at War with anybody!" "Yes, the Japanese attacked!" "Hell no! I'm told that nobody can come within 350 miles outside of our Island! How can these guys come. We got surveillance all around!" "But we are being attacked!" I said, "O.K." So I didn't bother for awhile, but then at about 12:00 I say, "Hey boys, let's go home. Everything seem to be too quiet around here."

So I start coming home and to my surprise coming home, there wasn't a single car coming toward Wainae, and we were going home towards Honolulu, Hawaii now. And then we were stopped and I told that I was Dr. Uyeno, and he said, "Oh yeah, your name was mentioned at the radio call to report to the Queens Hospital." So they let me go. And as I.... still I did not think we were being attacked by any enemy at that time. Then coming around Pearl Harbor I saw huge billows of black smoke coming from a battleship in the Harbor. I didn't think at that time that it was *Arizona* because I didn't know ships that were in. So I just thought that well gee with these people getting rough, the pilots going to get hell from the Admiral (Kimmel at that time.) But I kept coming home. Then when I reached home I...

Q: Where was home at that time?

A: Uh, I lived at 49th Ave. of Manoa, and here my two daughters and my wife are looking for me thinking what's happening to me, because they heard that we were being attacked and it was in the area of my farm, Pearl Harbor. So they were very surprised to see me come home and they said, "Dad! We are being attacked by the Japanese!" I said, "No. They can't come within 300 miles of here!" They said, "Yes, we are!" So still I wasn't convinced that we were being attacked... we were attacked.

And the next morning sure enough, news, everything said that we were attacked. I said, "Hey, I was in the midst of the darn thing!" And they were waiting I presume that the plane came over from the west and went toward Pearl Harbor, over my farm and there was one special plane that flew low and turned around by Lualualei ammunition dump. Probably that plane was looking for the Naval ammunition dump, but he didn't find it. And probably, I heard later that it was down in the ocean now. So everything went quiet and the next day, the Captain of the Naval Yard... I forget his name... Captain.. I used to report to him any time that I used dynamite on my farm. And that Sunday, fortunately, the guy that was supposed to be an expert dynamiter was called to Pearl Harbor, so we didn't use the dynamite.

You see, I use dynamite through the permission of the police and the ammunition depot Captain to dynamite, but to let them know, the Capt., that I am using dynamite. The reason I use dynamite is that I used to dig a hole and put dynamite and blow, and make a big hole for my trees, you see. One blow and it's over, and the other way I have to dig, dig, dig, and it took a long time. So that day, no dynamite, so we didn't. (traffic noise)... what are you going to do with the dynamite? I don't know, do we want it? Gee, I got too much problem in my official capacity, ammunition dump. I said, "Oh, I'll take it down to Waianae to the people who are taking care of all loose ammunition. So I took the dynamite and the caps and everything and depart for Waianae Plantation (sugar plantation). They took care of it. Then everything turned out all right.

I used to go back to the farm to work. But this time I had to have permission to go there every Sunday with a group of boys because we were Japanese you see. Anybody Japanese weren't allowed in that area because it was area that is too close to the ammunition dump. So we used to report, come out, and report again. That went on all through the period that we were at war with Japan.

Q: On December 7th, or just shortly thereafter, did you go to any of the hospitals to help with wounded?

A: You mean I did? Yes, I was um... at the Queens Hospital I was head of the dental division then. But, not much.

Q: Were many wounded brought into Queens?

A: No, I didn't go there at the time when the accident happened. I went there the day after, so I don't know. My brother, Dr. Ray Uyeno, is also, he's a M.D. and he went there but I didn't go because there wasn't any job for me. But I was on the staff of the Queens Hospital, oh... for the duration and a little after; almost 9 years I think.

Q: Did you participate in the Civil Defense set up?

A: No. I was not asked to participate at all.

Q: O.K., well, I can't think of any more questions. If you have anything to add that might be of interest to people...

A: Well, I can tell you of another incident of the Pearl Harbor Attack. It was told to me by Dr. Edward Hoye(?). He had a beach lot down below the Pearl City Tavern, down in that area facing the Pearl Harbor; the Bay. He told me that, "You know Dwight, that day I was at home and just looking over the Harbor and here this big battleship was throwing up black smoke and burning." So he didn't know it was hit by a kamikaze or something; Japanese plane. "So I told my wife, let's go get a better view of this up around the bend at Aiea." So he took his wife and went around the bend with the view of direct to the smoke. And as he was enjoying thinking that something must have happened; didn't think at all that we were attacked. A policeman came and said, "Hey you! Get away from there! We are being attacked by the Japanese!" He said, "Oh no." He said, "If you don't believe it, come and see my car! You see the holes on the side of my car?" He said, "Well, a Japanese plane strafed me."

Then he said he jumped in his car, drove back to Pearl City, and at the entrance to the road to his place, down by Pearl City Tavern, a policeman said, "What are you doing here?" "I'm going to my home." He said, "You can't. You have to go up the main hill toward Waimano Hospital." So, he said, "I'll go up there." And then he drove up there and to his surprise, he was going up that road, cane field on both sides, a Japanese plane came and over strafed him. And he looked at that thing, grabbed and stopped his car, grabbed his wife, went running into the cane field, and the plane came back and strafed behind him. And Jee(?) said, "You know how I dove into the cane field and stayed there from 8:00 in the morning (a little after 8) until about 7 that evening; because he didn't know whether he was safe to get out or not.

After even all the way up in the cane field, he came back to his big home, got what he needed and went home up... he live up by Diamond Head Lighthouse; his main home over there. So he said he crawled because no light was allowed, in the dark. He made his way home, but he said that was the most scary thing; that incident you see.

Q: I'll bet.

A: Yeah. Whenever he tells you, he kind of laugh about it because he wasn't hit, but when he got strafed twice, he saidthat was enough. Well, that's about all I know.

Q: O.K. Well, I thank you.

Norman Godbold #66
March 28, 1985

(**This interviewee is in Idaho, and the interview is being conducted over a phone line, I believe. From listening to the dialogue, it is difficult to clearly hear everything that is being said, due to occasional 'beeping' noises. Therefore, there may be gaps in portions of this transcription.**)

Q: Mr. Godbold, what was your job? What were you doing for a living in 1941?

A: Uh... 1939?

Q: 1941.

A: Oh, '49?

Q: '41.

A: Oh, '41! Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, I was Treasurer of the Territory of Hawaii.

Q: O.K., and from there why don't we get into what you remember of that period. Um, you mentioned that you remember Auto Kuehn the German spy who had been working for the Japanese.

A: Right, right, right, right...

Q: What do you recall about him?

A: Well, it started my five year old son, and Kuehn had a son the same age. They were down in kindergarten in Kailua. Mrs. Lorange ran a kindergarten there. So this little boy was quite frail and we felt very sorry for him. He had eczema all over his arms and he used to wear these long gloves. And so he used to come to our house; we lived near the beach, close to the kindergarten, not too far from the Kuehns. So through this situation we met his parents (proposed parents). We later found out they were not married and it was sort of a put together family.

So Kuehns would come down and pick up little Hans (was his name) sometimes after the kindergarten was over; usually about 11:00 or so in the morning. So we got to know them and they invited us over to their house at one time when they had a party. And as usual, people were playing the piano, and others were walking around, and I happened to walk into a study which was lighted and he had a bank of maps (rolled maps) that you pulled down from the top.

Q: Like window shades?

A: Beg pardon?

Q: Like window shades?

A: Yes, you know these sort of rolled maps that you pull down and then you give them a little jerk and they go back up again.

Q: Oh yes.

A: You know... and so he had this sort of a thing, and out of curiosity (I had a drink in my hand) and I pulled one of them down and the map was of Europe and it showed all the German process of conquering Poland and France, and so on and so forth. Then I pulled the second one down and to my shock it was a map of Pearl Harbor. So by that time Kuehns came in and he says, "Oh, there you are." and he kind of turned white and he rolled the map up and said, "Come on, some of the people want to meet you back here." So he got me out of the den; his little den in there.

So when I got down to the office the next morning, I called my Deputy Fire Marshall who was from Naval Intelligence, a (bleep) Officer by the name of Tom Quinn(??), and I told Tom about it and he said, "Oh my God, we better do something about this." So he ran down to the [*Alexander*] Young Hotel where the Naval Intelligence were operating out of and told them about it. Well, a couple of FBI men came up to see me and I told them about it and they said well just go on and see if you can cultivate this man and see what you can find out.

Well, at one time they invited us over to dinner after that and I could here sort of a clacking way up stairs; way up in the attic (they had a two story house with an attic above) and it sounded like a while this was going on and then he got out and then he said, "Oh, excuse me, I forgot something upstairs." And he goes up and evidently with the door closed I couldn't hear it any more.

So I went back and reported that again. So uh... this was some time before Pearl Harbor. So that's about the story of all I know about it, and then of course I know that in time, on December the 7th I was told that he was horribly excited and went down to visit Loranges, and picked up the little boy and just uh... no, no... no, no... no. It was the next day, a Monday, he went down and picked up the boy or something and Mrs. Lorange said he was quite excited at that time. I suppose by that time, why the FBI were after him.

Q: Yes, he doesn't sound like a very subtle spy, heh.

A: (ha ha) He wasn't. I don't think he was too subtle at all. In fact, I can't understand why he got away with so much, and uh,

everything else I know about him is rumor.

Q: You had mentioned when we were talking before that you had...

A: Beg your pardon... I can't hear you.

Q: When we were talking before you mentioned that you had spent the evening before, Saturday night, with Capt. Callaghan.

A: Yes, we were down at the Royal Hawaiian, uh with Dan Callaghan uh, he was a Captain at that time, and Dan Shea who was

a Commander. Shea was Skipper of the *Cassin* which was blown up at Pearl Harbor, and Callaghan was Skipper of the San Francisco, which was a cruiser in dry dock. So they escaped, but Callaghan, I asked them both if would stay all night because my mother had room. But Dan Shea said, "No, I'll go back down to the Base." so Callaghan said, "Sure, I'd love to stay over." and so we put him up at my mothers.

So the next day was December the 7th, a Sunday, and then he... uh, when we heard about Pearl Harbor, we woke up and heard this bombing (we were living on Makiki Street then; we had a place in Kailua as well) and so we turned on the radio and found out that the Japanese were attacking. So we called Callaghan, and he was amazed and he said, "I've got to get to the Base." and so I said, "Well, I'll drive you." and so I went up and picked him up and we drove (bleep) to get off yet. It was a terrible mess and many wrecks on the side of the road and I had heard that there was traffic but we didn't see it because we were a little bit late.

Now Shea, instead of... when he got to the Army Navy YMCA, he was so tired he said he thought he'd get a room. Fortunately he did, because he would have been aboard the *Cassin* when it was blown up. So he was saved. And that's about the story. Of course as I say we were informed shortly after that, that Callaghan called me when he could and said that things were pretty bad, but he couldn't say much about it, and suggested that we do what...uh, that maybe my family ought to leave and one thing or another. And I guess that's about the story on that.

Q: O.K., as Territorial Treasurer, you must have known Governor Poindexter pretty well...

A: Very well.

Q: ... and he of course was the Governor who exceeded to General Shorts request to declare matial law and I'd like to have your views on that as someone who was a territorial official at the time.

A: Yes, well at the time, people as I told you the other day, didn't uh... didn't... in retrospect, didn't understand what was going on in Honolulu and the terrible excitement that was going around; and I will say that Poindexter was a very calm, deliberate kind of a person. You couldn't have found anybody more deliberate and calm than he was. But nevertheless, he was under tremendous pressure from the Army and others to declare martial law, because no one knew... everyone thought, as a matter of fact, that the Japanese had transports outside and that would come in and conquer the Islands. And it was pretty obvious that the senses were weak and you could uh.... when you consider that attitude of all of the people at that time, uh... uh... there was nothing else that Poindexter could do. And I think that he was under... I mean people later on found that he had done something very wrong about declaring martial law. Well, ultimately, it was a very great burden on the civilian population, but at the time that he did declare martial law, uh... uh... certainly anybody, I am sure, a reasonable man, would have done the same thing, even though that were critical of him like Gov. (??), and um....

Q: Did you know Garner Anthony as well as that time?

A: I knew about Anthony quite well, yes.

Q: He seemed like he was pretty well opposed to martial law.

A: Well, he was later; but nobody knows what he thought at that time.

Q: So, he didn't raise any objections at the time that you know of:

A: No, no. Not that I know of. I don't recall any one, because when I was in the Governors office on the Monday morning, the Lt. General was there and there was a great number of military people, including Simons I believe and I think there was the Provost Marshall, and so on and so forth, and Aids and so forth. So there was a great running around and so on. So as I recall, Joe Hartford(??) was the Attorney General then. Joe was a very calm type person too. So I don't think anyone could have found any more calm(c)type people than Poindexter and Hartford, because they were both very fine people.

Q: Did you ever hear Poindexter later on, and years later express any regret for having declared martial law?

A: He might have. I'm sure that most of us felt regret, and uh, I mean as the way things turned out, and I'm sure that Poindexter felt regret too; it was very likely.

Q: What would you say was the worst effect of martial law, the most harmful effect, on the Territory.

A: Well, I think it was in the matter of...(??), was suspended more or less, and you had a military car and all that; (??) had little rights and they set out provisions that you had to comply with, so on and so forth. I presume that they thought that this was... or the military thought that this was the right thing to do. And I'm told of Midway, of course it was always a threat, of uh... of an invasion of Hawaii.

Q: What would you say had the greatest impact of martial law on your functions as Territorial Treasurer.

A: Well, uh, we were not controlled to much as far as our government is concerned. I mean I don't think there was any impact except of course as I explained to you before, that we started to destroy some money; the cash that United States currency, that was around and overprint it with the word Hawaii on it. That was perfectly normal but considering what could have happened at that time...

Q: Do you recall where the printing was done?

A: How the printing was done?

Q: Where it was done?

A: Oh no I don't, but there was um... as I told you before, I had to (Bleep) with Gov. Poindexter right after Pearl Harbor, and he contacted someone in Washington and later contacted me and told my they were sending a man down to take charge. And this man turned out... I think his name was Tree(??), and from the Treasury Dept. and um... He took over. He created a committee of myself and some of the bankers in town; gathered together all the cash together for purposes of destruction of it and certify that it had been destroyed. And then of course they printed (Bleep) out of Washington (I don't know the (??)) on Hawaii... on overprint that was the stamp name Hawaii on it; so that in the event of an invasion, that money could be disclaimed and there would by know possibility of using Federal money.

Q: I see. Could you describe how the currency was destroyed?

A: Yes, all the banks counted their money and then we had someone to check it all out. And they brought it up in sealed packages and they brought it up the crematory in the Nuuanu Cemetery; all the committee there had to sign on a statement to the effect that it had all been destroyed.

Q: Do you recall how much cash it was that was destroyed?

A: No, I don't recall, no.

Q: Gee, you mentioned when we were talking earlier about some of the men lighting up cigars with some of the money (laughter).

A: Uh, yes, well Tree(??) was in charge and I don't recall who suggested it, but somebody did and brought a box of cigars and one of the bankers opened up one of the packages and it was a large denomination of bills; and passed one out to each person who would light up a cigar with it, you know.

Q: Probably the only time in you lives that you got to do that!

A: Right.

Q: Is there anything else in that period that you can recall, particularly that sticks in your memory?

A: Uh, not particularly, I mean... all of where and what was going on you know, the attack on Midway and all of this and that. And incidentally, my first cousin was B.D. Godbold was on Midway; he was the executive officer to [*RADM Milo F.*] Dramel.

Q: Oh, I see, so was...

A: Wake Island I think it was.

Q: Was he captured as well?

A: Yes, he was captured. He was a prisoner of war until after the War.

Q: It must have been quite an ordeal.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Well, I thank you very much for sharing your time, um...

A: Your welcome. I hope you can use the information.

Q: What I'd like to do is send you a couple of things in the mail. I'm going to ask that you sign a release form so that we can make this tape available to historians and other people who are researching on the Pearl Harbor Attack and that period. And I'm along also, I'm going to be sending you a sheet with some personal data on it just for our files, and ask you to fill that in if you wouldn't mind.

A: Alright.

Q: You know, things like address, phone number, and that sort of thing.

A: Yeah, O.K.

Q: And the address that I have for you is... let's see. I... actually don't have one. Can you give me your address?

A: 3812 Moccisin Drive,

Q: And that's in Coeur d'Alene

A: Coeur d'Alene, [*Idaho*]

Q: 838 what?

A: 83814.

Q: O.K., I'll get that into the mail for you today.

A: O.K.

Q: O.K., thank you very much again.

A: Your welcome.

Q: O.K., good bye.

Joseph Kau #67
April 4, 1985

Q: Professor Kau, how old were you in 1941?

A: Five years old.

Q: Do you remember the Pearl Harbor attack at all?

A: I remember the morning... the Sunday morning. I remember hearing the church bells from St. Anthony's Catholic Church on Kalihi, just above the State Prison there. That was just prior, I believe, to the attack itself. The church bells used to ring on the hour. They used to ring church bells in those days, and it was after that the activity began, that I can recall.

Q: What do you remember of the attack?

A: The first thing I remember is looking at the skies toward Hickam, [*John*] Rogers Airport in Hickam [*Field*], and I remember seeing
the area toward Pearl. I lived in lower Kalihi at the time. I remember seeing an aircraft, or something like that streaking smoke, smoking across the sky. I think I remember something of that sort. Either that or volumes of smoke coming up. This must have been after the church bells, sometime, I'd say 20 or 30 minutes after the hour.

Q: Were you at home at the time?

A: Yes, we were all at home. Then the other activity I recall are the airplanes, because you know those propeller driven planes were still a novelty then. The speed of the planes were quite impressive I always thought, and one in particular low flying plane, I remember, coming across the rooftop I think. Some of us climbed onto the roof, my brothers, some neighbors, the low tin roofs in these duplexes in lower Kalihi, to look up, and I seem to recall seeing a gunner, a tail gunner in an aircraft that flew the rooftops. There were only one or two that flew the rooftops. Then there was, I don't recall whether I saw it or someone mentioned it, an old Japanese man waving a flag, a Japanese flag. He was a store owner a block or so across from us.

Q: Could you see the Japanese insignias - the Rising Sun, on the planes?

A: I don't recall that, I just recall someone crouched I think it was Louie Nelson looking up, you could see someone crouched in the tail turret. That was it, but you could see the figure; later some said they saw the face... a Simian-looking monkey. We thought it was funny... someone there. I think others waved because you know, youngsters that didn't quite know what was going on, all the activities, and some waved at them. So... the real news of it, the radio, (not everyone had radio in those days), I remember some kid coming down on a bicycle and shouting

that the water had been poisoned. Later in the evening someone saying oh, there had been some paratroopers who had jumped in. So after that it was kind of chaotic I guess.

Q: What was the reaction of your family, your parents?

A: Some fear, because my mother had been in China during the 20's, during the War Lord period, right after the nationalists had gained control there, in the teens and the twenties. So for her, her response was apprehension, because she had lived through that in here childhood. So she was fearful that something like that might be occurring. But there wasn't anyplace to go, things to do; not much information. We weren't readers. My parents didn't read. No radio. So everything was... no telephones, or very few telephones. So most of it was by way of rumors and word of mouth.

Q: Must have been a pressure cooker for rumors.

A: Yes, all kinds of things, you know? I think it was, oh, I would say, well after, in mid-morning to late morning before people could really understand what all the fireworks were all about. And again, not too many people had cars in the neighborhood, so you know, it's not as though we could have gone our and found out. Those who had phones were calling about and I think I mentioned my uncle's neighbor had been killed by what they thought was a bomb that had been dropped in the area... oh where was that.... Beretania and Piikoi, that area there. So a friend of ours was killed with that incident. There were a few casualties there, so they thought they mistakenly bombed throughout an area that had smokestack the closest thing to an industry.

But there was quite a bit of... almost... not quite panic, but people were all about you know, out of the houses, looking about, not knowing what's going on. There was very little information for most of us, and for those of us who were preschoolers or youngsters, it was just a lot of activity.

Q: What do you remember of the days immediately following the attack; the early martial law period?

A: Not too much. Things... primarily the excitement of the people. This was something that... a great moment. I recall a period after that, seeing people keyed up to enlist, which was unusual. I can't recall whether it was the old armory, the old post office, or the old armory, which was where the Iolani Palace is, across the street from Iolani Palace on the Hotel Street. I can't recall whether it was there on King Street, the post office, or somewhere down toward Chinatown, there was a recruiting office, and people were keyed up, anxious to go and sign up and fight the dreaded enemy. I can recall that part.

Then for a while there, again the sense the people had for me; their senses of concern for me, in the sense that this was a great deal out of the ordinary, learning that some friends, parents of friends, and people had been killed because of this activity... this attack. That's what was most striking.

But after two or three months, it was just back to the routine for a child going to kindergarten, then school. They began building bomb shelters I recall; a common feature up in the schools. That used to have these bomb shelters tunneled.

Q: What school did you go to?

A: This is Puuhale Elementary in lower Kalihi. So those were a new activity, and then of course there were gas mask drills and air raid drills...

Q: Were you given gas masks?

A: They were issued... I can't recall whether they were issued. I think we were all issued them? Or were they school issues? I can't recall. Perhaps we were all issued gas masks, and there was... in let's see that would be five years... till '43, '44, I remember drills. They used to use tear gas drills, and the kids would go and practice donning gas masks.

Q: What was the reaction of a kid, uh, you know, what was your reaction as a kid? Was there any conception of what poison gas was?

A: Not really. Mostly it was the tear gas because that was what the drill was run with. I remember tear gas canisters, they used to use as some tear gas generator, and that it was occasionally, maybe once every six months (once or twice a year), we'd go in to do the gas mask drill, and there'd be some evacuation drills. But you know there was nowhere to go except well the bomb shelters of course. By that time it gets to lessen their class day to go to the bomb shelters, that kind of thing.

Vegetable gardens, everybody grew vegetable gardens, and started cultivating; and even the schools, the grade schools used to have as a project (part of the curriculum) for some of us, which was planting and growing things.

Q: Do you recall any ethnic tensions in the neighborhood, with...

A: Japanese especially, yeah, because the mix there, in that neighborhood that I lived in was Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, mixed groups as well. But especially among the Japanese, the apprehension.... uh... but we'd been friends long enough so that even with that, I think people made the distinction between these outsiders... foreigners. It varied somewhat I think, people that had come from the "old country", who had, had hostilities, you know... racial hostilities, ethnic hostilities; the Chinese for example who had been in China recently, Japan, with Japan's incursions there, uh... in Manchuria and those areas. There typically were few. But this... I think the tendency was, well, it's typical, can't trust them, and so many of the local Japanese were "suspected". I think for the youngsters, well you know, people I played with were Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, they were still people. I didn't identify them with this incursion. And then too, since I think we didn't actually see, you know, who the aggressor was, who these people attacking were... there was no occasion to identify

the local Japanese with them; not in my mind anyway, and I'm counting a line of a lot of my playmates and friends.

Q: With the influx of servicemen into Hawaii, there must have been a... it must have had a big impact on the social fabric. Do you recall any of that?

A: Yeah, I remember there was a little GI camp just below the prison. The area of Nimitz Highway wasn't developed till during the War or right after the War. It wasn't built. So there was a... I don't know whether it was a holding camp, or a training camp, I used to be a newsboy selling papers there, and I remember GI's being there. I don't know exactly what the function of that was because there was a.... the closest installation would be Shafter. So I didn't know what the GI's were doing there. I just remember that. Let's see, that was in '42, '43, that period, they used it as a camp. But it changed the routine, the uniformed people, you know; we got the sense that we were at War.

There was some rationing of hard to get items, butter, meats were difficult to get.... communications, where my dad finally bought a radio that was a short wave potential that pulled a couple of tubes. That was the extent of it. Lights out, and curfew, I can't recall whether it was 8 or 9, with sirens to mark the curfew period. I recall that too. Those are the incursions. Some people were fearful you know, so they moved to the west coast. I remember that also, because they felt that there might be a recurrence of this attack. And the influx of GI's, what it did of course was liven up the activity with the... this was the jump off point for the South Pacific. That can be expected. So there were a lot of GI's especially in Honolulu town. So the activity, the incidents of GI's in uniform on leave, or on liberty on the weekend, there was much greater... much greater activity down in the red light area, around Iwilei and Chinatown.

Q: What do you recall of that?

A: Well, they had health stations to dispense... uh... that would have been somewhere around oh, Smith and Pauahi Street. My brothers were boot blacks (shoe shine boys). I used to run off to town to visit them at times and there was a lot of activity. The usual amount of hookers; some working on the old palace grounds there, because that's where they would take their tricks in the bushes there.

Q: On Iolani Palace grounds?

A: On Iolani Palace grounds. I'm you know, not a first-hand witness but so the boys told me. Uh, Ala Park, Ala Park was different then of course you know. It was kind of a ... well just off Iwilei. Old Iwilei used to have some of the brothels I understand, there, and a friend of mine who said that above his father's hotel on the old River Street there, there were some brothels that were in operation. But there was a lot of activity down town. Since most of the GI's were mainland kids, they again, were seen as kind of outsiders. You know youngsters, to a child there was no identity factor there. And there was some

sense that these were maybe Auslanders. For example, in lower Kalihi, there weren't too many white families that I can think of; maybe one of two white families around. So you know, to see wandering around in lower Kalihi would have been unusual during the 40's and late 30's. So when they did appear there was, well... kind of strangeness, sometimes some hostility, you know with kids that might be strolling around lost after a night out on the town. But it was a lively period, I think for a kid growing up in all this activity, without the eminent threat as you grow older, of what is going on; imminent threat of war.

Q: Well, do you have anything else you want to add to that?

A: No, it's just a kind of a part of growing up. I think what it has fixed in my mind, was the idea you know, that there had been an attack, um... that my impression was that War is an inevitable part of life. So you know, a few years later when the Korean War started up, you know the cycle of it all... um... and the whole idea I think, for a boy growing up, that it was an inevitable and a recurrent cycle to go trooping off to War. That was an inevitable part of history perhaps. Of course, as we get older we are perhaps disabused of that. But that sense, that it's part of the scheme of things.

Q: That's a very interesting perspective; to get the picture through the eyes of a small child like that. Thank you.

Masaji Marumoto #70
April 8, 1985

Q: Go ahead, Mr. Marumoto.

A: I think you better start by asking the questions.

Q: Well, I'd like to just start by asking you to give me a little bit of your background; where you were born and how you were educated.

A: Well, because the Japanese celebrated the centennial, so called centennial of the Japanese emigrants, I may say this. I am the son of the so called contract laborers and there are very few... I don't think there are half a dozen sons of contract laborers right now... or descendants.

Q: Is that from the original group that came in 1885?

A: No. The contract laborer group came in 1885, February 8th I think it was, and then in 26 ships. The last ship came here in 1894 and the total number of contract laborers in round figures would be 29,000. And my father came in the 6th group which arrived here in November 1888, three years after the original group. And his... uh... the ship manifest shows that he was contract laborer number 5,140 out of the 29,000. And he was sent to Pahoa Plantation on the Hamakua Coast of the Island of Hawaii, on the three contract. They all came on three contracts. And then he worked for four years more. Then he came out to Honolulu. Then after working in Honolulu for three year she went back to Japan and married my mother.

As a matter of fact, my father, according to the record, did not have anything to do with the selection of my mother as his wife because the family record in Japan, village record shows, my mother was already in the register of my fathers family as his wife one month before he reached Japan.

Q: So everything was all arranged beforehand huh?

A: Apparently. And then I was born in Honolulu in 1906. And then when I was a year and a half old, I had a chance to buy a store in Kona, so that I grew up in Kona. My father became a Kona merchant.

Q: Whereabouts in Kona was that?

A: It's just on the Keaau of Manago Hotel. If you drive there, the old building in which my father conducted the store is still there. I think even my father's stores name is still there, but nobody is operating.

Q: What was the name of the store?

A: Marumoto... T.Marumoto.

Q: You grew up in the Kona area?

A: I grew up until I was in the 6th grade of the grammar school in Kona, and the reason why I left Kona, it was during WWI, 1917, 1918, and in Kona, kids used to quit school at about 6th grade to help the parents pick coffee and then do some weeding and so forth. And there were very few already in the 7th grade and the 8th grade, so that when I went to school, I think my class, 6th grade had 18 students. Then there were only 6 students in the 7th grade; only two in the 8th grade. And it was WWI, so we were in the same class... no, same classroom, taught by the same teacher (c) the principal, And while the teacher, (I was in the 6th grade), while the teacher was teaching the 7th grade, and the 8th grade, we would be knitting socks and sweaters for American soldiers overseas, see. And so I asked my father, send my to Honolulu. And that's how I came out to Honolulu to finish my 7th and 8th grade in grammar school in Honolulu, before going to high school.

Q: Where did you finish your education in Honolulu?

A: In Honolulu?

Q: Yes.

A: I finished my education in Honolulu at McKinley High School, class of 1924. And what happened to me was that because I was so ill trained in English, I tried to get into the nearest public school to my Japanese school, which was across from the Buddhist Temple on 4th Street, Pali Hwy. now. I went there and the principal asked me (and that's Central Intermediate now, but at that time it was a grammar school up to the 8th grade, because at that time the elementary schools, the school system was on 8/4 basis instead of 6/3 basis), and the principal asked me, "What class are you planning to register." I said, "7th grade." She chased me out. She said, "Our 5th graders speak better English than you." (laughter)

Q: Do you remember her name?

A: Overend, O-V-E-R-E-N-D, and Central Grammar, of course, was the school where most of the Caucasian students went. So, then the only school I could go was Territorial Normal School which is those days, after a student finished the grammar school at 8th grade, they would either go to high school or normal school. And you went to Normal School for four years and you became a teacher. You didn't need any college degree. Then if a person went to McKinley High School (and McKinley High School was the only public high school on Oahu, on this Island,) and then a student wanted to be a teacher, then after graduating from McKinley, he or she went to Normal School for one year and then became a teacher. That was the system.

Q: So what did you do after you finished high school?

A: What happened was, I was in the same class as Hiram Fong and Chin Ho and oh, maybe about more than half a dozen physicians and dentists, and others who became pretty prominent. Probably that's the most well known class at McKinley High School.

And then, in those days there was not much fuss about religious freedom, so every high school class went to a Christian church Sunday, Sunday before graduation, to be baccalaureate Christian baccalaureate. Now in my case, in the case of my school, we had baccalaureate at Central Union and Rev. Palmer was the minister and I still remember the theme of his sermon was to aim high, as high as you think you can go.

And as I said, 210 I think in the class, Hiram Fong was there, Chin Ho was there. None of us had planned to go to college; had not applied to college. Chin Ho had never gone to college, Hiram Fong I think worked for about three years before the went to University of Hawaii.

But in my case, what had happened was the day after graduation (and the graduation was also in a church - 1st Methodist Church) and the one who delivered the address to the students was the minister of that Methodist Church, and in uh...last years 60th reunion of the class, I was interested in what I had said in my address because I represented the class and graduated number one and made the speech. And then at that time, the minister of the Methodist Church was the speaker at the graduation, and to show you what the psychology was, he emphasized the fact to be very faithful to employees and so forth (laughter). So it's an interesting situation.

Q: Yes, it is.

A: Then on the day after my graduation, the Bishop of the Buddhist Church and my father was a devote Buddhist and knew the Bishop here, the Bishop of the Buddhist Church and his wife come to dinner with me the day after graduation. And at that time, Seaside Hotel, which was on the location of the present Royal Hawaiian Hotel, was the best Hotel in Honolulu.

So I was invited there by the Bishop and his wife and myself. So three were at the dinner and that was the first time I had ever eaten at a place with a linen tablecloth on and heavy silver utensils. And he asked me whether I planned to go to college. I said, "No, I can't afford to go to college. I think I'm going back to Kona to help my father." He says, "Well, I've got a scholarship for you so plan going to college, and if you haven't already applied to college, apply.

Then my... I went back to Kona and my father told me to apply to a college where there is somebody you know. And it so happened that a person from the same village who came here in the 4th group of contract laborers had a son who had graduated from Chicago Dental College and instead of coming back to Hawaii had opened his office and was practicing in Chicago. As a matter or fact, he passed away last year; stayed in Chicago all this time; worked there; was very important. And so I applied to Chicago and was admitted there.

Then what happened was, after two years I had already completed the three-year course by going to summer school and taking extra courses and at Chicago, if a person graduated with B+ average for four years, he would be Phi [*Beta Kapa*] If you were A[a](average A(c)), after three years, you'd be Phi [*Beta Kapa*]. After 3 years and by the end of the second summer, I had completed the three year curriculum and so I was admitted as a member of Phi Be.

Then my father asked me, "So what are you taking?" I said, "Philosophy." And a person who came here as a contract laborer wouldn't know what philosophy is. So he was displeased and he said, "Take something more practical." Well, I could have majored in, and I did major in, and graduated as a Economics major. And at the graduation I was offered a fellowship in Economics at Chicago, but I decided not to accept that because in those days, a Oriental who took Economics or any such subject, couldn't get any job and I had never stepped into any law office, (had never stepped into any lawyers office). But I decided to go to Harvard, and take up law. And as an off side I may say this, that Hiram Fong worked for three years before he went to University of Hawaii, then he graduated from the University of Hawaii. Well, he wanted to go to Harvard. Now in my case I had no trouble because from a big prestigious college Harvard would accept anybody who graduated. The only thing they did was after the first year they wash out about one third.

But then Hiram wanted to go to Harvard. Harvard said, "We don't recognize University of Hawaii." So then Arthur Smith(??) who was a graduate of Harvard and Attorney General here... and I think he was a regent of the University of Hawaii, wrote to Harvard... wrote to Harvard and said, "Is there any way he can get to Harvard... admitted to Harvard?" And Harvard wrote back to Arthur Smith and said, "We take anyone who's in the top 25% of a small college, but in the case of University of Hawaii, we'll make an exception if the person you are speaking of is in the top 15%, and Hiram happened to be in the top 15%". (laughter)

Q: So, he made it.

A: He made it. But Chin Ho never went to college.

Q: How did you find Harvard?

A: Well, I'll tell you, I was the first Oriental student at Harvard Law School and there were a couple of colored students but I was the first Oriental student. And Harvard admits about 750 to 800 a year dividing into two sections.

And then the professor had a seating chart, and without exceptions, the professors would call the students uh... in the order... according to the seating chart. He doesn't jump all over. And, in the first year we have no electives but five compulsory courses, so there are five professors.

Every professor, and then I may say this, within the course of a year, about each student would be called about six times or seven times for recitation and then because the professor calls in the order of seating, you know when you would be called. In my case for the whole year, not one single professor called me for recitation. I suppose he figured that I could not recite (laughter).

And then Harvard washed out about one third and then probably 50% graduate. And you only know whether you passed or you didn't pass. Individually you know what you made, so that it wasn't too bad. Although I didn't make... in my third year, my grade was good enough to be an honor student. But the first two years we had no law background anywhere, so that it was all Greek to me and didn't make too well. Third year was all right, and that's how it was and I graduated in 1930.

Q: Did you come back to Hawaii then?

A: I came back to Hawaii then.

Q: What did you do?

A: Well, I uh... it was 1930, Depression Era; I made the route of different law

offices. One office that I called on was Kemp & Steinbeck(??). Kemp later became Chief Justice; Steinbeck became Governor, and also Federal Judge in the Hawaii Supreme Court. And they had employed Sukiama(??) who later became Chief Justice, and he had just been appointed City and County Attorney by Gillilan(??) who elected a City and County Attorney.

Gillilan's campaign was based on the fact that, "If I am elected, I would appoint one Japanese Deputy, one Chinese Deputy." Until then, there was not a single Oriental Deputy, and he won by 97 votes (laughter). Gillilan's first choice was Robert Morakani(??); Sukiama was supposed to be a Democrat, because campaign stand had a democratic front. But, Oragami(??) was involved in the appeal of the Fukunaga case and so he could not accept Fatsikimo(??) was appointed Deputy and there was an empty office room at Kemp and Steinback. So Mr. Kemp said, "Well, Sukiama, use this office, and you can come and use this office and use our secretary on a two-thirds, one-third basis.

Q: What did two-thirds, one-third mean?

A: What it meant.. so I asked him, "What does it mean?" exactly what you asked me. He said, "Well, whatever business you bring in; whatever fee you get, you regain one-third and we take two-thirds, and that's a fact. So I walked out and then, fortunately, an attorney named Thompson who was fairly prominent, had an office manager who was a Japanese and who he liked very much. And that office manager came out from corner so he knew me and my family. I saw him and he mentioned to Mr. Thompson, and Thompson said, "Bring him in."

Q: Do you remember Mr. Thompson's first name?

A: Fred.

Q: What was the office managers name, do you recall?

A: Naguchi(??)

Q: First name?

A: Uh... I'll get it for you but....He has a Japanese name, Girokicha(??) I think, and so I got a job there. Mr. Thompson treated me magnificently. Now one of the big cases... oh yeah, what happened was this: I started in the first week of January, 1931, because I passed the Bar in the Fall examination of 1930, the year of my graduation. And uh... he gave me a hundred dollars a month salary, which wasn't bad because most of the people, even non-Japanese "haoli" kids used to get only $50.00 a month in those days.

For instance, Edward Silva, who graduated one year ahead of me at Harvard, from a very prominent Portuguese family here, he got only $50.00. Now Fairbanks, who later became Circuit Court Judge here, he told me that he was married and then he graduated and got a job in Fresno. He got only $75.00 a month.

Q: That was the Depression.

A: Depression, see. But Thompson gave me $100. Then I sat down there for about two months and just warming my seat; doing nothing... no assignment. So I told Mr. Thompson one morning, "Mr. Thompson, I'm going to Hilo." He said, "What do you want to go to Hilo for?" I said, "Well, I've been here for two months and actually I don't think I'm earning salary from the way I'm here, because I haven't gotten any assignment to speak of." And so forth. And so he tells me, "Well," he says, "that's none of your goddamn business." I gained

the salary. He says, "If you go to Hilo now, the old time loyalists in Hilo would run rings around you and the old-time attorneys in Hilo were Carl Smiths father and couple of "haoli" attorneys. You would be disappointed. I'll start assigning cases to you. Just hang on." And he did start assigning me a lot of cases. So I was fortunate.

Q: What kind of cases did you get?

A: I had one Supreme Court case, and then some probate cases, and not too big a case. But then again, you probably heard about the Massie case. I wrote a Globe Review article last year, in the University of Hawaii Law Review, about the Massie case, and he let me work on it.

Q: What sort of work did you do on the Massie case?

A: Oh, just researching if problems of law came up, and in the second case where... not the first case, but in the second case where these sailors and Mrs. Massie were involved, they hired two mainland attorneys, and one was [*Clarence S.*] Darrow.

Q: Did you see Darrow perform in court?

A: Yeah, one time. I'm going to tell you. What happened was every noon I'd go to lunch together with Mr. Thompson, Darrow, and Admiral …, who was it now... Pearl Harbor Commandant, and after lunch they would go to Mr. Thompson's office.

Q: He would have lunch with the Commandant at Pearl Harbor?

A: He would.

Q: He would have lunch with the Commandant?

A: Yeah, or they would go by themselves, Mrs. Forteque(??), Mrs. Massie's mother, Mrs. Massie, and Lt. Then after lunch they would go into Thompson's office, and then discuss the strategy for the afternoon. One afternoon, Mr. Thompson called me. Some question of law had to be researched, so he called me in. Then Admiral Sterling was just flabbergasted that such a secret conference and an Oriental should be called in. So Mr. Thompson said, "Admiral, you don't have to worry. If I don't trust the fellow he would not be in this office." That was the biggest boost I had (laughter), and in that case he let me sit in on every hearing in the case.

So I didn't need to be in the office. He said, "Go and listen in and see how they operate." and then I ran some errands and looked up some points of law. Points of law had to be looked up; that's how it was.

Q: What is your impression of Clarence Darrow; how he operated?

A: The way he operated, he was already a little too old, and he wasn't sharp enough. But he was a gentleman, that is, as a matter of fact, one of the things that happened was he brought two analysts from Los Angeles to show that Massie was insane. And one day the analyst was put on the stand and questioned; Darrow questioned him, and his direct questioning ended at 4:00.

So the cross- examination would be the following day, and Armbreck(??) who was a special Deputy Attorney assisting the Chief Attorney who was Jack Kelly,

did the cross-examining and the first thing that Armbreck did was to produce a book like this, and he asked the witness, "Are you the owner of this book?" "Yes." "Will you turn to page so and so?" and he did "Will you read second paragraph?" or third paragraph or whatever it was. And that statement that he read from his book was completely contrary to his testimony, so he didn't have to cross(c)examine any more.

I don't think Darrell thought there would be a person who would win; this analyst book, or maybe he didn't know that he had written that book. But Armbreck was sharp enough, and spent the night before reading his book. So it was a very short cross-examination; that's the way it was (laughter).

Q: It must have been a lot of uproar in the community here about the Massie case.

A: Would you be interested in my law review article on the case?

Q: Oh... oh yes, certainly.

A: I have an extra so I'll show you.

Q: Oh, thank you.

A: I'll give a copy to you.

Q: Yes. It created a lot of tension I imagine. So during this period, you of course were of the few Japanese-American attorneys in Honolulu and..

A: I was only one of the two who were practicing because Sukiama had already become City and County Attorney, and after being with Mr. Thompson for two years, I said, "I think I'm going to open my office and start practicing independently." and spoke with Mr. Thompson about it. Mr. Thompson said, "I think that you are ready now, so that if you want to do it, you have my blessing." And he called his secretary, the office manager and said, "Well, Marumoto is opening his own office and he may need some files, so let him take out any file he needs for his case, and you have my permission to let him use it." That's the way it was, so I was very lucky."

Q: Very lucky.

A: And then he also said, "I think you'll need some help in the beginning, so I'll shoot over some small cases to you." and he did.

Q: It was just immediately after this period that Col. George Patton became Chief of Army Intelligence here in Hawaii.

A: That is right.

Q: And of course it was during that period that he prepared his plan and his list of people, and you were on that list. Why do you think that you were included on that list?

A: Because I was a licensed attorney. He put every licensed attorney on it.

Q: Every Japanese-American licensed attorney?

A: Yeah.

Q: So it was more just a matter of your position in the community than anything else.

A: He's Court of Appeals Judge in Washington, D.C. now.

Q: Shiro Kashira (??)

A: Yeah. He was not mentioned because this was one year after that report was made. Ralph Yamaguchi(??) also was not mentioned because 1936. In 1935, Tom Akino(??), (he's dead so he's not in this list), but Tom Akino passed the Bar in 1935 and he's in. Every licensed attorney was in. Of course, I was a director of Japanese Chamber of Commerce. But I don't think he bothered about those things. I think it's a fact, that is uh, he uh... just... picked up every licensed attorney.

Q: Did you ever meet him?

A: Huh?

Q: Did you ever meet him when he was here?

A: No. And I think he mentioned in his list, there are two District Court Practitioners, and who legislators. I think Thomas Sakakihara(??) was in it. He was a District Court Practitioner and then he was a Legislator see; and another one was Ongi on Kauai. He was also a District Court Practitioner and a Legislator. So that's how it was.

Q: Is a ... during the 1930's, did you gradually build up your law practice?

A: What was that question?

Q: During the 1930's, did you gradually build up and increase your law practice?

A: Oh yes... oh yes. As a matter of fact, I was pretty prominent in the Japanese community and if this... and I think this happened after Patton made his report. I think it was in 1936, after the Manchurian incident, Ambassador Seito(??), Japan, got called back to go to Manchuria to see the conditions there and then speak about the conditions there.

The Japanese Government Foreign Office wanted Seito to meet prominent Caucasians on his way back to Washington, so Vice-Consul Yamasaki(??) who was acting Consul General here, got a wire from Japan, stating that.... asking him to make an arrangement for Ambassador Seito to meet some Caucasian... prominent Caucasian on his way back.

Well, Vice-Consul Yamasaki didn't speak English and then even if he did speak English, in those days Japanese Consul Generals didn't associate too closely with Caucasians, and so he didn't know what to do. And I was President of the Japanese-American Citizens League here, which was the most prominent HAA organization. He telephoned me for assistance; so he says, "Can you help me?" Well, I said, "I'll try."

And what happened at that time was a fellow named John.... anyway, the... manager for the.... I think it was John Hamilton, he was the executive of the "haoli" Chamber of Commerce. I think his title would be President now. Somehow, I had developed some contact with him and he was very nice. That is he was much older. I was only 29 years old then and he treated me just like his

son. And so I went to see him and I said, "I have this problem and is there any suggestions that you could make." Then he said, "I think it can be worked out. I'll give you an answer in a couple of days."

And Harold Dillingham was President of the Chamber of Congress and in those days the Chamber of Commerce used to have quarterly membership meetings every three months at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel [*for*] lunch. And a couple of days later (maybe three or four days later), Hamilton called me and said, "I've got it worked out. Instead of you or the Japanese Consul asking for the privilege to speak to prominent persons, his schedule of arrival here in October would be just right for him to be the principal speaker at that quarterly meeting. So instead of you asking us a favor, we'll ask the Consulate here to contact Ambassador and ask him whether he would be the principal speaker." And that's how it was arranged.

So when my name appeared in the Patton's list, I thought maybe because of that connection I might have been in, but it wasn't.

Q: Oh... (END OF TAPE - SIDE 1) Then as War approached, did... were many people in the Japanese community thinking about the predicament that Japanese-Americans would find themselves in, if Japan and the United States went to War.

A: I don't think there was that much concern expressed in the Japanese community. Although, around 1939 (latter part of '39 and '40 and so forth) for the first time, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce began thinking about ways in which to get closer to the "haoli" community. So that, I suppose, on the first time the Japanese Chamber of Commerce (Director of Japanese Commerce) invited the Directors of the "haoli" Chamber of Commerce plus a few other prominent "haolis" was in 1940. And on those occasions, we'd invite... the first party was a sit-down dinner with trays and Japanese style at Japanese teahouse.

Then I think it was in 1941 (about a half year before Pearl Harbor) we again held a cocktail party, inviting the Army Commander, Navy Commandant, and prominent "haoli" officials and so forth; and actually, I happened to be the one doing the dirty work (laughter), inviting and arranging, and those things. But, certainly there was concern that the relationship may be bad and we just have to try to get closer to the "haoli" community.

Q: Was there any organizations that were formed before the Pearl Harbor Attack, like the Morale Committee, to accomplish that kind of work?

A: Morale Committee was not organized until after Pearl Harbor.

Q: Was there any organization that was formed?

A: No. Probably would be Chamber of Commerce. See what had happened was, I think that until 1938, the Japanese society here was split up in small fragments; the most prominent organization being the Chamber of Commerce. But the Chamber of Commerce would be mostly importers and wholesalers; then Japanese Merchants Association would be the retailers. Then in 19... I think around 1939, we decided (and I say we because I was Director of Chamber of Commerce) that instead of Japanese Merchants and split up, we should combine into Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and cut the contractors in and so forth.

And that merging of the organizations took place I think around 1939. And I was one of the committee members from the Chamber of Commerce side to negotiate what the Merchants Association and reform that.

Q: I suppose it's indelibly imbedded in your mind what you were doing when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: Yes, what happened was, I don't know but you probably know some details from Butch Smiser's(??) article, but what had happened was in... May....I think it was May, of 1940, Nippon Yusen Kaisha... the Japanese Steamship Company had built a new ship (I forgot the name of the ship.) But on the maiden voyage of that ship, the Company sent all the first class passengers to the Royal Hawaiian for dinner, and then used the dining room of that ship for dinner for Caucasians, Japanese, (I don't know whether there were Chinese merchants or not) but to invite them to dinner there.

And then, (I don't sip now, but in those days I used to drink) and then I was drinking Scotch, double Scotch, and so forth, and I know I drank with President of Inter-Island Steam [*Navigation*] Company and so forth. And when the dinner time came, I was pretty well soused and I don't know who I sat with, see?

And then the next morning, I got a telephone call from FBI and I didn't know why FBI should call me. As I say, the agent in charge was to speak to me, see? So I was a little concerned and I went to Dillingham Building, 3rd floor, to where the FBI office was. And when I went there, I was taken to the room, office of agent in charge, Robert Shivers. Robert Shivers had come in August of 1940... uh no... was it 1940?... uh... it might have been 1939.

But then I went in to know what was up, and he kept smiling and said, "I'm Bob Shivers, agent in charge here. I sat with you at the same table last evening and I have been here since August," Oh yeah, he came in August of 1939 and this was in 1940 "and it's now about 9 months since I came. I have found lots of Caucasians making reports to me. I have not heard the Japanese side of it. I want to find out the Japanese side of it. Can you help me?" And so I said, "Well, do you have a family here?" He said, "Yeah, we have no children, but my wife is here with me." "Well, if that's the case, do you think Mrs. Shivers and you would mind coming to my home for dinner. I'll get a few couples." And then I said, "Sure.", so I telephoned my wife from his office and I had about four couples, I think, beside myself and Shivers. Because what we did was in a small dining room, it would sit only eight, but by putting in the planks I could sit twelve. So we had dinner for six couples. That's where Shivers got his first introduction to Japanese here.

Then about two months later, Japanese Chamber of Commerce again had.... oh no, I think that was the first Japanese Chamber of Commerce party for the haolis. They called me and he said “by that time we were on first name basis” so Shivers said, "Masaji, are you going to the party tonight?" I said, "Sure." So then he said, "Can I pick you up?" I said, "Well, what's Corinne(??) doing?" (that's his wife's name) "Nothing." I said, "Why don't you have Corinne come to my home and spend the evening with Sikeko(??)”, that's my wife's name, while we are at the teahouse. He says, "Well, if Sikeko promises that she will not make anything special, I'll bring her over." And then they became very close friends.)

Then another thing that happened was that in 1939 (Summer), I had gone to the New York Fair; took my father along. My father got in an accident in Washington, D.C.; traffic accident. He got hit by a street car and he died there. But on the way back, I drove across the continent and went to Hoover Dam and so on... Lake Mead.

Then, so I showed that movie to Mr. and Mrs. Shivers. Then Mrs. Shivers said, "Well, [*Lt.*] Col. Marston was the G2 here. Mrs. Marston is Mr. Mead's daughter. I don't think she had seen Lake Mead and she might be interested." And uh, then a couple of weeks or so I mentioned it to Mrs. Marston.

Then in no time my wife received a telephone call from Mr. Marston. She says, "I want to invite you and your husband to dinner and will you bring that 16mm film over?"

Q: Is that the film you had taken?

A: Yeah, I had taken. And as far as I know, we were the first Japanese couple to be invited to the quarters of ... staff officers quarters in Fort Shafter, and in that way we became, again, very close friends (laughter). So it just happened that way.

Q: I suppose... where were you when the Attack took place on Sunday, December 7th?

A: I may start it off by going back a little.

Q: O.K.

A: That is, after I introduced these Japanese couples to Shivers, Shivers.... I used to spend practically every afternoon (Saturday afternoon) with Shivers and it's still a wonder to me what I had to speak about. But we would have maybe two rounds of whiskey and we would be talking about the situation here. Then my wife and our son was at that time was only 5 years old (or 4 years), so Mrs. Shivers, my wife and my son, would go to a different room and spend the time by themselves, while I was talking with Shivers.

And then, I didn't know until later but Shivers had formed a breakfast group of about half a dozen Japanese. Nucleus were the ones I invited to my home and later I figured that, well, I wasn't included because he might have been cross-checking. But I was never included.

And then on, I think it was Tuesday before Pearl Harbor, I had a dinner engagement at a Japanese Tea House with Daswon Sumida(??) (at that time the most prominent Japanese in Honolulu), Shivers, and me at the Tea House; just the three of us.

Q: Was Mr. Sumida (??) and merchant?

A: That is I said uh... by that time, Sumida... Shivers was on first name basis with Sumida, so he was calling him Daswon(??). I think it was Tuesday before Pearl Harbor, Shivers telephoned me about noon. He said, "Will you tell Daswon, I'm very sorry but I can't make the dinner tonight, and will you come to my office?" And uh, I think that was the day, FBI found some Consulate staff burning documents at the Consulate, if I'm not mistaken. And then also, that was the time when the Army here received a wire from the War Department to be on the alert because something may happen; and then that the War will start. And I'm not saying anything secret because it is all written in Hawaii's OR's(?) and in Navy also, got the same wire. The only difference between the Navy and the Army was the Navy wire stated that the shooting would be expected in Southeast Asia, not Hawaii. But Army heard other information. And then he told me to come over (Shivers told me to come over), so I think I had cut it off.

Q: Was this on Tuesday?

A: Huh?

Q: Was this on Tuesday?

A: This was... I wasn't able to get there until Thursday I think, because I had court cases or something. But, so I finally got home and then says, "I think a World War has started. But I don't want to say what we were talking, but for you Japanese, I think the best thing that could happen to you, because even though you said you'd be loyal to the United... nobody so far believed you.

This is the chance that the Japanese here, second generation Japanese, to prove what they've been saying."

Then of course the shooting began on Sunday morning. That morning I had an appointment with a Japanese merchant named Yamani(?). He was one of the three richest Japanese in Honolulu. He had bought the property which is now Kalihi shopping center, and had invested quarter million dollars (of course quarter million dollars is not a big sum but in those days it was a big sum), and I was going to discuss with him some technical problems connected with that purchase. Then I turned on the radio before I went to my office and the radio said, "Pearl Harbor has been attacked. Keep off the streets."; so I didn't go.

And then at Shiver's home at Black Point, (as I said they used to have a breakfast meeting) with breakfast prepared by Mrs. Shivers and they'd be discussing the problems. And there were probably half a dozen AJA's having breakfast when the call came in that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Shivers just rushed out see? Then the other AJA boys were having breakfast, also prepared to rush out. Mrs. Shivers according to the article written by Smithe(??) said, "You don't have to rush out. You cannot do anything in this situation. You just have to calmly finish up breakfast." She was very calm. That's the way it was.

But coming back before that, when I went to Shiver's office, they said to come in, and he told my that War was going to start.

Q: Was this on Thursday?

A: This was on Thursday, maybe Friday, but I think it was Thursday. "I don't want to see War start but this is the best opportunity for you. This would be... now you can prove what you have been saying up to now about what you believe." That was his message to me. Then at that time of course, preparing for any emergency, and the M- Day (??) law was passed and so forth, and every block had block wardens appointed if anything should happen during night time.

So on December 7th, in the evening we went, I think the block warden went around in a group of three to see if anything unusual might be happening. And my three consisted of myself, one Portuguese fellow, one Scotchman (laughter). And then uh... I came back.

I went back to my home, around 9:30, and I got a telephone call (telephone was ringing); it was Shivers on the other side. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well..." (of course if this were in California, or if I didn't know Shivers that well, I'd think I would have been grabbed right away.) I said, "Oh, listening to short wave from Japan." He says, "What are they saying?" I said it's so and so and so and so... "Well keep on listening and report to me." (laughter) That' the way it was. And then, next morning I went to the FBI office and I forgot what kind of conversation I had with him, but, so it's altogether different from what happened in California. Here, maybe by saying I was listening to short wave, they never suspected me. Then another interesting thing that you may or may not have heard, but, on Sunday of course, General Fielder (he was still Col. then) was too busy to contact anybody that is civilian. So he didn't contact any of us.

Q: Had he been in regular contact with you before that?

A: He did. He did. And his closest contact were Hung Wai Ching and Shigeo Yoshida. And he telephoned on them on Monday night. He telephoned Shigeo Yoshida and says, "I'm going to broadcast a speech over the radio, and I want you to... I'll send you two Army officers to pick you up, " (He was living in Malakole "and I want you to go to Huong Wai Ching's office and draft a speech for me." (and as far as Fielder was concerned,

Hung Wai Ching was the idea man, and Shigeo Yoshida was the writer.)

Hung Wai [*Ching*] could not leave his wife because she was pregnant, but he would have to take her to hospital at any time. So he sent two Army Lieutenants to pick up Yoshida and one of them (he's a dentist now) but in AJA, a Lt. is uh... what was it now... anyway he's a dentist and he was working for [*Lt. Col. George Bicknell*] office G2. Then they picked him up and Shigeo [*Yoshida*] says it was scary as anything because it was night and every corner they'd be stopped by Army guards with rifle.

The main thing that Fielder was concerned was the preservation of the inter-racial situation here. So with that in mind, prepare a speech. So he talked it over with Hung Wai [*Ching*]. He wrote a speech, and Shigeo [*Yoshida*] tells me that the speech which he delivered and which was published in the newspapers here, he broadcast that without a single word being changed. (laughter)

Q: Hmmm. How do you remember Col. Fielder? What kind of man was he?

A: Who?

Q: Col. Fielder.

A: Oh Fielder. Fielder was... we were very fortunate that we had Shivers, the southerner from Tennessee, Fielder from Georgia; he belonged to the 1916 class of Georgia Tech. He was small so that he did not make all the camps, all on the record, but he made the second team. His nickname was 'Whooch' see. And according to him, how he got that name is when he was quarterback of Georgia Tech., I think the score, that Georgia Tech score against some small college was 120-something, losers nothing. It was still the record. He was the quarterback and how he got his nickname was that he was so slippery that the opponents used to say, instead of saying, "Watch Fielder" says, "Which Fielder". That's how he got his nickname, 'Whooch' That's the southern pronunciation of 'watch", see. And then of course he must have had the respect and the confidence of the Commandants because he served all three Commanding Generals during the War.

Q: Who first got the idea to form the Emergency Service Committee?

A: What had happened was that when the War started, the Military Government established a Morale Committee headed by Charles Loomis(?) who was previously YMCA Secretary, and then Hung Wai Ching who was University of Hawaii YMCA Secretary, and then Shigeo Yoshida; three of them were on the Morale Committee. And I suppose Charles Loomis and Hung Wai [*Ching*] began talking about forming a Committee among Japanese, and instead of calling it the Japanese section of the Morale Committee, we decided to adopt the name, Emergency Service Committee.

And I wasn't that close to the 'big shots' of the Army here but then I was asked to come to a meeting of the different racial committees. And the Emergency Service Committee reappointed the name, Operation - Japanese, and called it the Emergency Service Committee; I think so that it was an idea which the members of the Morale Committee sold to the Military Government.

And as far as the Military Government was concerned, as you know, the first executive was General Green. As far as General Green was concerned, about a year before I think, the Navy had US Attorney in power every fishing boat over 5 tons for violation of the law which stated that any ship (fishing boat) over 4... no, 5 tons should belong to American citizens and no alien should have an interest.

As a matter of fact, what the Japanese were doing was, they were using names of their wives or relatives, and they never... the real owners name was not in there. So the... I think there were about 23 fishing boats here

impounded, and I represented about 60% or more than 70% of the owners of those vessels.

And at that time, of course the prosecution was handled by Angus Taylor(?) who was just as anti-Japanese as you can find. And then the Navy was represented, the observer the Marine Major, I forgot his name...

Q: Was that Major Pfeiffer?

A: No. I forgot his name. Then the Army was represented by General Green, because he was the judge advocate at that time. And in that trial, I became very close with Green, so that Green knew me and that's how we were very fortunate because we were pretty close in those things.

Q: What was Green's attitude?

A: Green was just non committal, see. What I did in that case was, I had all these different things, plead Nolo Contendere(?) because I didn't see any way out. Technically, they were wrong;
they were using somebody elses name.

One boat I fought because it was registered in the name of two sons (two fisherman) and those two sons worked on the ship; and tried it before Judge Stainback(?) and Judge Stainback decided in my favor (that is in favor of my clients). So we saved the boat. Then after pleading Nolo Contendere (?) I thought of trying to save something by having some money paid to the ship owners and so forth. Well, Angus Taylor absolutely refused and Navy absolutely refused.

What happened was, the Asst. Sec. of the Navy in Washington was my classmate at Harvard...

Q: Who was that?

A: Uh, I forgot his name. He died later. My memory is really not ... but contacted him, (it was an Irish name) and then I got a message saying that have it appraised and what you will do is on each boat assess a fine of $1000 (I think it was $1000... I think) and then we would not return the boat, but the difference between the appraised value and the $1000 fine, the fishermen can get. That's how they settled the thing. I have the file here but that's the way it was.

Q: Why don't you tell me a little bit about the work of the Emergency Service Committee. What sort of projects did you do; what sort of work...

A: Well, what happened was we worked with the police contact group which was organized by Jack Burns who was head of that branch of the police here. And actually what we really did was to go to different communities of Japanese and explain, so they won't violate the law, explain what the military regulations were.

Because they worked during daytime, we had arrange meetings and so forth. And then at the start, those were the principal functions that we engaged in. And then also, because when General Emmons came here, he disbanded all the AJA, what was it now, in the Territorial Guard. But Komatani(?) who was First Lieutenant, he was kept. He was not chased out; all the others were taken out of the military guard.

Then of course, Hung Wai Ching was YMCA Secretary and [Shigeo] Yoshida was also close to those young men. So Shigeo [*Yoshida*] talked the University students who were taken out of the Territorial Guard and after discussing it with Shigeo [*Yoshida*], [*Shigeo*] Yoshida drafted invitation to General Emmons

that they would serve in any capacity and so that of University and others were taken in to do necessary (??)... and so forth.

I don't think the Emergency Service Committee could take too much credit for that because that was the work of Hung Wai Ching and [*Shigeo*] Yoshida of the Morale Committee. But it some way we received credit for it.

Then later, when the (... end of side two) (... new tape begins in mid-sentence) out of trouble and ignorance of the military regulations and so forth. We went every night, we went to different communities and explained what the regulations were.

Then one thing we didn't do was, we did not take the position that there should be any organization of racial military units, like the 100th [*Battalion*] and so forth, but because we were all old and our position was we had no business risking the lives of young men if we are not also risking ours and we were over-age anyway most of us.

But when the call for the 442nd [*Regiment*] came in, then we went full speed and with the different communities and got the volunteers, and in that situation... as far as say other problems were concerned, like when the War Dept. decided to take out all AJA draft board members. Some criticized us for standing our ground, but I was one of those who was a draft board member, and I didn't take that hard position because it's no use taking a hard position situation.

One day when I was in the Emergency Service Committee Office, [*Edward deHarne*] who was [*General Manager*] of the Honolulu Rapid Transit and he was Chairman of my (??)... "What are you doing for lunch?" I said, "Nothing." He says, "I'll treat you to lunch. Do you have time this afternoon?" I said, "Ed, did you get wire from Washington." He said, "Yes." I said, "Save your money." He says, "I'll send in a resignation." (laughter) and that's how it was that when the call for the 442nd volunteers came... oh yes, before that of course (background noise and quiet speaking - cannot understand) ... our group was organized, we had nothing to do with that thing …but, the, the …182[*nd*] had parties and so forth

Then when the 442nd problem came, then we went full speed, O.K., to make a good record and where the mainland quarter was (cannot understand) and Hawaii's quarter was 1400 and we got 9,500 volunteers. There we went full speed and of course we had all the cooperation from the young fellows.

Then one thing we did was when the first group of internees were being shipped out from Hawaii, they had not seen their family. First, I think the plan was to have the family members meet them before they sailed but then I think that the military intelligence decided that there would be too much emotional impact on them so what we did was we interviewed - we divided the number of persons and interviewed them and took the message back to the families. That's how it was.

Then when the 442nd.... of course there were some accusations that we engineered the formation, but we didn't do anything, and I think the calling of the volunteers organization of 442nd was pressure to learn the job of Japanese-American citizens; they canon the mainland. Plus, the (something) of the...

Q: Relocation...

A: Yeah, relocation center because according to this Nisei, like Americans they discussed this in their Salt Lake City meeting. That was a start, and there although the Californians relocated, some of the people were allowed to go to a meeting in Salt Lake when it was discussed.

That was the beginning and I think Dillard Myer was for it too and what is interesting is, that in the call for the volunteers, the most quoted passage in the call for volunteers by Roosevelt is, "...The principal on which this

country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of mind and heart. Americanism is not and never was a matter of racial ancestry." That was never in there, in the original one. What Dillard Myer did was send it to... was it Davis?

Q: Director of War Information?

A: Yeah, Davis, see? ... sent, and Davis added that paragraph. It was not in the original one. It says here ... and so that's how it came to begin(?). This paragraph was never in the official call and here in Hawaii we took the position that we should never initiate anything like that because we are not in... of the age group and then when the call came.

I really don't know how many volunteered. In my case, I said to the committee members because I look like a hypocrite, I'm old, plus the fact that I'm lame and that I was excused from ROTC in high school, and it doesn't look right. Well, those fellows in the committee said, "Well, let the Army decide and don't decide yourself." I don't know how many of the others volunteered.

I was at that time 38 years old with a wife and a son, but I did file an application and those fellows in the draft board saw my name and so I said, "Oh heck, call the guy, I was among the first to be called." and sure enough I flunked the physical examination, see.

Then later, when the call for volunteers for the language crew came, Phil Stuart(?) who was the Asst. Commandant of the language school wanted me as a civilian instructor. I told Col. Stuart that as a civilian I think I could plan a much better service here than in just a language instructor in a school. But even as a buck private if he gets me a uniform, I'll go in and then I volunteered, and I flunked the physical. I flunked the physical but they took me in for limited service and so that I'll be an instructor there.

But then after a year in the language school, the Commandant...

Q: Where was the language school?

A: Minnesota, Camp Savage Then the Commandant who wanted me to apply for Judge Advocate General Officer Candidate School at the University of Michigan and I said again, if I do apply, I don't see any chance because of my physical condition and uh... but I did apply. The doctor at Minnesota, the Army doctor, never tested me for anything except color blindness and I was not color blind. I was 2400 so my sight wasn't too good. But I applied and then the first difficulty I had as I said, you got to have Army Basic Training, and this was 1944 so I was 38 years old, and he sent my down to Alabama to be with the 18 year old for infantry basic training.

I somehow got through with it, but then...

Q: It's hard enough for the 18 year old (laughter).

A: Oh yes. (laughter) and the next thing was, I waited and waited, and then the first excuse was they take 50 you see, the class if filled. Then I waited for the next class and in December the call should have came; I didn't receive any call. So the Commandant contacted Washington to say, "What's happening?"

And then about a week before the next class started in January I received, the Commandant received a call to send me to get a physical, and my suspicion is that Green who was Judge Advocate General had something to do with it.

Q: That's right he moved from Hawaii to the job up in Washington, yeah.

A: So I got into that class of 50 candidates and as a matter of fact not one of those 50 candidates... 49 of the candidates had ever met a Japanese see. And,

but then when the evaluation in OCS by fellow students came they evaluated I think the top 3 or top 5 (whatever it was). What gave me confidence was those guys never had met a Japanese but they evaluate me on the top.

And then on the 14th week, an assignment officer would come. Assignment officer and then the candidate, most of them would be married and have children, so they want continental service. They don't want overseas service. In my case, assignment officer didn't ask me where I preferred to serve. He said, "General Green has asked me to ask you whether you know what would happen to you if you are sent to General Buckners Army and then be caught as a prisoner?" and I knew I was going to Okinawa; my assignment was in Okinawa, so I didn't answer the question directly but I said, "I'll take my chances." and that's how I went to Okinawa (laughter).

Q: That was where you were assigned?

A: That's where I went, Okinawa, yes. Then from Okinawa I went to Korea and then came back.

Q: O.K., well, it's quite a story you've told (laughter)... and I really appreciate your taking the time to sit down with me.

A: Yeah, I might show you some photograph.

Q: Oh yeah! (tape ends)

Bernice Rogers #71
April 15, 1985

Q: Mrs. Rogers, were you working in 1941?

A: No, it was in 1942 that I applied for a job in Pearl Harbor.

Q: What were you doing on the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: It was on a Sunday morning and we thought when we saw the planes coming over to Hickam and Pearl Harbor, we thought it was a practice actually; they were practicing. And so we didn't think anything of it and then someone passed by and my uncle came back from Hickam. He works there and he was the one that told us that Pearl Harbor was being bombed by Japanese.

Q: What was the reaction of you and your family when...

A: We were scared! Part of us... it was hard to believe! And then when we turned on the radio and listened, then we knew it was true. And so it was frightening. It was hard to believe that anybody would come over here and do this to us. You know, considering there isn't very much on this Island that anybody would want.... except Pearl Harbor.

Q: Did you have small children at that time?

A: Yeah, I had three children at that time, and we had to have them registered, identified, fingerprinted, and uh...

Q: Where did you go to have them registered?

A: At the... oh, we had several places open for that. We had to have identification papers made out for us, fingerprinted and everything, gas masks. So the children had to have that too.

Q: Even the little ones?

A: Even the little ones. And then maybe in...

Q: How could they get a mask to fit on a little baby?

A: Yeah, it wasn't exactly... it was sort of like a... I wouldn't say it was a safe one. It wasn't a mask. The boys had... my little boys had just fitted for their little face, but her, it was sort of like a bib.

Q: Uh huh. That just sort of wrapped around her?

A: Yeah, I knew it wasn't very good, but she would use mine if something did happen. I would know how to handle it, yeah.
So 1942, when they asked for workers at Pearl Harbor, because most of the men were being drafted, I applied and I didn't think I could get in! I really didn't think I could get in. So I went there

and it took us a whole day just to apply for that job! There were lots of women there and I guess maybe for everybody who came in to apply, especially females, I have a feeling they didn't trust females. They have their reason for it even though we were Hawaiians, Filipinos, Portuguese, Oriental girls couldn't come I think.

Q: Oh really?

A: So none of them showed up.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Yeah. I just remember now.

Q: What kind of job was it that you applied for there?

A: I applied for... the opening was for classified laborer, because I'm not a pipefitter, and I couldn't go into being a shipfitter, you know, and there was no opening for that anyway. They wouldn't trust newcomers like females coming in doing that. I don't think so. They were kind of particular. They'd give you the once over and look at you.... it took us all day just to apply for a job like that!

And then, when my application did go in, I was hired. I went through a whole bit of another... my name sent to Washington. They usually... I don't know what they did, and they found out my name is not Bernice, it's Beatrice, in Washington. So I had to go up to Capt. Payne's(?) office and go through the whole thing again, like uh... they were treating me like a spy. I think that's what my dad said. That's what happened because the two names were different. That's all. That's about the only thing. It was frightening too because like uh... they were treating me like I was doing something wrong; until I had everything cleared up, it was O.K.

Q: Do you want to get the phone? (pause in tape) So what kind of work were you doing there at first?

A: Classified laborer. We would do sweeping, or cleaning up too, you know, or taking inventory of the things that come in, or whatever we have left over in the warehouses. It was a big job really and we were all new, so we don't dare make mistakes in...

Q: Was it all women in your crew?

A: Yeah, about six or seven that's all, and another crew in another warehouse would be about that amount, six or seven women. And they even had women who drove trucks! Now I wish I had a drivers license at the time. It would have been fun to drive those little Navy trucks, from shop or to.

So I was in Supply Department. There were two different departments, and so Supply was the one that usually had all these things that most of the Navy ships needed, you know. Industrial Department was different. It was in shipfitters and machine shop, and ...

Q: How long did you work as a laborer there, classified laborer?

A: For only 7 months. It was a lot of fun because no responsibility. Anyway, working as a under storekeeper was good too, because you had to know when these things come in. You have to know where they are, and what ships have to have those certain materials, you know. So that to me was an important job, yeah. Some of our battleships was coming in, you know, had to have these certain things, and the Supply Department took care of it, and we just had to make sure that we never made any mistakes. So most of the things that went out to them was with stock numbers. We had to be very careful about things like that. So it was very good though. It was like us learning... it was like us going to school again, yeah, because you don't dare make a mistake. Because if they get out to sea and you issued the wrong material, something could go wrong out there.

Q: Sure, yeah.

A: So... but working there was a good feeling, like you're helping. Of course we had Bob Hope and Arty Shaw, and these men who... these people who came in to entertain us too. It was nice to have something like that for a switch you know, during our lunch hour. But outside of that, I remember at our warehouses we had machine gun on top of the warehouses, and I used to want to go up there and look. I'm nosey anyway. You know we would look at it, and they would show us, most of the Marines are the ones that handle that. So we had hands off. We were never supposed to go up there and look. We didn't know at that time though you know. So there's a lot of things we learned working there.
Couldn't have any affair there; that's what they call a relationship. I am getting tired of that word "relationship". You can't use the word "affair". (laughter)

Q: Well it means the same thing right? (laughter)

A: Same thing but it sounds nicer... "affair"

Q: Uh huh.

A: (conversation with someone entering house regarding phone call and other related conversation)

Q: Well, you know it must have been a little bit strange and unusual to be one of a small number of women there among so many

men.

A: Yeah, I'm beginning to think about it. Uh, it was very nice because people stared at us. And at 22 years old, yeah, I used to wear size 8 dresses, so it wasn't so bad. (laughter) And I think it was really... well, it's nice to be admired by people! I mean uh...

Q: Sure!

A: At that time I didn't realize how nice it is, now I'm beginning to appreciate it. Now that I'm older. I should have

um... nope, wasn't a very nice person. All I did was go to work and go home. That's all I did. Until we had, for entertainment for the Navy people like us, we had a Pavilion built in Waikiki where Queen Surf Park is now.

Q: Oh yeah... yeah.

A: It was called, 'The Breakers' and so once a month we had dances there and that was where the fun is for all these people like us. You know, that's where the fun is, because if we didn't have fun like that, we would probably crack up.

Q: Sure.

A: ...Because, yeah that wasn't... I'm surprised I could at my age, at 22, that I could take that kind of job. I didn't realize. I remember coming home tired.

Q: It must have been especially tough for you with three small children.

A: Yeah, I had my mother and dad (thank God for them), and my mother and dad is legally divorced already. And so my mother and dad were heaven sent, because when I would get home from work at about 4:30 or 5:00, I couldn't breathe, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, I would just cry and fall asleep. That's because this is new to me, you know. The work is not hard, I'm not afraid to work hard, you know, physically, but mentally it was a great deal of strain on me. So I would just cry myself to sleep at night and my dad would be massaging my feet and my mom would be massaging my back, and I'd wake up at 4:00 in the morning, take a long bath, to back to work again. So that, maybe because I was too young or... no I don't think so. I'm supposed to be strong. (laughter)

Q: Well, you sound like you're a strong person.

A: Catching the bus. I remember getting on the bus on Hotel Street. Sometimes I would go that way and we would board this great big bus, and the bus would go all through.... no lights. There were the yellow lines right in the middle of the street, so the bus driver would stay on this side, the other one would stay on that side, and they would go by the yellow line; a yellow paint on the street you know. Going through sugar cane fields all the way, there was no... that airport was homes. They had a tract there; a lot of homes you know. All homes just falling apart, but there's a lot of people there too.

And then getting to the gate we would have to show our ID, and so we always wore it you know, with your picture on it. And most of the Marines were sort of friendly. I used to be scared of them because they would just look at you (laughter). We're getting an idea here. But now I'm thinking, they're just being funny I think; but I used to be so scared of them. "You got your gas mask?" you know, and I would show it to them. Just the sight of them used to scare me, but I got used to it. Maybe they had to be that way.

But I got along nicely with most of the Navy boys because we were almost about the same age, you know, 22, 23, 24, and some of them were good dancers, you know, and they were a lot of fun.

But my dad used to encourage me to go on dates with them, you know. And I think I was too... maybe it was good that I was that way, because my children I had. I always think too much of that and my mother and dad said it wasn't so bad.

But going to work was a great deal of strain and I eventually got used to it after 6 or 7 months. Then I got to love it, and so when they asked for overtime, I stayed, you know, because we always had a Navy truck or a bus to take us home, and usually they don't want the women to work late. But once in a great while they needed our help you know. So I stayed. I used to volunteer to stay because it was O.K.; safe in numbers. And besides we had a Navy Chief who was a real sour puss, so it was good. (laughter)

Q: Took care of you?

A: Yeah, made sure that we got on the bus and got home safely (laughter). You never had to worry about... it's worse now! During the War time it was the nicest place to live on this Island.

I remember getting home late and I had to go to my grandma's house sometimes and I get off the bus on Queen Street. It's dark already, with my gas mask, and the military base was right there in the park, right in the heart of Kakaako, and those military boys were there.

Q: What kind of base did they have in Kakaako?

A: It was an Army base, right in the... uh, where American Factors(?) is right now. We had military bases all over. They were small ones but, God this was a nice place to live in during the War time. Now it's not safe. True.

So now I'm with child abuse center and I'm responsible for a 14 or 15 year old girl living with me. I make sure she comes home right after school and I sit here and wait for the bus until she gets home safely. That's who I'm with now. So it's... But she...

I gotta tell you... and at night when we used to go to bed, you could hear the military trucks all night long. I don't know where they're going, what they're doing, but they must be doing something right.

Q: Working 'round the clock.

A: You could hear them and sometimes it's kind of frightening. Then, we were told to build our own bomb shelter.

Q: How did you do that?

A: Uh, we had someone dig a hole in the ground and put some boards over it or cement on top. I remember, and cover it with some kind of cement... oh, burlap bag, that's what it is. But we hardly ever used it. I remember teaching my dad how to go down there, and he's big, so I always made sure, "You just go down there first and then the children will follow you." I used to have to tell him, because I'm not home you know. And he said, "Ho, that's a (cannot understand)" He said, "It's my time to go anyway."

My father's a well known man, Captain John Brown, on the Islands here. He was a step-father, but I loved him. He was

more like my own father. I shouldn't say step-father.

So that's maybe... and everywhere military people. Even when we went to town shopping, there was no Ala Moana Shopping Center. And us being working girls, we used to come in on Fridays, go to the bank to deposit our check or something, or ... everywhere there were military men.

They would whistle, or you know they would be across the street, or they would whistle at us and some of us would... We were told not to say anything, because these boys are here for short while, and they call you. "It's not going to hurt you; just wave back." I said, "No, we don't wave back, because they walk across the street!" (laughter) So we don't wave back.

And so a lot of them used to complain about being on this "Rock". They call this Island, "rock" and I used to get mad because they call this Island "rock". But that's O.K., and he said the girls were unfriendly, they were goofy looking, they didn't have pretty legs and all kinds of things. And I thought it was real funny. I don't blame him for saying that.

The girls were unfriendly, you know, and maybe there was a reason for it. Maybe because we were all working, and there were a lot of nice girls too, because my two sisters were married to military men and their marriages were very happy so I'm not against that. That's where I met my husband and here we are. He was my boss.

Q: Oh... (laughter)

A: So, I got to learn the ropes about being a storekeeper. You know that way I got to be real good, because he was a workaholic. Workaholics, they don't fool around when there's work to be done, you know, so it was nice to have a man like that around. I mean there's a time for play and a time for work. That's what all our bosses should be like, you know because there was so much to be done. Some people took it lightly. But I must have been awfully serious, because they told my I was a real sour puss (laughter.)

Q: (laughter)... That's hard to believe.

A: You know, but I loved dancing, and on our day off you know, we would get together... all the girls would get together, "Let's go to Pearl City Tavern." I said, "Pearl City Tavern! You mean we're going to walk right in with no escort!" "Don't be so naive! Of course, five of us!" "How we going to pay for our drinks?" " Well, you pay one round, I pay one round, you pay... don't let anybody pay our rounds." and that's how I got to learn about going into places like that. I thought it was fun. I thought it was fun to go like that because most of the Navy boys were quick dancers, you know, and they were at Pearl Harbor, and in Pearl City Tavern.

Q: They must have done a good business over there.

A: Yes. But I tell you, when it was time to go home, we got into a group and we went home together. So whatever girls made dates with whoever they happened to make dates with, they went out some other time. I'm sure they did. Because see, used to talk about it. (laughter) It's O.K!

But the Navy boys were good dancers. I remember that so well. And we used to go to Royal Hawaiian, you know, some of us went by there because we were with Navy USO. And so we always had chaperons, which is...

Q: So that was sort of like to go to the dances and ... put on by the USO?

A: Yeah, this was for the Navy and at the Breakers and at Royal Hawaiian. But at Royal Hawaiian Hotel I remember I said, "Why is it that only officers can come and stay here?" I shouldn't have said that. See at that table, and everybody was going...

Q: (laughter)

A: They went like that you know. And I just had one drink and I became that way and it's not like Bernice to talk like that. "What's wrong with our enlisted men? I mean they could come here too! Why shouldn't they come here? Why is it officers only? It's not fair, because they go out and fight too." You know, I'm thinking of the underdog and I always do anyway. I still do. Well there's a reason for it because this guy is trying to explain to me and he's a Navy Lt. I know he's a pilot. He's real nice and gentle about it. He said, "Well, we can talk about it later on tomorrow when I come by and pick you up for lunch." I said, "Who's going out to lunch with you?" (laughter) Oh boy, I'm so ashamed when I think about it. I feel embarrassed now that I think about it.... stupid of me. "I want to talk about it, I'll pick you up for lunch." "O.K., you bring the lunch. I'm not going to stand in line to talk to you." O.K., he brings the lunch, we sit in the truck and we talk about it. He says, "There's a reason for it because these boys are only here for a short while, that's why they have Royal Hawaiian Hotel." (laughter)

Anyway, oh there were a lot of... my brother-in-law was in the Army and he was stationed at Armstrong, and I remember that he had to leave sometimes all of a sudden and my sister would want to know why he's leaving so suddenly. "Well, I can't tell you." (an unclear response to this quote) There's a reason for it you know because this is War time and he can't tell here where he's going and that's not so good you know. You don't like that. I know I wouldn't. But he had to leave.

He was an Army Sgt. and then I had another one too and he was in the military also. So you can imagine my grandmothers place. There was a lot of military men with Army trucks that used to come in because see, my two brother-in-laws lived there and so that was nice. Some of the boys were boisterous after they had a few drinks and the sad part of it; we couldn't buy any liquor. Uh, no maybe it was good, and everybody had to had some kind of card. They had to get it at City Hall, in order to buy one quart of liquor a week.

So I used to get a card just so my brother-in-law could get a quart you know because his friends would come over and most of the military boys can't buy any. I don't know why! So that was that.... and so they used to uh, restrict on foods, certain types of food but that's O.K. too.

Q: You had ration cards?

A: Wait a minute now, I can't remember that. But I know there were a lot of things that we couldn't have, such as soap, toothpaste, you know, and... but I don't think about that there was certain foods we couldn't have. But we learned to do without. It was fine. I know I never squawked about it because we always had fish. We could never go fishing though because the whole Island had barb wire around the beach.

Q: Oh...

A: And so sometimes we'd get together and we'd want a beach party. We'd have to have permission from two different military people. I don't know whether... I think it was the Navy and the Marines, because we used to have this paper made out and we had to have our names written down, you know and for us to go to the beach and have a beach party that day. Then someone would open that uh... those barb wires would be great big coils like that. Were you here at that time?

Q: No.

A: And so there was no way you could get over it because it was high, you know. But they would do it for us because we worked for the Navy and we'd stay for two or three hours, just for swimming. Oh that was much nicer; nobody on the beach. Oh that was fun you know. And of course when we got through there was always someone there, you know, military men who had to... because they had barb wire that would have to be closed and opened again to let us out. So that was fine. I'm beginning to think it was really nice to run along the beach and nobody there. We'd just go swimming way out at sea, and take your bathing suit, and swim naked, and I mean nobodies looking! (laughter)

Q: Sure!

A: And put it back on when you go back. That was fun. And we worked for the Navy at that time so we were lucky; always had to carry an ID.

I remember taking a girl home after a "black-out party" for our boss one time, and we were late so it's after 10:00, and we were stopped. That was frightening too, you know, because they were going to take us in, and that wouldn't be so nice because see, if you get into trouble like that you can't go back and work in the Navy Yard, and I didn't want to lose my job you know. So, he was pretty nice though, when we had a civilian. We had a MP, two MP's, and we had a civilian policeman and he was the one that took care of us; not the MP's. If it was the MP's it would have been... See, one of our girls in our car (she was a good looking Hawaiian girl, well known hula dancer) she answered back. You know, she got sarcastic, and they fined her $25.00. They didn't fine us. They just put in our card about uh... there was something on that, on my ID card. I don't know what it was saying, that I was out on "black out night". And I would have to go and take it to Capt. Payne, my Capt. and show it to him, and he would say, "Oh, that's nothing!" It was so nice. I loved him for that, to erase my ID, so it wouldn't look so bad for me. So

it was real nice of him now that I'm thinking about it.
Anyway, she was fined $25.00 and had to go down and pay for it. We thought it was funny. She didn't think it was though.

Q: When she had to go to court, was it Military Court?

A: She didn't have to go Military Court. Oh, wait a minute, yes! Oh! That's why she didn't come to work for three days! It was right on Bethel Street, because... How did you know about Military Court?

Q: Some other people told me about it.

A: Yes! She paid that $25.00 fines and she had to go Military Court and then see Capt. Payne three days later. Yes. And she just hated... and yet she smiled (cannot understand). You know she just hated him for it. I told her, "No, you shouldn't have said anything." I said, "It's cause you had two drinks that' s why and because you had two drinks, that's why you got sassy. Because it's not like you to talk like that." She said, "I don't care. They think they own the Island." You know, she starts saying... I said, "No, not really. We're lucky to have them here. You know, I think so. My dad thinks so, and he's a big German man."
And I had to help my dad too because he's a foreigner. He left Germany when he was 13. I had to have papers made out for him, you know, because he left Germany when he was at the age of 13. Never went back. And his German name was Nouheimer(?). So we had to make those papers out and go through a whole lot of red tape to protect my dad. And he had to tell me where he had been and what countries he went to, until he came to the United States. He decided to carry the name John Brown when he became a Capt. of one of those ships (I don't know which one. He gave me a German name. I don't remember) and he landed over here. He got to like the Islands and stayed here. So when someone wants to know about him (sometimes I get a call) I tell them to go down to the Library of Hawaii. His whole history is written out there, because I helped him make it out. They tape recorded it and it's over there. So it's something nice, even about my grandpa.
My grandfather, Hawaiian side, there's a whole lot of history about him too. I'm so proud of him because he um..... oh, there's so much he did for the Islands. Of course we're not going to talk about it but there's so much he did.

Q: Was he still working during the War?

A: My grandfather? No, he wasn't around. I'm sorry, he died already. He wasn't here. But it seems I spent so much time with him and with my step-father that it seems two different cultures, you know. How'd you like living in Kakaako, and my mother gets married to Capt. Brown and we go up Diamond Head live. Two different ways of being brought up.

Q: Was your step-father Capt. Brown, was he working during the War here?

A: No, he had given up that sailing and he worked at Aloha

Tower. He was the one that uh... you see most of (??) came to the Islands did not come by plane. Most of it came by ship and because he was so good at identifying ships who were out at sea, this job was given to him, you know, at Aloha Tower. And of course he was a Harbor Board inspector too. You know, ships that came in from different countries like China, Japan, places like that, he used to be the inspector there. So he had a very important job, I think. Now I'm beginning to realize how important it was. At that time I didn't care.

And they built a nice home right beyond the lighthouse, there's a little park there that's called Koolei Park(?).

Q: Oh yes.

A: Uh huh. Our home was situated right on top there, uh huh.

Q: Oh, that's a nice place.

A: Yeah, and there was no other homes there. So to move from Kakaako which is very different from Diamond Head, and being transferred from Pohukaina School which is in the heart of Kakaako and we speak Pidgin you know. I mean, the kids they were smart down there, but when.... we just... our English I think was really poor. But when in Rome do as the Romans do, so in Kakaako, I had to speak that way.

O.K., I went to Diamond Head live. There was a whole different bunch of kids (the Dillingham boys, Magoon boys, Kelly boys, you know). I said why they brought boys. Always. And there was a famous artist who lived right next to Natatorium. the name of that place is still there. There's a beach there that still holds his name. Right next to the Natatorium there's a little beach there .... I'm sorry, cannot remember. He's a well known writer before. I'll bet I'll remember after you leave. anyway, he's very nice to us kids you know. He would sit down and tell us stories.

And the polo field used to be right in Kapiolani Park, so I got to like polo playing. But you gotta like it when your kids are understood, and of course the Dillingham boys were in it. Now polo playing is at Mokuleia and I would love to go over there and watch and nobody cares for polo. Nobody I know cares for that. Say what's that. I don't understand. It's a fun thing. The only thing I don't like there, the horses get hurt. That's why I cry when I see it. And so for a long time I haven't gone to see it. I would not like to see the horses... I don't care if the rider gets hurt. He can break his neck for all I care, but the horses... the horses.... I don't like to see the horses get hurt. What are we talking about. We supposed to be talking about what it was like during the War time.

Maybe if I had been married to a military man I would have had more information. I remember my sisters being married to military men, so they could purchase things at the commissary, and civilian people did not have it so they could not have things like toothpaste and soap. Those were the two things.

And outside of that it was nice that.... we probably had the nicest military boys come to think of it. We never had rape cases like we have now, you know, and those boys are probably my age now... 66, 65. And I have a hunch a lot of them come here as tourists to visit this place again

you know, and they probably go out Pearl Harbor and uh... show their wives what the Islands were like before uh, and explain to their wives what the Islands were like.

So it brings back memories for some of them, because I know when they have services up here for Ernie Pyle, that was a sad thing to watch, because a lot of men remember him you know. And now they're my age and they stood there and just cried. That was a very touching thing, to be there and to watch. And my son-in-law works there, so I go there when there's special events like we had this Easter Sunrise services. That would have been nice to see, and we usually walk about 4:00 in the morning, walk there, and the place is packed full of people. Now that's something nice to do, and if I was most of these tourists I would come here around Easter time and attend the services there.

Q: Yeah, that's a big one.

A: They have a big one. It's very, very nice. Now the services start when the sun rises and it's so touching, the songs they sing. You can't help but cry. You know, I'm not very religious. I am in certain way. I know that there is someone there who's taking care of me because I wouldn't be here today you know. But, to be over religious is not very good in some ways because then they become fanatics then. And then you get too carried away and you become one-sided, I think. Because sometimes I see some of my best friends have become that way you know. I don't want to condemn them but it's better to not... if you do get in to it and you go a little too far, you lose your bearings I think and then you become, oh, we're better than they are, you know. And when you get to that point, forget it, you just lost something. But now I'm preaching.

Q: That's alright.

A: You can erase this part yeah? But ask me something...

Q: Well, one thing that sort of, that I was sort of wondering about, you know, about your children and how did they take the whole thing. Did they understand what was happening about the War? Did they understand what a War was? And how did they... see, I guess what I'm getting at is all this influx of military must have sort of disrupted life a little bit and I was just wondering how the little kids took everything.

A: My oldest son, he took it pretty hard. He used to... he was about 6 years old going to school and he would be with my mother and father most of the time because I'm at work. He always used to say he was sick. He didn't feel like going to school, you know. And that wasn't too good. So he tried to hide it. So they explained things to him. You know, when you hear “BOOM”, you don't know whether “TACK TACK TACK” you hear that. Now the boys are practicing. They're trying to ... what they're doing, you know, when you hear machine gun all over the Islands, is they're working to see if it works. That's why they do it. They're not shooting at anyone. See, I used to have to explain to my son about that, because we'd hear “TACK TACK TACK TACK”. You hear that. I said, "There's no one out there. It's just the Marines.

They're oiling up their machine guns and they have to see if it still works. That's the only way I can explain to him. There's no one out there. There's no enemies knocking. Because it's dark and when you hear something like that it is frightening, yeah.

So my son, one son used to be here and the other son used to be here, when I used to sleep at night, come home from work. My little baby girl (name??) used to be on the cushion; didn't feel anything. But my two sons, I was always home at night with them. Because the grandparents can take the place, can be there in the daytime, but I don't think they can take my place at night. So I should be there. So it didn't affect them, no, not too much. Maybe they with Grandma and Grandpa most of the time. They were not put in daycare center. Those are the children I heard later on, that became... some of them did not uh... could not take it; some of them.

Q: The ones that were in the day care centers?

A: Yeah, that were my childrens age. Because I heard some of them became "off" a little bit. It affected them when they were young. And so in some way, maybe because they were in daycare centers. That has something to do with it too, because if you are not close to someone you related to, you not going to believe this lady, this caretaker who's talking to you. Children are not that stupid. I don't think so. You can look at them and lie, and they know if you are lying to them... some. They seem to have a built in kind of a... they look at you and they go.... and then there are some who will believe. So it's just different personalities maybe.

Q: Well, I can't think of any more questions.

A: Yeah, I should have brought my sister (name?) here. Now that one is with military. But I'm sure I already told you most of what I ... Anyway, it was scary and not to be able to... we use to have to put this great big black paper on our window, just so we could turn our light on in the house. But the lights we had is dim, you know. So that we used as blackout, and gee.... We had to go without a lot of things and that's what the people here should learn, really.... to go without things. Because now I look at it, we have too much. We really have too much, and the children are materialistic. O.K. that's all I'm going to say about that (laughter). Um.... how old are you?

Q: I'm 40.

A: See, one of my sons. You could be my son.

Q: (laughter)

A: See, isn't that cute. I've got one who was born in 1936. You were born in 1938.

Q: Me?

A: Yeah.

Q: I was born in 1944.

A: You're a '44 baby. Oh, O.K. Victor, (when was Victor....) he was born in '45. So Victor is 39. He was born... oh, you're a War time baby. Oh, that' cute! (laughter) There were no diapers too. I remember a lot of women who had babies...

Q: Oh, it must have been hard... because they didn't have Pampers or anything then.

A: No. (laughter) Not at that time.... You have a baby?

Q: Yeah, I had one.

A: Oh so you know about Pampers! (laughter) That is so cute! (laughter)

Q: So, things like diapers you couldn't get huh?

A: No, couldn't get diapers. So when Victor was born in 1945, there was a military wife whose baby died when she gave birth and so she put an add in the paper, uh you know. Now these military women can get everything from the baby carriage to the crib to the baby diapers... so we got all those things for Vic in 1945. And everybody said, "How you got those diapers?" It's because her baby died. It was a black women and her husband was stationed at Hickam as a flyer. No, no... he wasn't a flyer. He work co(c)pilot, anyway, on board those planes that come in and go out. You know (laughter) .... Pampers. No, we never... our babies never had Pampers. We used to have to wash the diapers... oh, I didn't mind. It was easy.
So when I moved. It was the hardest thing to find a home to live in.

Q: Oh yeah, I imagine rents must have gone up and everything huh?

A: And this property, this land here is Hawaiian Homes Land. I guess you know about it. And uh... I've been here for 36 years. I can't believe it. Wait now, Victor is 39. No, I've been here 38 years. God, was it that long ago. And so when I bought this home it was a tiny little brand new home. This was a bedroom, that was a bed room, that was a bed room, that was a living room. That section was not around. That bed room, bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen. It was a tiny little house and the door was over there, and there was two stairway, a stairway that goes down and the kitchen was downstairs. But I didn't care. I didn't care. I thought it was cute. I just loved it. So we were lucky to get this place.

Q: There's a long waiting list now for Hawaiian Homes Land.

A: Yes, even Dr. Sasaki he lives above Tantalus, that's a high income, and Dr. Sasaki he lived there. He just sold his home. He says, "Don't believe it. Don't you believe that's a higher

income. Those guys eat sardines because they have to pay for their home." (laughter) That's what he said. Dr. Won said that too. Maybe there's something else that you want to know?

Q: Well, I can't think of anything else.

A: Yeah, I'll probably think of something else but it will be uh.... Anyway, I left in 1944. I left the Navy Yard because I was going to get married, and I'm sorry I did leave. You can't just leave. You have to have a good reason because it was still during War time.

Q: Oh really?

A: Uh huh. Can't just walk out and say, "I quit." My reason had to be... I had to have a good reason. I couldn't say I'm getting married again. No way. That's a poor excuse. So I had my children and that was the best excuse. I used my children. Anyway that was true. I wasn't lying. My husband just thought that I should take care of my two children. My mother and dad were older; they shouldn't be doing that. So I left in 1944. If I think of something can I call you and tell you?

Q: Sure.

A: O.K., leave your phone number here. Thank you...(tape ends)

Ralph Yempuku #72
April 16, 1985

Q: Ralph, were you a University student in 1941?

A: No, I was not student. I was working there already.

Q: Uh huh.

A: I was a... I had graduated in about 1936 or '37. I say '36 or '37 because they wouldn't give me a diploma in '36 and I had to wait till '37 to get my certificate. But from then on, up until the War started in '41, I was an assistant instructor in physical education at the University. So I was working there.

Q: Were you connected in any way with the ROTC program there?

A: Yes, I had finished four years, two years of Basic and two years of Advanced at the University when I graduated. But you see, uh, I had not been able to complete my ROTC requirement and this is the reason why they wouldn't give me my certificate of graduation, see. And the reason that I couldn't fulfill my requirement was because I had a bad knee and couldn't go to one of the summer camps, you know. And those things were required to complete your ROTC course, and I just had to delay it one year.

Q: So when the Japanese attack on Oahu came on in December 7, 1941, what were you doing that day?

A: Well, as part of my work, I was involved with the Department of Athletics there, and at that time we had a team in from San Jose' I think; San Jose' football team and possibly we had two teams. We had another College of Pacific football team. It was just in December, and during that month we... the University of Hawaii football team played a Shrine benefit game and another game, and brought in teams from the Mainland. You know, of course they came by boat and they stayed at the Moana Hotel. Of course, during that period, at that time there were only two hotels on the beach there, the Moana and The Royal Hawaiian. And it's not like today.

And on that morning we had scheduled a bus around the Island tour for these teams. I think one of the teams had played the night before, or the Friday night, uh... you know, the 5th or the 6th of December, and so I went down to the Hotel, Moana Hotel, to make arrangements for these ball players, to take them around the Island on these buses, you know. And that's when the thing started.

Q: So were you down there at the Moana Hotel then?

A: Oh yes. I was at the Moana Hotel, and we uh... well we were going to leave at about 8:30, or thereabouts, and I normally get down there a little early (one hour early) to see that everything goes along alright, you know? And when the Japanese started bombing Pearl Harbor, of course we could see the smoke and hear

the bombing, and everything, and like everybody else, we thought it was just another rehearsal until we found out over the radio that it was the real thing.

So I immediately got a hold of the bus company and cancelled the buses and re-cancelled the tour. And an interesting part of the whole thing was uh... I'm there at the Moana Hotel steps and uh... oh, must have been about 8:00 or thereabouts, and then these four Navy aviators, they were sleeping at the Hotel, come rushing down the steps. You know, they had a big night, Saturday night, you know, and they wanted to get to Pearl Harbor, you know. And there was no way for them to get there; no Taxis or anything was going out there. So I said, "Well, I'll take you folks down."

So I put them in my car and you know, we're going down the road, and one of them said, "Look, you gotta stop at a drugstore. I gotta get a Bromo Seltzer. I gotta big head." you know.

Q: (laughter)

A: So (laughter) I rolled up into the drugstore someplace and get him a Bromo Seltzer, so that he could, you know... he was still... he had a terrific hangover! The four of them had a terrible hangover in fact, and I think you know, this shows what was happening on the morning of the 7th. You know, all of our people that were uh, you know.... should have been alerted, weren't, for one reason or another, see. And so I took them down to Hickam.

Q: What was that drive like?

A: Eh?

Q: What was that drive like?

A: Ride? Oh, geez... it scared the hell out of me because I started going down there and then I see these trucks coming back by the old airport; right around there going down to the Pearl Harbor Gate. I see these trucks coming back with bodies loaded on the trucks you know; people that were killed, or half dead, or whatever, in the attack. And you know, just like carcasses, or... on an open truck. So when I saw that and I saw all the smoke coming up, I couldn't get them unloaded and get out of there fast enough. So I unloaded them at the gate and came back.

And then I think it was the following day, I think, or that night, I don't know when it was, that I went down and.... you know, because I heard that they were looking for uh...you see, National Guard was not here at that time, so they wanted a Territorial Guard. And this is when I went down and I volunteered, because I had my ROTC commission and uh... We got this thing going, but the interesting part was that so many then didn't know what a gun was all about, you know?

Q: Uh huh. What did you do? What was your job in the Territorial Guard?

A: Well, I had a platoon, you know, uh... about 30 or 40 men under me, and we started to guard all the public utilities, like telephone companies, water tank, and things of that nature. But

there were so many rumors flying around that the Japanese had landed, had put down parachuters and up Kaimuki, up Maunalani Heights, you know. They said they were all over the place. And today we know that they had not landed, or they had not put I any troops. But all I know is that fortunately, the Japanese made the biggest mistake in the whole War, in this respect, that if they had brought in the troop transports and had brought in 5,000 soldiers, they would have taken this place lock, stock, and barrel, you know.

Q: So, from your experience, you'd say that the Island was pretty thinly defended, then huh?

A: Not thinly, I don't think it was defended at all. Because after, you know they were firing these anti(c)aircraft guns up from someplace you know, out maybe from Hickam or places like that, and all I know is that many of those shells... you know they didn't know... you know those shells, you gotta fuse it, you know. You gotta... you gotta... if you fire it up in the air, if it doesn't hit anything, it's not going to go off unless you fuse it at 5,000 or 10,000 feet or whatever. Then it's going to drop to the ground and burst when it hits the ground. And I think that a couple of guys got killed, and many uh... there was quite a few damages because the shells went up and came down because they failed to fuse it, you know?

Q: Uh huh.

A: And uh... they were really inexperienced and they didn't know what it was all about. So that's why I say that it was very, very fortunate for us that the Japanese had not foreseen that we were so... no defense at all, and they had failed to take advantage of that and bring in... just a hand full of troops could have taken this place.

What can we do, you know, like the guys that I had in my platoon, they didn't know how to load the gun, let alone shoot it, you know? But they went out and guarded the installations. And I remember it was right on December the 7th they had a "black out", you know, you couldn't light... a "black out". So, we would go out to inspect, to see that the troops weren't sleeping, or weren't goofing off. My God, it was so scary, you know because if you... they going to shoot you! (laughter)

Q: Yeah, probably everybody must have been pretty tense.

A: Yeah!

Q: Do you recall, I guess a month or two after the attack, when the AGA members of the Hawaii Territorial Guard were demobilized?

A: Yeah... yeah. Well, I think, you know, looking back at that time, I was bitter and I said, "Geez..." because what they did was to get rid of us, you know, because we were Japanese.

Q: Uh huh.

A: And uh, here we had gone out and volunteered and gone through all that harrowing experience of you know, we could do right after the bombing, and then to be you know, kicked out because you're not loyal enough or we can't trust you, you know? But anyway, when I look back at it, you know, you feel that...telling stories about these... about a month or so after the bombing they started moving troops into Hawaii from the Mainland. And the troops would come down to the waterfront and everything, and there would be us, guarding the water front. And they'd say, "Oh my God, we're late. We're too late." So, they've taken over the place, see. So, when those things starts happening, you know, you kind of figure...

Q: Excuse me for laughing... I just....

A: No, no. That's quite alright.

Q: It's just the way you said it struck me.

A: Yeah. They... well, we look like them see. So what they.... they had a big, big problem, they had to get rid of us. But they couldn't very well say, "You get out and you stay." So what they did was demobilize the Territorial Guard one day and the same afternoon and then the same afternoon they mobilized it again. And when they mobilized it, they got rid of us.

Q: Well, and it was... you know, after that a lot of you folks were pretty depressed and...

A: Yeah. We were very... I for one was very depressed and I says, "Jesus" you know "what are we going to do now?" So I went back to the University where I had physical education this and that.... teaching. And I think all of the... most of the Territorial Guard people, many of them were University students and they went back to school, see.

Q: Well, how did the Varsity Victory Volunteers come to be formed?

A: Yeah, well, now I come to that. That was a concept, if I recollect correctly, a concept that was put together by people in the community. See, because of this tremendous... at that time, tremendous number of Japanese people here, I think it was around 35 or 40% at that time, now it's much, much less, proportionately, but during that period the proportion was much, much larger than now, and I suppose the Commanding General, or you had military law here, and they were worried what... you know, how to cope with this big group of Japanese.

So they formed an Emergency Service... and Emergency Morale Committee, they call it, and they had leading citizens of the City in this Committee. And the Committee, one of the members was Hung Wai Ching, Shigeo Yoshida, Mitsho(?) Kido, and Dr. Murai, and uh... Masaji Marumoto, Charlie Loomis, Mr. Herman Wai was a member also. But anyway, you know, there were some Nisei's and some other nationalities in this Committee, and when they kicked us out of the HTG, the

Territorial Guard, and we went... I went back to school to teach or work there, and many of the members went back to school for an education. The Emergency Morale Committee must have figured hey uh, you know, we gotta do something to sort of alleviate the bad situation, the feelings that was prevalent at that in this community anyway. They were afraid of the Japanese!

So they originated this idea of a group of workers, a labor battalion, for the military. And uh... the YMCA got involved because Hung Wai Ching was a director of the... he handled the (name?) House, which was the University YMCA there (University Ave.) and he was Executive Secretary there I think. So he was one the Emergency Morale Committee and they put this thing together, and they talked to quite a few of the Nisei students that were there, and they agreed to the plan. And this is when we're going to have this group and we will go to the Commanding General that we want to serve as a Labor Battalion. You won't let us serve our country with guns so we'll do labor. And so they got this group together.

Now, I was older than most of them because I had graduated in '36, '37 and they were still freshmen and sophomore in '41. So I was 8, 10 years older than them, and they figured they needed somebody older than them, you know, because they had about 125, 150 people, to be their supervisor. So they approached me and I says, "Alright." you know "I'll go." So this is how I got involved with it and we got together and went to Schofield Barracks. At that time, you know,, we had now idea what we were going to do. Then, but, I think it was more of a project to convince the local population and also the military that we were, you know, we like to do something.

Q: What were living conditions like up at Schofield?

A: Oh, it wasn't....you know.... they had these barracks there and they opened up the barracks for us, and there was about 150 of us stayed in the barracks and there was one, two, three barracks. And uh, maybe uh...30, 30 people in one floor. It wasn't bad. It was the same living conditions as the soldiers had, you know. So, of course, but you know, our kids weren't experienced as far as the conditions were because they lived at home and all of a sudden they get thrown into this barracks situation.

Q: They had some adjustment problems?

A: What was that?

Q: Did they have any adjustment problems?

A: You mean problems adjusting?

Q: Yeah, to the...

A: Yeah. All of them did, you know. But I think, because most of them, I'd say 90% to 95% of them were University students. And that doesn't make them any better than the others, but mentally and intellectually, they could cope. Because I think they all knew that this isn't what they're going to do all the rest of their life. This was an interim thing and we were out there to show the General that we could be just as loyal as anybody else, see? And uh, as it turned out, we became like a show piece for the Emergency Morale Committee and Hung Wai Ching and others they go to the General and say look at that. We had

all Colonels, Generals, and everything, they come and look at us you know?

Q: Anybody from Washington ever come out?

A: Yeah, yeah... McLoy(?) the Sec. of the Army, or whatever, you know? They came out. I think they... by about then they figured Jesus maybe they... uh, they pulled the bone away as far as the West Coast Japanese are concerned, and so they came down and they saw what we were doing, and I think that was one of the main reasons why they were willing.... because at that time the 100th Infantry, they were federalized, but they were on the mainland training, but they weren't given guns. They were used as labor battalions or whatever see. And I think the basic thing is that it was a matter of trust, whether they could trust these Japanese to fight. So after they say what the EMC was doing, I think it convinced whoever made the decision that, you know, that maybe they can be trusted. So they were given guns and then they started to form the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and that's when we disbanded, because everybody wanted to join the 442.

Q: What kind of work... what kind of projects did you guys work on? Do you recall any of them specifically?

A: Well, there was uh... yeah, we had the whole 140 or 50 people divided into different work gangs. And we had a quarry gang, a gang that went up, you know, the Kolekole Pass. They got up at the top there, they got this quarry; they have a big quarry there. There were not enough workers, so we had about a dozen or 15 of our boys in one quarry gang and they went and reported every day, every morning, 5:00 or whatever it was, to work at the quarry. And we had uh.... gangs working in the building doing carpentry work, building pre-fab, not homes, but barracks you know, because they started to bring in troops from the mainland and there was no place to keep them. And you know how the military is always that way. They .... So the logistic problem was terrific, so they had to have these things to put them up in Kahuku, out in the field someplace. They gotta build latrines you know, uh, regular portable latrines. Then we had a couple of crews that went out to fix roads for military roads, you know. Not asphalt roads, but make it passable for tanks and trucks and whatever, for their training purposes. So we had all kinds of work gangs, you know.

Q: When the call came out for the 442nd, did you go in there too?
A: Well uh... yes, I tried to get in there. We disbanded. But you know, the same reason that kept me from getting my diploma or my certificate in 1936 now kept me out of... although I got my certificate uh, as an officer, commissioned, but right after... You see, right after that the draft started, you know, the military draft, and because of my knee, I was put in 4F see, and now when I wanted to volunteer for the 442, they said, "No you're 4F. You can't go." So here again, Hung Wai [*Ching*] and Emergency Morale Committee says, "Hey Ralph, you gotta go. I mean the boys all going and I'm sure you want to go, and they're depending on you to go." So I says, "Yeah, I want to go but the military won't

take me." So they say, "Alright." So they went to see the General and uh...

Q: Was that General Emmons or....

A: Yeah, General Emmons here. And somewhere orders came down the line to the Colonel, and they called me and they said, "O.K., we'll take you on the condition that you can go through the Ranger Course." They had a Ranger Course in Schofield where they had trained these Rangers for combat. They said, "You go there for a month and you pass that course, and then come back and we'll take a look at you."

So I went there and I was the only civilian that ever entered that Ranger Course. Every morning I'd go out in my car and go to the running, and jumping, and rope climbing, and everything. So after a month of that, I went back... I think at that time, Kam [*Kahehameha*] School, or one of the schools there was a big hospital, and I went there and saw the Colonel. So he tells me, "O.K., get up on the table here... on the desk." So I get up on the desk. He said, "Now jump to the floor." Of course, what the hell, it's only three feet, so I jump on the floor. He says, "O.K., you in." (laughter)

Q: (laughter)

A: So here again, you know... (laughter) .... military.

Q: That's probably one of the most unusual Army physicals I've heard of. (laughter)

A: Yeah, one month I'm building myself up physically and he puts me on the desk and says, "Jump." (laughter)... and that's it! So anyway I passed the test.

Q: Uh huh.

A: So I.... then they gave me my commission back, or restored my commission and I went to Camp Shelby... I mean, yeah, and trained with the 442 there.

Q: Did you go through all... all through the African...

A: No, see, this is uh... apart from the VVV [*Varsity Victory Volunteers*] picture I stayed with the 442 for Basic Infantry Training. Then they sent me to Fort Benning, Georgia, at Atlanta or Fort Benning, and for Officers Training Course, you know? The military game you know? They put it before and afterwards see. So I go to Officers Training School. Then while I was there the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA they wanted Nisei's(?) to volunteer for OSS while we were at War with Japan. So I could speak a little Japanese, so I volunteered. So there's about maybe, oh.... 15 of us that volunteered for officers and a dozen enlisted men. And I served uh... went to Japanese language school, then went to jungle training and everything, and finally I found myself... I wound up in Burma, fighting the Japanese in Burma. (laughter)

Q: Oh yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: What kind of duties did you have over there?

A: Well, I was with Detachment 101 which is a OSS outfit, and we uh... most of our... all of our activities there... first we were an Intelligence outfit. We were way behind the Japanese lines. We didn't have any lines; Burma is all jungle.

Q: How did you infiltrate in...

A: Well, I got behind the line, the first one, with a small plane, you know? And then we got back there and we organized Katcheen(?) Guerrilla troops and we had about one, two battalions. I think three battalions of Katcheen(?) guerrillas. We armed them and we ambushed the Japanese in groves and trucks, and this and that. So at first it was the Intelligence gathering team, but you know, as we went along, we had all these Katcheens back in our battalion. We might have had 2 or 3 hundred of them. So I stayed out there six months... about six months, out in the jungles, you know, and with these guys, and fought the Japanese.

Q: That's really an unusual story because of course the 442 is... has lots been written about that...

A: Yeah.

Q: ... but not much about you folks who uh...

A: Yeah, well, the OSS had phenomenal success in Europe during the War. You know, they had people in Germany, people in France, and Italy, and all the places, long before the Americans or the Allied Forces came in. They were handling mostly Intelligence duties.

But back in Burma and that part of the world, they ... the U.S.... at that time U.S. military forbade the Nisei's, like you know, interpreters, to go in front of so many uh... like battalion headquarters, or regimental headquarters. They wouldn't let them go ahead of them, because they were afraid that the Japanese would capture them and torture them. And this is how the OSS got in.

Now, as far as we were concerned, OSS was a real bastard outfit. It wasn't a... it wasn't under the military; it was under the President. So they could do anything they wanted, you know? I had people in my... with me, that were doctors, who were very intelligent people, majors, you know, and no military training at all! Draftable OSS because they had certain capabilities that uh... military officers didn't.

So, with us, they shifted us, you know like I was behind enemy line for six months see? They, you know... and there was no objection by anybody you know? They were OSS... OSS.

So I stayed there until then after we cleaned the Japanese out of Burma. They asked... I went up to China and stayed in China, and reasonably when I went to, when I was in the Mainland, after I was recruited and going to all these OSS schools, original plan was to drop us in Japan, see? And the same way that they had Yugoslavians, Americans drop into Yugoslavia, French... Americans drop into France. They think they can do the same thing in Japan, you know? That I could drop into Japan...

But they fail to realize that uh... at that time, and even afterwards, that in Japan it is an entirely different thing. Then France; in France uh.... or Italy, or Yugoslavia, they were parties in troops that were allied, you know. They were for the allies...anti-German. But in Japan, they was no anti-Japanese! (laughter)

Q: Nobody to hook up with once you got there huh? (laughter)

A: You get there and you're on your own (laughter)... because I never heard of any Japanese that were against the military. So fortunately that never took place and you know, I uh... I stayed in China for a while and the War ended.

Q: What were you doing in China?

A: Same thing.

Q: Same thing?

A: ... the OSS, and we were getting ready for the you know, big thing, and OSS had cleaned up in Burma, so we went into China. And then when the War ended, I uh... was put on a "mercy mission". There was about 3 or 4 "mercy missions" and we jumped into different prisoner of war camps; one up in Peking, one in Shanghai, and I went down to Hainan Island and it's a big, big island, then we thought there were American, regular American Intelligence, a lot of American prisoners of war in this big prisoner of war compound in Hainan. And they were afraid that the Japanese would murder them. So as soon as the War ended, the following day, we were down there and I was .... there was six of us. I was the only Japanese speaking guy in the six, and we jumped into the prisoner of was compound to tell the Japanese that the War had ended. But fortunately they had heard already and they didn't harm us. So we took over and there were no American prisoners of war. They were all Dutch and Australians, yup. And so we got them out.

And then I went to Hong Kong on the way back you know. You gotta get to Hong Kong, and the British weren't too happy to see us around, you know. But we stayed there and then, this is the strangest story that ever happened to anybody.

So I'm there in Hong Kong. See, I have four brothers, and before the War, my father, back in 1932 went back to Japan. And he told me, O.K. you can come back with us to Japan or you can stay in Hawaii and finish your education. So I said I was going to stay here. So the other four kids he took back to Japan.

So when the War started, I had no communication with the family at all. We just had it before the War started and so forth; half a dozen years. I don't know what they're doing. They don't know what I'm doing.

So I get into Hong Kong and I'm on my way back to Kunming the Chinese headquarters. And I'm up in the Peninsula Hotel, up in the second floor, you know out on the lanai there, watching this surrender ceremony. And Japanese, of this was about 3 or 4 weeks after they surrendered.

But then the ceremony was going to take place and I' m watching them. And unbeknownst to me, my brother was interpreter for the Japanese General who was giving the sword to the British General see? And he sees me up there in an American uniform. Of course he doesn't say anything and I don't know anything about it, until I get to Kunming in my tent there.

At that time I was a Capt. I'm in the tent and then a friend of mine

comes knocking you know. Says, "Hey, you gotta brother?" I says, "Yeah, I have four brothers." You know I had four brothers. He said, "Where are they?" I said, "Oh, they must be in Japan." He said, "You know, I gotta tell you a story. The strangest thing happened to me." He says, "I was in the British, you know? I was American but was assigned to the British because they didn't have any deputies." So he was with the British and he was in Hong Kong, interrogating the Japanese prisoners of war. He says he sees a guy exactly like me, you know? He knew me here see; he and I. Exactly like me but it's a Jessuz, I better not say anything because he knew that I was in OSS and we do all kind of strange things. And one of the things, we masquerading as Japanese prisoners of war, and trying to find our some War criminals, or whatever, you know? So I didn't want to say nothing, you know? I figured it was you. But I say you know, after a while, the wheels started... I couldn't stand it any longer. So I called him to me, and he says, "What is your name?" He says, "Yoboku." you know? He says, "You have a brother?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "You know your brother is alive?" I says,"Yeah, I saw him the other day." (laughter) He says, "What do you mean? When did you see him?" And then the story came up on the show and I saw him up there. And...

Q: Did you recognize him when you were looking down?

A: No! No I didn't. I couldn't, you know, see very well for one thing, and I would never think that you know.... (laughter)

Q: That's an amazing story!

A: The way the story is, it doesn't' sound true but that's how it happened. Yeah... yeah.

Q: Well, it sounds like you had a really interesting career.

A: Yeah, so then I... after the War I went to Japan because my brothers and family lived in Hiroshima, to find them, you know... to see what happened to them. And fortunately they were all alive and were healthy, so I stayed in Japan with the CIC for about a year, and then came back.

Q: Well!

A: O.K.? (laughter)

Q: Thanks!

Joshua Agsalud #74
April 23, 1985

Q: Mr. Agsalud, where were you living on December 7th, 1941?

A: I lived in Waipahu. More specifically, it was called Armory Camp and that's a plantation housing camp in downtown... what's downtown Waipahu at that time, behind the Waipahu Theater. It was on the hillside so we had a view of Pearl Harbor at that time.

Q: How old were you then?

A: Eight years old.

Q: What do you remember of December 7th, 1941?

A: Well, if I can try to do this sequentially.

Q: Just do it any way that...

A: O.K. This is Sunday morning. I like to (I still do today, even when I was a kid) sleep late. Church wasn't until 9 or 10:00 I think and I was awakened by what I thought at that time, somebody banging on the wall of our house; a lot of vibration, which continued on. So I got up and looked out the front door and a lot of my friends and other people in the particular camp at that time, were on the road looking down into Pearl Harbor. So I went out to join them and what I saw were flashes from ships and airplanes flying over them, and somebody had said that those were British planes and that the military was undergoing maneuvers. So we were enjoying all of this, really. And now that I think back about it, a few Japanese planes flew over us because our particular camp was right below the Oahu Sugar Mill, which as I think back now, and after discussing it with others, they probably thought was a military installation, because of the two smoke stacks, and perhaps... I'm not sure of this, people said they were shot at. So, and I don't know. I don't have...

Q: From the planes?

A: From the planes. So if that was true then these planes were coming right over us, and shooting at the Sugar Mill. Of course all of this was put together later on. Uh, we didn't know there was a War on. So, we were members at that time of the Waipahu Evangelical Church, which was I think about a mile or a mile and a half from where we lived. I'm not sure if you're familiar with Waipahu Town. But to get from where we lived near the Waipahu Theater and the Waipahu Evangelical Church is where... near August Ahrens School is now. So just to show you the distance that we had to walk.

We were a plantation family now. We didn't have transportation and so my three sisters and myself (I'm the youngest) started our regular Sunday walk to church. And we did

notice a few holes in the ground or in the street, on the way to church. And at that time it didn't dawn on us, you know, what was going on.

We got into church and then we found out through the minister... and it still didn't sink into us because we had no idea what War meant at that time. And maybe for my older sisters, but for me, I had no idea. And he announced the fact that we ought to go return home because there was an attack taking place (or something to that effect). And so here we walked a mile to a mile and a half (I'm not sure how long that distance was) out in the open with planes flying over us, and ...

Q: Did they seem to be flying pretty low?

A: They were flying low from what I could recollect. Not that many; maybe two or three. I would think that these were the stray planes that perhaps lost whatever plan they had, their flight plan, or their attack plan, or what, and maybe they were just looking around Hawaii (as I look back now.) At that time I really didn't know what was going on.

But we walked back home and my father was gone. Apparently the plantation had mobilized (the plantation workers) and I didn't see him until late that night, and by that time, the plan... we had what was called plantation police and I think the Honolulu Police were coming around telling us about a "black out", (no lights and so forth.)

And so slowly then, I began to realize what was going on; especially when my dad wasn't around all this time and I just heard that they had mobilized all the men to go down to either Hickam or Pearl Harbor (I don't know which station he went to), to help out either moving the wounded and the dead or moving equipment around, or putting out fires, or something to that effect. So that was the extent of the experiences that I remember on December 7th.

I've heard a lot more later on and then I just piece it together to find out what I saw.

Q: In the days and weeks after the attack, with the institution of martial law and the "black out", how did that affect your family and your family's life?

A: Quite drastically. Um... I'll have to say I saw my first Caucasian person, maybe the next day or the following day when an Army jeep came into our camp with two or three soldiers. I'd never seen a Caucasian person in my life... I mean life, in flesh and blood. Uh... this goes to show you what kind of sheltered life we lived in the camps at that time. So that was an eye opener for me.

In terms of martial law, again, in my youth and because of the sheltered life, I suppose, that we lived in the plantation, and because our plantation was close to being feudalistic, being told what to do, where to go, where to buy your things, what hospital to go to, I guess for me it didn't mean.... it wasn't that much of a difference that somebody else is taking over.

I think the propaganda was really good at that time. The radio was talking about War now, uh.... and patriotism, and by cooperating and doing our bit, you know, we were helping some

kind of an effort. And so I think we were glad to be part of this and uh... I think for me as a person, maybe my family too, we became more aware or dragged into the mainstream of life even more now than perhaps the isolation we were living in. Because we never really bothered gathering around the radio before, to hear news broadcasts, or I can't even remember if the President of the United States came on at that time. But I do remember having meetings around the radio, and listening to news, and people talking, you know, what's going on and all of that. I think we started to buy the newspaper for the first time, because of what was happening around us.

Q: Sounds like that uh... expanded the horizons of the world of some of the people there.

A: Sure. Sure. I think as bad as WWII, or any War can be, we all know the story about how it helped the Americans of Japanese ancestry move up after they went off to the War and came back; allowed the GI Bill, to be prevalent among all these youngsters that came back out of the military. If it wasn't for the War we wouldn't have a Daniel Inouye or Spark Matsunaga today, who went to college because of the GI Bill. So in a very small way, in my own little isolated plantation camp in Waipahu, it opened the world to us, this negative thing that occurred.

Q: How did it impact in terms of relations between different groups; say, between Japanese and Filipinos, in the camp? Not only the Attack but just the beginning of the War.

A: There was emotion. There was strife. We became more aware of who the Japanese were. Unfortunately, this did occur. I don't know how it spread. When we went back to school for instance, it seemed as though the Japanese kids sort of stuck together. I don't know what their parents had told them, or what. But there probably was some shame, or maybe some (this is my assessment now... I don't know if this happened but) coaching on the part of their parents that, don't let anybody push you around because of what happened, or something like that, I guess.

But I think there was some kind of polarization taking place. Again, I can look back at it and make this assessment. But at that time it was merely uh...towards Japanese. I guess our parents and other adults who were non(c)Japanese, had caused this kind of a division.

Q: Were there any measures uh... say for example, education programs or propaganda, to counter that?

A: I can't think of any at that time. But like anything else, humans being what they are and being close to each other, the differences in ethnicity, I think disappeared after those few weeks of emotionalism, of being frightened I suppose. Then after a while, we were all playing together again, and friends were friends again. But initially there was some kind of uncomfortableness, and maybe some teasing also. I remember some of the non(c)Japanese kids putting down the Japanese kids. There was some of that. But this is immature childishness that I think occurs....

Q: I was going to ask you, were there large numbers of troops or sailors, that moved into the Waipahu area?

A: Yes.

Q: What effect did that have on the community?

A: Again, being that young, I cannot look at it from a sociological point of view. Economically, I think we gained. I, as a youngster (for instance), I went into shining shoes, and this is much later now, from December 7th, after the troops came, but here you have these "American Boys". At that time we were a territory and mainland U.S. really didn't' know what Hawaii was all about. They figured we were a foreign country, and so after .... I used to get big tips (300% tip). You know the shoeshine was only .10. The sailor or the soldier would leave me with a dollar bill, you know, or a quarter. And that was a big deal for us.

I remember a lot of that. Um... sociologically I think there were some of the military around, coming to church. I think it accelerated the Americanization or our particular community, to have some many mainlanders around. At that time they weren't know as mainlanders; they were known as either GI'S or hauolis, or... And uh.. it was positive, their presence.

The War effort I think was ... if this was planned we certainly didn't know about it. But we were very patriotic, and any person in uniform, or even not in uniform, if we saw a white person, he much have been with the military, and so there was this great attachment. I think is what the people in the occupied countries felt too, at the same time, now that we're talking about it. But, there was a good feeling of the military being around. It could have been the propaganda effort too that was going around, and in the schools, now that I think back about it.

Q: What do you recall about the way the War affected your education and what was taught in schools?

A: I think it opened up the schools in terms of awareness to kids, of what was going on. Certainly we became a lot more knowledgeable about Europe and the Pacific, because we now had real experiences taking place in Germany, and Italy for instance. Then on this side of the world, in China, and the Philippines. Whereas if didn't have these current events taking place at that particular time, I would think that our lessons in geography and history would have strictly been theoretical book knowledge, and no current events to relate it to. So when somebody spoke about uh... you know, the 442[*nd Regiment*] for instance landing in Sicily, and we know the brothers, or fathers, or cousins, of these people actually making that landing, it hit home more than just reading about Sicily without that particular current event taking place. So again, the whole War was a big negative but it did make some changes in the educational process, to the positive side.

Q: Did most of the men who worked in your community, and the women who worked on the plantation, did they stay in the plantation jobs, or did they go into War work?

A: No, the men stayed on the plantation as far as I know. The wives, the spouses, my mother, for instance, worked for the military. I remember days when I was home all by myself, because my mother was working at Pearl Harbor. If you ask me what she did, I don't know. But there were a lot of Federal jobs for spouses at that time. So, you talk about in Hawaii, the prevalence of the working wife, it started with WWII, in the plantations.

Q: It sounds like a major change in the pattern of employment and family life.

A: Yes. Yes.

Q: Do you recall from... just what you remember of what went on in your community? How it affected family life?

A: Well, um... fortunately I had a mother and father that were church going and they believed in bringing the kids up, again, "the right way". They went sure we went to school and studied, and so forth.

But I became a wayward kid for awhile when there were no parents to come home to. Again, the working wife, and that's my mother at that time. Fortunately, I did not go that far off wayward. I was a juvenile delinquent. The policeman had to come to my home once for skipping school and doing some vandalism at the Mill. Now I don't want to blame my parents for that but again, as I look back, and as a parent now, I think lack of parental supervision did occur and I hate to put other families in a lower light in this case here, but there were some other families whose parents were not as astute as mine, so some of my friends got in a bad way more than I did.

I really can't... I don't know if my sisters had any encounters with the military that were around. I had heard stories, some of them had a difficult time with them. But certainly not what I hear today in terms of rape, for instance, or what you hear of any military occupation unit doing to a particular area, where they move in. I don't think there was that at all.

Q: Living in Waipahu, you're pretty close to the West Lock area of Pearl Harbor, and do you recall the explosion there in the Spring of 1944?

A: Yes I do. And was that a Sunday? It must have been, because it was during a day when I was at the movie theater. I wasn't skipping school (laughter).

Q: I was going to say, maybe you were playing hooky (laughter).

A: But I remember being in the Waipahu Theater and then these rocking explosions taking place and how dusty we all got because all the dust in the Theater, seeping in walls, fell on us. That's how explosive the event was. When we came out of the Theater, there was a lot of commotion out on the streets, ambulances going by, and the Waipahu Plantation Hospital was oh... maybe 2 blocks away from the Theater. So some of us ambled over there. That's where we saw all the ambulance going. And we

ourselves, as young kids now, were mobilized to help.

Q: What did you do?

A: Um, apparently the Waipahu Hospital served as some kind of emergency facility and they had beds, folded cots, beds, mattresses, stretchers, all stored up in the ceiling and they guess they needed some manpower to move this out. And you talk about War effort and not thinking about whether I should or not. We were just asked, "We need your help boys." you know "Join us." I can't remember who was there now. I guess military was there and the local police and some others. So we just pitched in.

I remember one Boy Scout troop coming over too. I don't know how they were mobilized but we happened to be just individuals ambling around at that time. So we spent a good part of the day helping carry bed cots, mattresses, stretchers, down. I forget where, either to ambulances, or opening up.... or setting up the hospital to take care of the dead and the wounded.

And what I remember most about that event, was seeing the dead being brought in. This I did not have any experience with during Pearl Harbor; maybe my dad did. He never did tell me exactly what went on down at Pearl Harbor. But, and I can't remember details too often. I do remember seeing one body with brains blown out for instance, and I think it left some impression on many of us to be exposed to this. We were what, 8,9 years old at that time. And I remember some of the adults asking us to move the bodies and we just ran away and we never went back. So we were doing alright in moving the cots, the stretchers, the bed mattresses and so forth, but when we saw the dead bodies we said that's not for us. And I remember myself, one body with... I've never seen a human brain before; it looked like an orange you know. The part of the head was blown off and there was an orange imbedded in his head. That's how a brain looked to me at that time. It left me with a few shocking experiences.

The hospital is between school and my home, and for a while I found it real difficult walking home from school to go by that place, knowing what we saw in there.

Q: Sounds like a traumatic experience in a way.

A: Yeah. Yeah....

Q: Could you see the Harbor itself, where the LST's were?

A: No. Not from Waipahu Town. We saw the black smoke in the sky and that's all we saw. We couldn't see the Harbor, West Lock. In fact, I didn't even know what West Lock was... what it was, till they kept talking about West Lock. I didn't know there was a West Lock and an East Lock. I guess we overlooked East Lock and West Lock is where Waipahu High School then, that's Waipahu Intermediate School today, was. But I didn't get to Waipahu High until much later. So... I didn't even know what the place looked like. All we could see was the smoke in the sky and all we experienced was, again, the shock waves from the explosion.

Q: Did they bring any of the uninjured survivors ashore into Waipahu from any of the ships that blew up?

A: That part, you know, I'm not sure. I really don't know. I can only remember moving the beds, the stretchers, and then seeing a line of dead bodies. I don't recollect any walking wounded, or wounded per say.

Q: O.K., well, do you have anything to add?

A: Uh... not really (laughter). It's.... it's an experience.

Q: O.K., well I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me here.

Sumu Furukawa #81
April 30, 1985

Q: Mr. Furukawa?

A: Yes.

Q: What were you doing on December 7th, 1941?

A: Well, I was ready to go out and play baseball with my buddies. We waited and waited and my friend never showed up. Now we knew why afterwards.

Q: Uh huh.

A: Then, it looked like some maneuvers were going on.

Q: Where you living at the time?

A: I was living in Kalihi at that time. This is about how many miles away from Pearl... oh several miles I suppose, and we heard all the rumors. But then we heard the Webley Edwards on the radio saying this is the real McCoy. So...

Q: That sticks in your mind, huh?

A: Yes. Yes. But, I wanted to see what was going on so I climbed the telephone pole right in front of our house.

Q: Uh huh.

A: ... and looked towards Pearl. Saw airplanes flying, smoke coming up. We couldn't see the ships. Not from our place, or anything. Just what we could see in the sky above Pearl.

Q: Could you see any planes flying around?

A: Yes. Yes...going all around. But we didn't know what was going on. We didn't see any bombing, or hear any.

Q: Did you see any planes flying over Kalihi area?

A: Uh, yes, I'd say overhead and towards the ocean they flew over. But uh...

Q: Were they flying low enough that you could see any kind of identifying marks?

A: Uh, we couldn't tell at that point. Uh... I know now in looking back, they weren't P-40's though.

Q: Not too many of them got up.

A: We didn't see the "meatballs" you might say. But afterwards

when we found out it was the real thing, well, that was something else.

Q: How did you spend that evening?

A: Uh, at home, in the dark. It was a "black out" and we went to the neighbors house, I guess just to be with the people, and they were of part Hawaiian ancestry.

Q: Were there any special measures that you took for the "black out"?

A: Uh, I don't know if we started that night or not, but we had to get curtains and black out the windows, so that no light would show. I think by the next night we did all that.

Q: You were mentioning to me before that you were an ROTC student, ROTC cadet at the University.

A: Yes. Yes. We were told to report to the University. I didn't know about so I didn't go, but when I found out about it, I went the first thing the next morning. Because many went that morning, but I didn't know so I went as soon as I knew.

Q: Were you given any kind of equipment?

A: Yes, uh.... we had the Springfield from the ROTC class, with bullets.

Q: Given any helmet or anything like that?

A: No helmet, but I think we had a ... I think by then gas masks were issued, through all the ... through the populous anyway.

Q: Uh huh...

A: But uh, let's see, the Springfield and an ammo belt. No, I don't recall getting a helmet... and that's about it.

Q: What kind of duty was your ROTC Unit assigned too?

A: The main function was the guard the vial installations on Oahu: water, pumping stations, telephone installations, and that sort of thing. So we were assigned to guard these places on Oahu.

Q: Do you remember which installations you guarded?

A: Yes, one in McCully. A Hawaiian Telephone sub-station. There was another time we guarded the pumping station up in Kalihi Valley, then an overpass at Hawaiian Pineapple company. Those are places I remember and different places in downtown such as, Lewers and Cooke Building.

Q: Now the ROTC. Was the ROTC Unit part of the Hawaii Territorial Guard?

A: Uh, yes, the members of the ROTC, became a part of the Territorial Guard, obvious to who volunteered I suppose.

Q: Now, were you folks pretty nervous on guard duty? I mean, what I'm getting at is the I read that there's a... was a lot of tension and a lot of uncertainty in those days, and uh...

A: Yes, I suppose. We didn't know what was going on. But uh, now thinking back, although gee uh... I wasn't that scared about an attack of the installation somehow. They were all... let's see, fences were put all around these installations. So it would be difficult for anyone to get in. And I just didn't think anyone would try too, sabotage an installation anyway.

Q: Were you given any instructions on what your Unit would be doing in case of a invasion of Oahu?

A: Gee I don't remember. I don't think so. Our job was simply to prevent sabotage rather than fight off any enemy attack.

Q: Uh huh. Now, later on, about a couple of months later...

A: Yes.

Q: ...when the Japanese-Americans who were in the Hawaii Territorial Guard were demobilized...

A: Yes.

Q: ... how did you get that news?

A: We were told to report to camp out at.... oh, we were at camp at KoKo Head and we were brought into the Armory, all the Nisei's were there and Major.... oh, I forget his name now but it'll come to me shortly, told us the news at that time. He said it was a dirty shame but that we were going to be inactivated. So it was a low point. It was an awful feeling.

Q: Yeah. Must have been. What did you do after that? after demobilization?

A: After that I felt that I should do something for the Country; War efforts or... I obtained work with the USED, or Hawaii Dredging. USED I guess it was. Surprisingly, I did some work at Hickam Field.

Q: What kind of work did you do over there?

A: I was doing some carpentry apprentice work.

Q: Uh huh.

A: Construction.

Q: What kind of projects were you working on?

A: We were building some ammo uh.... housing I guess you might

call it.

Q: Mmm Hmm.

A: We were supposed to be restricted but yet somehow we were working in that area. I worked until I found out that there was another organization with all these University boys (ROTC) started this VVV. I think that Ted Tsukiyama told you something about that.

Q: Yeah. He told me something about that.

A: So when I heard about it, then I left my work there and volunteered for the VVV [*Varsity Victory Volunteers*]. They're out of Schofield so that's where I went.

Q: Well, why don't you tell me a little bit about that uh... what kind of... well, where were you housed?

A: We were housed right around with the 3rd or 4th Engineer barracks; same as the rest of the GI's there. We had our own mess hall, barracks; same except we had no guns. We were civilians. We were attached to the 3rd and 4th Engineers, and we did all kind of labor work; building roads, ditches, other oh ice boxes... reefers I guess they called them. Things like that, but really just putting on a show you know.

Q: What was the pay like that you got?

A: Pay was labor rate; maybe $60 a month. We got issued a raise over what... a year or a year and a half maybe we were there.

Q: Would you say that there was an awareness among the men in the VVV that as AJA's you were very much in the spotlight so to speak in your work out at Schofield?

A: So to speak, and yet funny I suppose is our letters were saturated. We could not tell where we were...

Q: Oh really?

A: ... so to speak, yeah. But yet we go home we tell our family and friends where we are.

Q: So, did you get... was it a situation where you got regular liberty?

A: Oh, it came out that finally we had Sunday off. We used to stagger the days but it was easier just to have one day off then so Sunday was off. We worked Monday through Saturday, and those who were at home on Oahu went home. Many stayed back, from the outside Islands anyway.

Q: How long did you spend in the VVV?

A: Probably, let's see, December.... about a year I'd say. Then Hung Wai Ching (I think you heard of him) came by and told us

that we were given an opportunity to volunteer for the Service, and we had to make a decision whether to continue with the VVV, or inactivate it and be ready to volunteer for the Service. So we voted. By the way, that was interesting. I don't know if it was a matter of record but I remember what the vote was like.

Q: What was it like?

A: It was a momentous time. I thought it was about 2/3 in favor of, you might say, dissolving the VVV and volunteering, and 1/3 voted against it.

Q: Which way did you vote?

A: I voted for it.

Q: For dissolving it?

A: Yes.

Q: What were your reasons for voting that way?

A: Oh, I felt we should do something for the Country.

Q: Mmm Hmm.

A: Prove our loyalty.

Q: And the people who voted against it, what did they give as their reasons?

A: Well, one was we felt that doing what we were was alright. We wanted to be together. We volunteered. We wanted to be in that service as a unit, but no one could assure us of that. So that was one objection but uh... Some said they had to check with the family first before voting and things like that, so... uh...

Q: So did the VVV volunteer as a unit for the Service or as individuals?

A: As a unit but as individuals. The unit was dissolved, so it was all up to us... each one of us... whether to volunteer or not. But I think almost all did. I don't know about any records being kept but I dare say it was close to 100%.

Q: Did you volunteer?
A: Yes, I did.

Q: What happened then?

A: I wasn't accepted because of my health.

Q: What did you do at that point?

A: Then uh... let's see, oh, I found work with the USED again, doing carpentry apprentice work.

Q: What sort of projects did you work on then?

A: Basically things connected with the War. I know we made some sleds.

Q: Some what?

A: Sleds.

Q: Sleds?

A: Yeah, you know, to haul ammo and whatever over on the beaches I guess.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. Then we made houses, barracks, furniture, things like that.

Q: Mmm Hmm.

A: We were working mostly with wood, but...a funny thing was that a lot of the carpenters were Nisei (laughter).

Q: Oh really?

A: In effect they were helping the War (laughter)... effort. So...then I stayed there then it looked like... well, VJ day came around, so I thought well, I guess... or was it VE day first, I'm sorry... came and thereafter I thought oh well maybe I'll go back to school so I left the job and went to school and finished up in 1948
.
Q: O.K., Well, thank you. I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

A: I hope that.... Sorry, I thought there'd be something more dramatic.

Q: No, listen, it's.... every person that gives us something makes a contribution to...

A: Mmm Hmm.

Harry Goda #83
May 8, 1985

Q: Mr. Goda, why don't you tell me a little bit about your early life. Where you were born?

A: Oh, I was born on Kauai. When I was 3 years old I went back to Japan and I went after grammar school, I finished my high school in Japan. This was [*in*] Shikoku, Kagawa Ken [Japan], and after high school I went to Takamatau teacher's training school; should be two years. But I didn't quite finish the school. One year; a little over one year, I came back to Hawaii. I was 19 years old.

Q: What year was that?

A: Oh, 1920-something... 1920... something 19... I... about 1900 I think, about. Is that right? (voice from back, "He was 19.")

Q: Oh, you were 19 at the time?

A: Yeah, 19 years old. That was about 1922 or 3, I think, yes.

Q: Oh, O.K., and what did you do when you returned to Hawaii?

A: I returned; I had no work so I went to a newspaper... the Maui, in the Maui they had the Japanese paper... newspaper company... Maui Shinbu newspaper. I worked over there one year and after that I went to Makawao. My father, the friend of the store, they needed one man, speak good Japanese. So I went there, and after that one Mr. Sasaki(?) he was care for Japanese learning school. He wanted me to come over; help him.

Q: Is this on Oahu?

A: No, Maui.

Q: Oh, on Maui.

A: Maui, Kaehoeho. So I quit the store and went to help Mr. Sasaki. He was principal for that Japanese Learning School, and he wasn't there just one year, and he left for Honolulu. I was the only one so I took his place. I became more like principal for Japanese Learning School, and I taught about 3 years, or 4 years. Mr.Kugo(?) who is from Lahaina, he wanted... he used to be my good friend. Do you understand what I am saying, yes?

Q: Oh yes.

A: I went to Puukolii Learning School as the principal and I taught about seven years. We got married, my wife Nakiko(?), and ...

Q: Was that in Puukolii

A: Puukolii, that on the Lahaina; more like.... that was what you call... Kanapali what is very popular now.

Q: I have to ask you one question. Did you know the Matsudo family?

A: Matsuda?

Q: Matsudo.

A: Very well.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Very well Matsudo. How do you know him?

Q: I know one of old Mr. Matsudo's daughter, Mrs. Araki.

A: Oh.

Q: Lives in Salt Lake.

A: Oh!

Q: I know that family.

A: Is that right?

Q: Yes. (laughter)

A: Would you give my regard to her?

Q: Yes, yes, because I know Mr. Matsudo's grandchildren. They are friends of mine.

A: Is that right? Oh! Mr. Matsudo child, one of them I know, but Mr. Matsudo kind of short man used to be. He's not living any more, yes.

Q: No, but...

A: ... and from there I stayed about 7 years, Kanapali. They used to call Puukolii, Kanapali. I went to... what was the name of that school I went? (voice from back, "Hong Wan Ji(?)") No, no, no, not that. (voice, "Lahaina Home Gardens") No, no, not that garden. (voice,"which one?") the last school. (voice, "Oh, Waihee Waihee, Japanese learning school, as the principal, and I stayed about 4 years. Then when I was Waihee...

Q: That's around on, near the other side from Lahaina.

A: That's right.

Q: Yes, on the north side.

A: No, no. Waihee is next to Wailuku.

Q: Oh yes, that's what I meant, around the other side.

A: Then...

Q: Um...

A: Yes?

Q: Tell me, how did they first pick you up?

A: Pick me up that night? Oh, that December 7th night, I cannot forget for my lifetime. On December 7th night I was listening to the radio, you know, about 11:00... about almost midnight; that is December 7th night. Someone knocked on the door so my wife went out and said, "Yes, my husband is here." and so one man came in and (laughter)... so and gun. I was scared you know... I don't know what to do. "Oh, Mr. Goda, I want to ask you some questions tonight. So would you come over?" I said, "No, it's too late! Almost after 11:00 already! So no, no... a few minutes we will come together." So I just left and went to schoolyard. There's one big Army truck there and four or five soldiers with guns and what they call... swords?

Q: Bayonet, yeah.

A: Bayonet. And Mr. Hashimoto used to be our school president you know. He was inside there, and he said, "Sansei" (means teacher) "I'm here." he said. He was caught already in the truck. Then one of the soldiers said, "Shut up you! Don't talk Japanese!" So we did nothing. So I went in the truck. I went to Wailuku side and we are saying something in Japanese. Whenever I say something, "Damn you! SHUT UP!" you know so I could...

So we passed Wailuku Town and going over, and Asimoto says, "Sansei, we are going to Yakiva." (Yakiva?? means cremating place) "We might be cremated." (laughter) Then he said, "Don't say Japanese!"

So finally we reached one building, that was prison... Wailuku prison. So they put me down, no more right. I went the hole going straight. Then someone said in Japanese, "Hey, who is that coming here now! Oh... Goda. Oh we thought you were coming pretty soon too. Ah, come over, come over." So went, about 15 people inside there already, in the prison you know. And Dr. Wohata(?), Mr. Myhana(?) used to be a big school principal too, and almost everyone I know, the old friends, and I shouldn't say but, almost all 'big wheels' too you know. That was December 7th night, yeah.

Q: When you were in the jail, did they ask you questions?

A: No, about two, three months, they didn't ask any questions. Just, we don't know what to do, but they treated us really mean you know.

Q: What did they do?

A: Oh, well, we had place to sleep but that's all prisoners bed or some kind of (cannot understand). I couldn't sleep. Really unsanitary place... prison. Now prison is alright, but the prison the time we went, we couldn't sleep whole night, and in the morning they served one piece of bread and one cup of soup, which is more like weakened... you don't know, even now a dog cannot eat that kind soup you know... thin, oily soup. We couldn't stand that time really bad.

Q: How many together? How many people?

A: At that time about oh... almost forty people from all over... Maui you know, Maui. That's much smaller a community than Honolulu of course. There was most minister, principal, or big manager of big store, and yeah, more or like us, school teacher... I mean not school teacher but principal of the Japanese learning school and minister and big manager of big store... big Japanese store. Yeah, something that about 40 people.

Q: How long did you stay in Wailuku prison?

A: About 6 months. Six months in Wailuku. Later, the treatment a little bit improved and they giving some better food too. And we had one investigation too before 3 or 4 months.

Q: What kind of questions did they ask?

A: Oh, that was mean... Mr. Chapman. I don't remember their name but one that was Cooper or something, from Army and the rest, three of them civilian. They had one, two, three, four, in front of me and I went there.

They asked many, many questions which I forgot, but mostly, "Are you a citizen of the United States?" I say, "Yes." I say, "I was born on Kauai." and one of man said, "What are you doing December 7th?" "I was Japanese learning school teacher?" "What were you doing?" "Teaching Japanese to small children after grammar school." "Why you teaching Japanese?" Well, that was my bread and butter. So it was just my work. You understand what is bread and butter? That my living. "You not supposed to teach Japanese to the people of the United States... the citizens." Well I don't know but they wanted me to teach so I teach. "You not an American citizen. You a Jap."

That word I cannot forget my lifetime, you know. "You not a citizen, although you were born in Hawaii. You're a Jap." one of the civilians said. I didn't say anything. After that I didn't say anything already you know. But that real hurt me. I'm teaching Japanese but I taught them good American citizen. Still I taught to loyal to this country you know. Even if I'm, my face... of course I'm not white but yellow, Oriental. But my father was of course Oriental, but I should be good American. So I had pride you know. But still he said, "Damn you Jap." He said. I didn't answer anything.

So O.K. do anything what you want. So I didn't answer after that question. I don't know who they were but I didn't answer that

question. He was a young man about 28. I forgot his face too already but if I see him I can tell because I hated him so much. Ever since I didn't say anything but you know, I have nothing to say so I didn't answer. I still remember that all my life time, yeah....
Then we were sent to Honolulu, Sand Island.

Q: What was it like at Sand Island?

A: Sand Island was very good. Oh the treatment was completely different. They served good food. I didn't have any complaints, Sand Island. They treated us really nice. Someone said they treated me but I said that time I really believed United States people they might think we are enemy but they treated us really nice. I had no complaints; nice food, treatment good. They gave me a place to exercise you know. Oh lots of good treatment.... oh that Army treated that time really nice.

Q: Did you live in tents or barracks?

A: No, very nice barracks. Nice barracks, nice food, everything... I'm so happy that time.

Q: Was your wife able to visit you?

A: Yes. Once (wife) show up, come down.... uh. Mommy who was that president of Wailuku Sugar Company? (voice in background) Anyway, she forgot his name but he helped us so much. He gave plane ticket to my wife and my child. He visited us in Sand Island one day. So nice, you know, that place. Mr. Aaron or something, he treated my wife so nice. That real American.

Q: Could you write letters to your wife and family on Maui?

A: Yes.

Q: What about when you were in jail in Wailuku? Could you get visits?

A: Yes. Usually after one week they allowed to visit us. They bring over some food; mostly food. We cannot eat the food they serve you know. So they bring sushi or sometimes soup, or chicken, boiled chicken. We divide it you know? I give a chicken you something like that. We didn't eat in fact Wailuku prison food.

Q: What did you do all day?

A: Well, we had nothing so we walk in the yard or read in the newspaper, something like that. Newspaper, of course we have no Japanese newspaper, so American newspaper.

Q: Was that at Wailuku?

A: Wailuku, yeah.

Q: What about at Sand Island? Did you have work to do?

A: Oh Sand Island, we used to play baseball. Oh, Sand Island was a heaven compared to Wailuku. The Army treated us.... they even took me to downtown. I wanted to buy something, so one of the soldiers and escorted me to downtown store. I bought hair cream(?). They were so nice. I wanted to buy something. They say, "O.K., I take you." One of ... I don't know who he was but one soldier, he took me to downtown and I bought something. Oh they were wonderful. That real American, yeah.

Q: How long did you spend at Sand Island?

A: About six months. So totally I stayed about one year in Hawaii and January 2, just one year after the War, January 2 my whole family was sent to States.

Q: Where were you sent?

A: First we went to... not Arizona.... Oh Grandma! Grandma! (talking in Japanese)... Jerome, Arkansas.

Q: What was the camp like in Jerome?

A: Camp was perfect too. No complaint. Mr. Chapman(?) really, they treated us really nice. Food and I used to work as an ambulance driver you know that year there and there food, even they used to give us cake and ice cream for dessert too, which we couldn't eat at War time outside you know. But everything except Wailuku, they treated .... I shouldn't say this but I have to tell you the truth, you know. Some they say they treated mean, something like that, but only mean, dirty was Wailuku prison. After that very reasonable treatment, yeah.

Q: How long did you stay at Jerome?

A: Jerome, about one year, and they shipped us to Arizona. We stayed in Arizona about six months and you want me to tell everything?

Q: Yes.

A: Navy wanted some Japanese learning school teachers, so I went out and took a test and I passed the test. So I went out as a teacher to Colorado uh... what was the name of the University at Colorado... Boulder University. I was an instructor. I was teaching Navy Officers. Where I taught Judge King. I met him over there and about two or three months that place was too crowded so we were shipped to... where was it, Oklahoma A & M College, Oklahoma they had branch school, Navy school, they had a Japanese language school I Oklahoma A & M College and they gave us nice house and new refrigerator, everything. I taught about.... almost two years and a half as a language school teacher, I taught up there.

Q: When did you finally go back to Hawaii?

A: Then War was over so right after the War was over, we came back, yeah, next February we came back Hawaii.

Q: Was that 1946?

A: Maybe... what time over... 1945? Oh, '46. Then I had no work. No more Japanese learning school. So I went, Judge King, King-san tried to find one job for me. “Oh, Sansei you go Japan.” as a occupation forces. There's an Army wanted like you. So I went take a test. I went.... then I passed the test. So I went to Japan as... I stayed only one month, Hawaii, and then we went to Japan, in Tokyo and stayed for 13 years. My family all went there and we stayed in the Army camp... not Army camp but Army... what do you call it?

Q: A billet.

A: Yeah. That nice place.

Q: Things in Japan, Japanese people must have been very hungry.

A: So I should say but... this is not... this is more like secret you know. Not supposed say but I bought a lot of stuff from PX or Commissary. I gave Japanese people who lost his parents, or lost his husband, the wife cannot do anything with two or three children, without house, no place to live, nothing to eat. So I used to give, I shouldn't say it, but they were really happy. That was a miserable time I went, first I went to Yokohama in the jeep, from Yokohama to Japan, no building, nothing... oh yeah, terrible.

I stayed 13 years and came back and was hired at Hickam. Worked about 10 years and retired. That whole my life. As a whole I tell Mr. Chapman our country is ... well, if I say this, maybe this a true fact so I cannot hide or I cannot tell lies, you know. So I tell you the truth, as a whole United States treated us very very nicely. Someone say, complain this wrong, that wrong. Well, certain place wrong, but as a whole my idea, they treated... well they should because I'm not enemy see. But first they treated me as an enemy, earlier. But I must say they treated us really nice. Some Japanese they don't like the way I say it but this is a true fact. I cannot hide. I cannot tell lies, you know. So as a whole, they treated their prisoner, more like, very nicely. Maybe you don't like it to?

Q: No...

A: They wanted us to say, "Oh they're so mean." something...

Q: I just want you to tell me your experiences.

A: Tell my truth. Some might say, damn Goda, he is tell something. Well, the one who criticize me go ahead, but I tell the truth. They were really nice. We could do anything, Japanese school, teaching, everything, they allowed us to do you know. That's why, except Wailuku, I didn't have any complaint. In fact it was, in fact thankful the way they treated, in Honolulu too. I went to but something. They took me out to camp and when... oh, I think... the man here he was in camp too... same place. He's Oriental.

Q: O.K., well thank you very much.

A: Is that uh?....

Q: Yes Mr. Goda, that's a...

A: I guess you didn't like the way I said I guess.

Q: No, it's fine. It's fine.

A: Do you think so?

Q: Yes.

Harry Urata #84

May 9, 1985

Q: Mr. Urata, what did you do for a living before the War?

A: Before the War I was a attending school, high school in fact.

Q: Which school were you going to?

A: Uh, I was attending Mid-Pacific Institute.

Q: What year were you in there?

A: That was last year, Senior year.

Q: What were you doing on December 7th, 1941, on the day Oahu was attacked?

A: Well, I was in that same school, Mid-Pac, uh... I think I was... that's in 1941, so I was a sophomore or... I don't remember, a sophomore or freshman, you know. So that was 19... because I was picked up by FBI in '43, in April.

Q: Where were you when the attack started on December 7th?

A: When?

Q: On that day, do you remember that day?

A: Yes, yes, no that was Sunday. I still remember that clearly because I was washing my face and brushing my teeth and then somebody, my classmate, came to me, said, "I think we are, you know, attacked by enemy plane or something, you know, at War, you know." So I was so surprised and I said, "No, cannot be." I said. So, but "Come and look outside!" So from you know, where that Mid-Pac you know, old building used to be. If you go up the roof, you can see Pearl Harbor side. So I went up the roof and sure enough, the black smoke. So, and somebody had the radio on, says, the announcer was telling that Oahu is under enemy attack or something like that, see.

Q: What did you folks do that day?

A: That day, commotion and oh... everybody going here and there, and somebody said, "Well, we better go home, you know?" Because at that school we are in a dormitory and so they wanted to go home. Then Sunday, we... about 7:50 in the morning, about 7:55 and we have to go to chapel. This is a Christian school and they didn't know what to do. But anyway after that I don't remember too well, but all kind of news are going on. Some said, enemy landed already you know, Kanehoe or someplace you know. So, they were really...

Q: Sounds like a lot of confusion.

A: Confusion, yes.

Q: So, how did that change your life then? Did they have black outs?

A: Oh, black outs, yeah.

Q: What was that like?

A: I think first night, even that authority, they didn't know what to do I think, you know. So I think some people you know, they just put their car lights on and they are... I think they are driving you know? They don't know what to do, so... But anyway, and I heard somebody who was telling some Japanese soldier had landed already and put poison in the water reservoir, yeah. So don't drink water (laughter). I still remember that, you know, don't you ever drink, you know, water.
After that well, I think, if I'm not mistaken, that day.... that night I don't remember but, from next day on or something like that... curfew (8:00 curfew) and black out.

Q: Did that mean you had to be off the streets by 8:00?

A: Oh yes, yes, yes.

Q: What would happen to people that they caught on the streets?

A: I think they got tickets or something. Anyway they, the police arrest them or something like that.

Q: When were you first picked up by military government?

A: I was uh... see after that while anyway, well school was going on as usual and then I remember year of 1943. I don't remember exact day but end of March or so, because I still remember I took the test for UH and I passed the test and I thought I'm going to UH you know?
Then, uh, I was in a class, and I still remember that. One lady teacher, Miss Aperholten(?) was teaching us American democracy. Then principal, Mr. Baken(?) came and said, "Harry, come out." you know? So I went out from the class. Then he told me, "You come with me to the office." Then here the two FBI men was waiting for me.

Q: What did they tell you?

A: "You Harry Urata?" I said, "Yes." "You are under arrest." They gave me this. You read this.

Q: Did they tell you why?

A: No, well it says in the paper already, but that word immin...I'm not sure...

Q: Inimical?

A: Yeah, inimical to the safety of the United States or

something like that.

Q: Did anybody ever tell you what you did or why you were considered inimical?

A: No, no. I thought, well at first I thought you know I was teaching(??) before when I came back from Japan in 1937. Uh, I taught Japanese language school for two years. So, well, War started, 1941, December 7, and after that lots of this Japanese language school teacher and principal, Buddhist priests, and those people went inside camps. So I thought well, maybe next time they're going to come and pick my up, you know? Because I was teaching at my Japanese language school in, I had education in Japan.

Q: Where did they take you first?

A: The immigration station... no, no, wait, wait, wait, no, I think they took me to uh... where is that, I think downtown, Dillingham Building? Do you know where? Yes, up there, that FBI office I think second floor I think. They questioned me.

Q: What kind of questions did they ask?

A: Oh, all kinds. Some silly questions. Say, if, if, if, if Japan and Japanese you know come here, land this Island, what you going to do. You going to help, or something like that, and they brought picture of Emperor and Empress, said they're going to watch me, what I'm going to do (laughter). And they said, "Who this?" and I said, "Emperor of Japan and Empress of Japan" you know those things.

Q: How long did they keep you there?

A: Uh, about... the interrogation lasted about hour or so, hour or hour and a half. But they were nice though, very nice, very gentlemen like.

Q: Where did they take you after that?

A: No, I think they released me that time. Just the second time I think. They came again.

Q: How much later?

A: About a week or so. Then this time, they said, "You just come with us." you know, two of them. So they took me to immigration station.

Q: What was it like there?

A: First just like they... you just like criminal or something, you know, they put that number over here?

Q: Oh, on your chest?

A: Yes.

Q: With the sign?

A: Yeah, sign and you know they take picture from front, side, and with that number hanging down. After that they going to check what your belonging. But you don't have anything because they don't even give you a chance to go up, you know, your room, and get your belongings, like toothpaste or toothbrush and those things; just no time at all.

Q: How long did they keep you at the immigration station?

A: For my case, I think.... gee, I don't remember, but I think a week or so.

Q: Did they question you some more there?

A: No, nothing there, nothing there.

Q: What was the conditions like that they kept you in there?

A: You mean in the immigration station? Oh boy, lots of people. Those who like to smoke, they cannot smoke see? They don't have cigarette and they don't give you any cigarette; and even toilet paper too.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. So we had hard time, and uh... I remember one guy named Mr. Sato, he used his head because the guard was reading the newspaper and he can talk English and told that guard "How about we like to see newspaper sometime." So he says "Can I read?" and he got the newspaper and somehow we use that for toilet paper for awhile.

Q: Were you in a cell there? Was it a...

A: Not cell. One very wide room with a bed.

Q: Oh, I see. How many people did they keep in one room?

A: About 10 or 15.

Q: After you spent a week there in immigration station, where did they send you next?

A: To Honouliuli.

Q: To Honouliuli?

A: Yes, because at that I think you know, first, Sand Island, I think the Sand Island closed down; I think early part of end of March, 1943. After that they moved to Honouliuli.

Q: What kind of place did you live in then at Honouliuli?

A: Just a regular Army barracks, yeah. Eight people on shack and two bed, like that, you know, up and down.

Q: What was the food like over there?

A: Oh good, very good. We had, as far as food was concerned we had... only thing, we like to eat more Japanese food you know? But that's Army food so we stay exchange, I remember, with rice, with... We had the Army camp below you see. Then our mess of people use to exchange rice with potato or something and some things that we don't like, we used to exchange.

Q: Were you allowed to write letters and receive letters there?

A: Yes, but sometime lots of holes there... censored.

Q: What about visits?

A: Visits, once a week, uh... Sunday. But if you don't cooperate with authority, for instance, if you don't clean the toilet or you know, if you don't uh, for instance, some people don't go out for what you call, in the morning when they raise the flag... What you call that?

Q: Colors?

A: Reverie, in the morning, yeah. Sometime about three or four people they don't go out you know, then they not allow that meeting... I mean the Sunday privilege going to be taken away, so maybe once a month or so, once you know, in two weeks or so.

Q: When you were out there at Honouliuli, did you... what did you do to keep busy? Did you have a job?

A: Oh right, myself, I wasn't so bad because I was single. I felt very sorry for those who have family outside you know? Like myself, I was single and I like to read books like that you know? And those first.... we didn't have to many Japanese books, but while I was there in Honouliuli, I remember one day we had lots of books by Japanese government through Red Cross and even miso too.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yes. All those things, and uh...so for especially older people, those who cannot read English, you know they used to read all these books and those who can read English you know, what you call, that Sunday when the family come to see them, they can bring newspaper, whatever they like to read; no limit. And uh, I love to play guitar, so I asked my mother to bring guitar. After that, every day I practiced guitar.

Q: Did you organize any kind of musical groups there?

A: No, I remember what I did was I thought even inside the camp, I thought it's better to do something worthwhile you know? So I went to that warden office and I said is it alright to you know, get one place so that we can study English? We had somebody, a graduate from mainland college over here, you know, they're good in English. So they used to teach us English. At first only

about 10 or 15 people were studying and after that only men, Mr. Kawazoi(?) only two continued study that English you know.

Q: Was each of the people there at Honouliuli, each person assigned a job to do?

A: Well that's all voluntarily, you know? That's up to you, because I think... what I heard is we not prisoner of War so you know, kind of lenient you know. They said, for your health, if you think you like to do little work and it's up to you. So some people who I know, old folks, they like to raise vegetables, you know, so they go out with a guard and they used to raise vegetable at the center. They can make Japanese, what do you call, pickles, like that?

Q: Oh, skimono?

A: Yeah skimono, yes. Even at mess hall too, sometime they used to cook for us Japanese style things you know?

Q: You know, were a lot of the people uh, feel bitter or angry?

A: Yeah, some of them, yes, yes, yes.

Q: How did you feel, you know, being a young man, being pulled out of school?

A: That, even now I thought well gee, even if I didn't pull me, I had better chance because those days when I was attending school, I had really fight to study you know, really... and uh, I wanted to go through with all this study you know, and if possible I like to go to mainland college and master, especially English. I had really urge to study in those days. So, but since they put me in there, all those things there you know, uh... I couldn't do it and you only talk Japanese inside there, because of more Nici people over there and Orkibe(??) like me, myself.

Q: How were you treated by the guards?

A: Oh, yeah, guards uh.... some guards just came from mainland like that. They don't know. That's the first time they see Japanese you know. They think, oh, Japanese, only good Jap a dead Jap or something like that you know. So they had some kind of, that kind of idea so like some... I remember I fought with one guard too myself, because you know work detail they cannot force us to work you know? But this guard, young guard, from Texas or someplace and I said, "When we tire and sit down?" He said, "Come one you folks get up and work!" all that you know, just like he likes to shoot us or something like that, you know?

Q: Was he holding his rifle at you?

A: Yeah, holding his rifle
at us. So I told him "If you like to shoot go ahead." you know. But I know he cannot shoot so... but I said, "You know you not supposed to do that. You think you areright? If you are right

let's go to warden office." you know. So all those things but after that they you know...fought us after that. And some guards are really very good men. They ask me, "How come you're here?" you know. So I said,"We're under suspicion I think." you know, and my brother in fact now in US Army, my own brother. You know, my own brother. But you know, I mean he said, "What!" (laughter) He said, "That's funny." and uh... So, but, as a whole, I think we didn't have too much trouble in there.

Q: Do you remember, who was the camp commander?

A: From what I know that warden, the Lt.... I remember Lieutenant, Name was Burger(?), Lt. Burger we used to call, and oh one Sergeant... Sgt. Loveless. He was a really, really nice guy.

Q: What did he do for folks there?

A: Well, he take care of us, and sometime, for instance, if you like something you know, for instance tofu, or something like that, Japanese food, and well he go out and get those things you know. And even I talk to other people the other time he said you know when you go to work detail and he showed the place that's getting lots of mango like that, you know? So we go pick the mango that's ripe already, so... (laughter)

Q: Did they allow you folks to bring mangos back to camp with you?

A: Yes, yes, or papaya....yes. So... because they know that lots of them they know that we're you know, Hawaiian people you know, born here, or Nisei people they have a home here. That's one reason too I think, they're not so... we're not treated so bad. And one time, same barrack, about eight people. One day, that was as soon as I got in there, one old man, he holding one letter. I said, "From War Dept." I asked what happened you know. He said their son was killed in action in Italy. He was telling and he said, "Why my son is in Italy killed in action. Why I got to stay over here!" you know. So I thought it's so funny, you know. What is this you know? Of course he got released but....

Q: That's really sad. Ironic...

A: And another thing is, I had over here some kind of a .... anyway I need a operation you know.

Q: In you neck?
A: I don't know, something was formed over here... gland.

A: In your mouth there.
A: Mouth there... and we had Dr. Uchida you know, internee doctor who was treating the minor things. But operations, he not allowed to do. So that guard took me to Ewa, that station hospital and there War time so that War was going on in South Pacific. So lots of wounded soldiers line up you know. But two guards took me to that place that they're going to take out that something for me... gland. Well, I was talking to a guard and

the guard was talking to me in English and all these soldiers say, "Hey this Japanese prisoner I think must be officer because he speaks English." (laughter) and then I went inside that place that you know just like dentist like because that surgery going to be over here you know. And I sat down and I think one Major and a Captain. were there and the Major said, "How come your name is Harry?" So I said, "I'm American citizen by birth. I was born here, Honolulu." and he said, "What?" He asked me, he said, "Then how come you in there?" (laughter) So then he turn around to the Captain, he said, "Don't you think that's funny, this guy Harry is American citizen and why he gotta be in that camp?" you know. And uh... and they were talking and then I told that Major, "Yeah, if fact in the US Army." "Really?", he was surprised.

Q: So a lot of those soldiers didn't know?

A: Oh, they didn't know. They didn't know. They didn't know, especially the mainland soldiers, they didn't know. Yeah, but that camp in there I don't think that's a real mistreated like that though. It was really I think too... what I think, alright, and whenever we had time, especially this Nisei people, they make there nice garden you know, in front of the shack you know? And everyone that, from that uh Army side, they used to comment, "Look at the garden. How you folks do all this nice stuff." you know. Japanese are good at all of those things, you know garden making you know. So, and uh... and so... not uh, bad in there for me, but I still think those who have a family then, they had hard time.

Q: Yeah, it must have been a big strain.

A: Yeah, because I know one fellow, if I know the name.... Kubasan(?), yes, the day before he was normal and in the morning he was walking say, "Hey, how are you! Good morning! How are you Kubasan!" He looked straight and he walked so I thought what is you know man, even he doesn't answer me you know. Sure enough, he went Kanehoe.

Q: Did he have a family?

A: Family, of course, yes.

Q: Probably worried about what was going to happen to him.

A: Worried, yeah worried.

Q: O.K., well, do you have anything else?

A: What you like to know about?

Q: Well, just anything else you can remember about Honouliuli.

A: Honouliuli. Oh, there, that's right, they didn't have any trouble you know. Only thing, sometime the young internees (Japanese word) they had strike like that, you know, small strike.

Q: What did they...

A: They said they don't want to clean latrine and all that.

Q: What did they do, just...

A: No, they don't come out from that shack.

Q: They stayed in the barrack?

A: Yeah, barracks, and I still remember that our commander you know, Mr. Sumida, all by himself, he was cleaning it. Then we are Captain under him and no good you know, commander doing all that dirty work. So we all helped. So after that, we lectured those young internees.

Q: Did the guards know anything about what was happening there? Did the guards know that the guys were on strike?

A: I don't think so because that was in the morning, and they don't come around you see. They don't come around, only morning and what do call it, when they turn off the lights time, yeah?

Q: Lights out?

A: Yeah, lights out time. So... they didn't have any riot or all of those things you know. Very quiet over there was.

Q: When were you finally let out?

A: No, no, I was so... I remember that uh, they had uh, rehearing or something like that at that time. Colonel or Captain you know, the big shots, they came and said, "Go out, they going to close down over here." But we hard head you see because now they say go out. They going to release us you know. So we said, "No, No, we don't want to go out yet."

Then 69 of us, those who didn't go out at that time, they sent us to Tule Lake, during the War. That was next about '44, next year. You know, I was interned in '43 and '44; one year I stayed over there. So what I'm sorry was no way scary (??) And one time on the ship, the ship stopped you know, and all these soldiers said, "Hey, your cousin came." something like that. You know, I think submarine or something. But that was a false alarm I think. So we went to Seattle, Washington after that went to Tule Lake. Tule Lake is right by the border of Oregon and California.

Q: Must have been cold there in winter huh?

A: When we reached there, yeah, we were shivering, because we had only on our shirt. Yes, and I remember when we reach Tule Lake, lots of this West Coast people were there already. Oh, that was the biggest, I think, relocation center. I think about more than 10,000 people were there. But they didn't.... right away they didn't put in with them you know. They put in, you know, 69 or us, they put us in a stockade and they watched two months what we going to do.

So... (laughter) that's a funny story but so they let you but some kind of belonging you know, some cigarette, or candy, or whatever it is you know, and my tank came so I went to that Canteen, you know inside that big relocation center, they have you see, each block, canteen, small store like. I went there, first time I saw young girls. When I ... all the things I bought everything at the window (laughter). I was so excited. I still remember that (laughter). That's almost 2... 3 years I didn't see girls.

Q: That's a long time.

A: Yeah, so, but I found out if you in that condition, you have to have some kind of hobby you know. Then the thing gonna help you out. Myself, I like playing guitar, you know, music. I like to read books and all that. That help a lot.

Q: O.K. thank you.

A: Oh, I don't know...

Charles Eckhert #89
July 15, 1985

Q: Mr. Eckhert, why don't you tell me, first of all, if you would, about the daily routine, and your duties just prior to December 7th 1941.

A: Well my duty was to see that planes were available for flying, physically, and mechanically from the area of operations.

Q: What was your position with the 11th Bomb Group?

A: Well, with the 11th Bomb Group, I was an S-4 and I was also attached to the 18th Bomb Wing as S-4; dual position.

Q: I see. What were you doing on December 6th?

A: On December 6th, I had just returned from Kauai where we were establishing a bombing range out to sea; anchored targets. I came back for the purpose of visiting and watching the Shrine football game. However, as we came into Hickam Field, General Rudolph requested that I come and see him in his office, at which time he told me that he received a message from Washington, that we should prepare for defense against attack by sabotage. And that meant that all our planes which were in dispersed areas had to be taxied in to tight formation positions along in the hangar area where could be guarded by the men against attack. This was done.

Q: About how many planes all told did that involve for you?

A: Off hand I don't remember. That's going back 40 some odd years.

Q: What types of planes?

A: We had some B-18's mainly, a couple of B-17's, and some odds and ends.

Q: What kind of a plane was a B-18?

A: A B-18 was a converted DC-3 I believe it was, into a medium bomber.

Q: Was it generally a satisfactory sort of airplane?

A: No, I wouldn't say it was. It wasn't built to carry a heavy load of bombs or a big load of gas; accomplish long missions.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of December 7th?

A: I was out waiting for Ted Truman to begin.... Ted Landon, [*Major*]Truman [*H.*] Landon, to bring in a flight of B-17's from the West Coast. As they approached the field off Diamond Head, they were intercepted by Japanese planes and they did manage to make their

way to Hickam Field and other places around the Island where the flight scattered and found landing places.

Q: Where were you waiting for Major Landon?

A: At the headquarters building at the tower.

Q: When did you first notice that something out of the ordinary was happening? What first attracted your attention?

A: Well, the approach of these planes which was out of the ordinary for a Sunday morning and we were just dumb-founded. What are those clowns doing up there! The Navy playing around?... we all thought, you know. And pretty soon you could see the firing started and some machine gun fire, dropped the dive bombers, hitting the ships in Pearl Harbor. They attacked at Hickam Field, and they did a lot of damage there. Found out the barracks for the enlisted men, found out the fire house, and they did drop some bombs on our baseball diamond. That was due to the fact that under the original plans at Hickam Field, the gasoline tanks were to be buried under the baseball diamond. The plans were changed but the Japs knew about that original plan.

Q: When did you first realize that it was a Japanese attack and not Navy planes?

A: Well, as soon as the action started.

Q: I see. Did you see them bombing... actually dropping bombs on the hangars and...

A: Yeah...you know, when something happens like that, it's all split second. You don't have any second thoughts and you just do what you can, and there wasn't much you could do with the start. But our men did get into action, those that got out of the burning barracks, and we did receive a supply of machine guns, which were set up by the men. And when the second attack came along, we were pretty well prepared to fire on them at that time.

Q: Did they manage to shoot any of them down?

A: No, there was one shot down at the far end of our field at Fort Kamehameha. That's the only one that hit the air field.

Q: I see. What did you do during the attack?

A: During the attack, I got myself a pad and a pencil and started checking over the planes to see what damage had been done to them; that was after the first attack. Then they came right back again shortly after and I made a record of all the damage done to all the planes, and immediately picked up crews to do whatever repairs was necessary to get whatever planes we could ready for flight.

Q: I see. Of the 11th Bomb Group planes that you worked on, about how many were you able to get ready for flight?

A: Well, I couldn't tell you off hand right now. I made it as a matter of record but it's my memory going back 40 years, you know, 45 years, its...

Q: Did any of them actually manage to take off that day?

A: We got one or two off the ground.

Q: Do you recall what their missions were?

A: Well they were to search the area, particularly for submarines.

Q: Did they send back any reports?

A: None that were worth any value.

Q: You know, while you saw all of this unfolding in front of you, what were your feelings at the time? or your thoughts?

A: (laughter) It's unexplainable.

Q: Uh huh.

A: We were too damn busy to stop to think.

Q: I see.

A: You just run here and run there, and somebody would call you here, how about this, how about that, and what'll we do, you know.... things like that.

Q: Sounds like it was...

A: Hectic!

Q: pretty hectic.

A: It was hectic.

Q: Yeah. What's your single most vivid memory of the December 7th attack? If there's any one thing that's engraved in your mind, uh....

A: Well, that's another hard question. There were so many things happening and so many different things. I saw a fellow waking under shock holding his stomach... open, and holding his stomach like that.

Q: My goodness.

A: You saw everything happen that day. The headquarters squadron, 11th Bomb Group had 211 some odd men killed or wounded. This is the headquarters squadron.

Q: Gee, how come so many men from just the one squadron?

A: Well, it just so happened they were available and got to it.

Q: Well, do you have anything to add that you think might be of interest to...

A: Well, that's about the whole thing as it wound up.

Q: Well then I thank you.

A: You're welcome.

Benjamin Heal #90
July 15, 1989

Q: Mr. Heal, why don't you start off by telling me when did you first go into the Army?

A: Well, I went down and enlisted, and at that time you could pick a job from the board. In other words, there were enough jobs with the numbers and you pick out where you wanted to go, and I picked out the ordinance at Hickam Field, and that was April of 1941.

I went over on the Washington to Hickam. That was the first trip that the Washington had made through the Canal up to San Francisco and then into Hawaii. And we had our training at Hickam Field.

And then about (to get on with it), about a week before Pearl Harbor Day, December the 7th, we maneuvers; what we would call maneuvers. We had our guns out and we placed guns around and loaded sand bombs. And our particular job, one of them, was to load a sea(c)going barge that was supposed to go to the Philippines. We loaded it with about... well I don't know how many million rounds of .50 and .30 caliber ammunition, and 300 and 500 lb. bombs.

Q: You mentioned sand bombs. What's a sand bomb?

A: Well, a sand bomb is a... for practice. It's a sheet metal bomb that when it's empty it doesn't weigh... it weighs only a few pounds, and it's got tail fins on it, and in the tail there's a 3-lb. charge of black powder. But you fill the container with sand and so that when it comes out of the bomb rack, it comes down and it's armed, and when it hits the target, the black powder makes a big plume of smoke which black powder does. It's not very... as far as explosives, it is explosive but not in the terms of a bomb. So they used those for targets.

Q: What kind of targets did they use?

A: Well, they used to go out and practice bomb on the *Utah*. They'd come down and practice on that with these bombs and then also practiced off between Hickam Field and John Rogers Field. That was a civilian field. Well, they wouldn't do any damage as far as the damage unless they hit something that wasn't structurally sound or if it hit a person.

Q: You mentioned the barge that was loaded up with ammunition and explosives....

A: Yeah, well, we loaded that up, when I say so-called maneuvers, I don't thing you would actually call them maneuvers but that's a get ready or whatever you want to call it, and we were loading the ammunition and bombs for the Philippines. It was a sea-going barge and that was anchored, or tied up at the end of our Hickam Field, which is at the entrance of Pearl Harbor.

Then there was the HAD hangar, which is the Hawaiian Air Depot hangar, that they assembled planes and worked on engines. Any planes that came in from the states, we'd assemble then there; put the wings on them and work on them and that we right alongside where this barge was tied up.

And December the 7th, they bombed the HAD hangar. In fact, I think they even put torpedoes in that, and they would fly right down almost through the rigging of this sea-going barge. But as far as I know they never hit it. I don't even think they strafed it. I'm not sure but I don't think they did. If they'd have blown that up, I don't know what would have happened to the entrance ... whether it would have harmed the entrance to Pearl Harbor or not. I don't know that much about it.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of the attack... uh, when the attack started?

A: Well, usually I used to walk over to Pearl Harbor and I'd take a picket boat out to get on a boat, on a ship, and have breakfast, because they had baked beans on Sunday for breakfast, and we never got baked beans, and I like them.

So, but that morning, it happened that another fellow and I were going to take a trip around the Island, so I didn't go over to Pearl Harbor. And while I was waiting for him to get up, and get ready, I heard these strange motors that I didn't recognize and I went over and looked out the window and I saw these ... I'm not sure whether it was three planes or four planes. It seemed to me, as I remember it now, it was three planes in a formation, and one plane was off to the... would be to the right and further back.

Then as I was watching them I saw these bombs come out from underneath them and I told the fellow, I said, "Look, they're bombing the *Utah*, right in the Harbor!" and about that time, when they hit, then I saw the red, looked like red rust, or it could have been dust from misses. By then all smoke and fire and pieces flew all over everything. And then those planes seemed to come down while I was watching, they came down and lost altitude, and then more planes came in from the same direction, smaller planes...

Q: Which direction was that?

A: Well, it... trying to think of whether it was... it was from the mountains. They came in; there was... they were burning sugar cane that same morning and they came in as far as I could see, the first ones came in from the mountains end of Pearl Harbor.

In other words it would be the same, almost the same direction as our entrance route into Hickam; almost the same entrance, or the same line as our runways would be. And battleship row was in the same, as I remember, it was in the same line. And that's.... they came in from that direction over from mainland, over Ford Island, and then swung out toward Barbers Point and then swung back over the land and that's when they would come in and strafe Hickam Field; bomb and strafe it. And then, let's see, uh..

Q: What did you do during the attack?

A: Well, during the attack, we all got together, and ran out. We had bomb trucks and trailers, which we were all assigned to as crews. And we ran out and loaded... and we went down and got guns and ammunition. And while the attack was going on, some B-17's were landing in from the mainland. And we went out with this ammunition and bombs to try and load them. We thought that's what we were supposed to do. We didn't know we were supposed to get out of there until the attack was over. So our whole ordinance... whole Company was out running around the runway, with our bomb trucks and trailers.

Q: From what you were telling me a few minutes ago, it sounded like you were looking.... you looked pretty conspicuous.

A: Yeah, well at that time all of your trailers and bomb trucks, all of your bombs, and everything was painted yellow. Uh that was to show that it was dangerous and could be explosive or anything like that. And not realizing it, every plane that we went up to, why the Japs would come down and strafe the plane. Of course we'd grab everything off that we could and put it back on the truck and go to another one.

Our trucks were capable of... they were Ford trucks and they were half-ton, I guess you would call them half-ton trucks with a crane over the back end; something similar to a wrecker. That was to lift the bombs up and they were capable of doing about 90 mph. And I thing that's what we were doing that day, as fast as we could go, and missing the craters. And at first, of course, there weren't too many craters, but later there was.

We... when the attack was over, we went down to our bomb dump and we set up camp down near our bomb dump in the woods, and we wouldn't be conspicuous down there because of the trees. And then that evening or that night, they wanted to know if anybody knew anything about communications, and I told my commanding officer, I said, "Well I set up the bell system in a small hotel when I was a kid, bell-hopping in the summer." "Well," he said, "come on with me. We're going to put a command post out near the runway for communications."

Well we started that and it got darker and everybody started shooting at us, so we crawled back and off of where we were and got back in the woods again until morning to do it. Then we dug a hole out there and put a .... we got the .... telephone equipment from the Signal Department and that's where we had our communication system out there, under ground.

Well, there wasn't anybody in our Company that was... that got hit. We had a lot of close ones and everything but none of our Company, even though we were all out on the ramp running around, none of us got hit.

Q: Which Company was that?

A: 482nd Ordinance. We had the 482nd Ordinance and the 481st Ordinance. They were two aviation ordinance companies. That's the two companies that were together that I was with, but I was in the 482nd.

Q: What rank were you at the time?

A: I was a Private. Yeah, at that time, why you didn't get any raise or anything for quite a while and I'd only been there, well, about 9 months. So that wasn't much time to do it and they didn't hand out ranks very good before the War. After the War, then you stepped right up. But then you didn't... I don't know.... well, I'll tell you, the... of course they were all kind of rumors; everything was rumors.

Q: I can imagine.

A: And they had rumors that the reason they were burning the sugar cane up there, they said they had arrows pointed in the sugar cane, pointing to where the planes were supposed to go. Well, I thought that was kind of foolish because I figured the Japs knew where everything was anyhow. They need arrows to point, and then they said that they had sabotaged the water. Well most of the water pipes were broken anyhow, or a good many of them were, but they said that they had sabotaged the water and we weren't allowed to drink water.

So after everything was over, the first attack, while the attack was over, I took a bomb truck down to what we call "Snake Ranch"; it's the beer place and it was all banged up and hit and everything was bad around there. So I went in and got cases of beer and cases of soda to drink and I also got cigarettes for the fellows and brought them back. The ice cream was all melting by that time. But there was no... we didn't have anything to eat or drink for I don't know how long. It seemed when I .... at the time, it seemed like the attack took all day, but actually it was only like a couple hours, but uh...

Q: Longest two hours you ever spent probably.

A: Yeah, it seemed like it was all day. You lost all track of time. You lost all track of everything. But as far as I know, as far as December the 7th, that's about what I remember.

Q: Well, thank you. I appreciate your sharing your time and your memories.

A: Mmmhmm, yes.

Lester Williams #92
July 15, 1985

Q: Mr. Williams, when did you first join the Army?

A: July... middle of July, '39.

Q: '39? And how did you come to be in the [*Army*] Air Corps?

A: Well, I was out of a job and I actually wanted to go to Alaska and they only wanted PS men to go to Alaska so they said, how about going to Hawaii in the Army Air [*Corps*], at that time. So I said, O.K.

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: What's that?

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: Oh, we got here about October, '39.

Q: What were your duties here at Hickam?

A: I was a crew chief, mechanic crew chief.

Q: In the 11th Bomb Group?

A: Yeah.

Q: Which squadron?

A: 26[*th*] Bomb Squadron.

Q: What kind of planes did you fly in?

A: Well, B-18's mostly. We got some 17's in just before War started, not too many of them.

Q: How would you compare the B-18 to the B-17?

A: Well, there was not really any comparison. Uh 17's a 4-engine job, B-18 was a 2-engine job. It was old. It was obsolete. Of course, the 17 I guess was getting obsolete by the time they got them over. The airplanes go, by the time they get them out to the field, why they're obsolete I guess.

Q: What would a typical work day for you be like, before the December 7th attack?

A: Oh I'd get up around... I guess they rolled us at around 6:00 in the morning for role call and then you went to chow. Then probably around 7:45 you lined up, marched off to you work detail, which would be down the hangar from me. Then you preflight your airplane, or whatever was going on, if there was any maintenance why preform the maintenance.

Q: What kind of work did you know when you preflight an airplane?

A: Oh, drain the 'sumps', drain the gasoline sumps, wipe the oil off the props, put oil on the props the night before,(corrosion control) and run them up, run the engines up and check them out, kick the tires and all that sort of stuff, make sure the struts was up and check the control sources; look the whole plane over you know.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of the 7th when the Japanese attack began?

A: I was sleeping. I'd been out late the night before. You want to hear the whole...

Q: Sure, the whole thing.

A: Well, we had been on maneuvers, see, previous to this, and we came off maneuvers Friday night, Friday afternoon, brought the airplanes in, cleaned them up a little bit, and lined them up and secured them for the night.

Next morning we was relieved, off... on pass, and that was the first time we'd had off since pay day. We got paid on the 1st, but we didn't get any pass because we was on maneuvers. So it was first time since pay day we got to town.

Me and a couple of buddies went down. University of Hawaii was playing I believe it was S. Calif, at a football game. So we took that in. And then there was some kind of a Hawaiian show and dances, hula dances and stuff, in conjunction with the football game. So then we went out and had some chow and proceeded to do a little drinking. Used to go down the Kau Kau Corner and bought sit-ups and drink some good old Seagram-Seven.

So we stayed up pretty late, In fact we... it was a... let's see, radio stations generally went off around 10:00. They went off the air, but they stayed on the air, and they were on I don't know, I guess it was on until we finally went to bed. So we fooled around until about midnight and then we got some chow, came back to the barracks and went to bed.

So next morning they woke us up with a whole lot of noise. At first we thought it was a post artillery. Every once in a while they'd go on maneuvers or something; fire them big coastal guns and shake you out of bed. They generally didn't do it in the day time. They had to do it early in the morning, you know, so we figured they was up to their old tricks.

And then of course we went out of the barracks and saw the planes flying over and we saw the Rising Sun on the insignia and we knew what it was. We made jokes about radio stations being on the air. We said they were sending beams to the Japanese to come in and bomb. And of course we thought it was all a big joke.

I don't actually know why the 'higher-ups' weren't more alert to the feeling because among the enlisted men, why we figured the Japs would be around sooner or later. And so when we woke up Sunday morning, there they were, you know?

Q: What do you remember seeing of the attack?

A: Well, I remember, first thing, we were standing in the doorway of the barracks, two wings like outside on each side of the walk and this guy come strafing up the walk, and you could see the tracers you know? So we stepped back inside the cement doorway and said we better do something about this. So we beat it up to the supply room, got a helmet, gas mask, and a couple of us decided we better go down to the hangars and see how the planes was making out.

These guys was strafing up and down the flight line, creating a lot of ruckus and of course they was bombing Pearl Harbor too, and I saw a guy fly over HAD [*Hawaiian Air Depot*] hangars (big hangars) and supposedly they was built in a curve to where if anything but a direct hit would bounce off. This guy had a torpedo and I don't know, he didn't make any direct hit but she sure went inside and blew the whole thing wide open. Oh I saw the one flight of bombers come over, perfect formation, and the Navy cut loose at them, and I guess they was about 2000 feet below, there ac ac was about 2000 feet below the bombers. Oh we saw planes flying all over there at will you know, because we didn't get any fighters in the air from Hickam. There weren't any there anyhow. So they had quite a field day down there and at Pearl Harbor too I guess.

Q: What were you doing during the attack?

A: Well we went to the hangar and I got a B-18 that I used to crew. We hoped to tug on it and tote it out across the landing field and out into the revetment. Then we came back and picked up a B-17 and took that out. We wanted to get the planes out and off the flight line, out the revetment. A guy, one of them Japs got after us when we was going across the runway and I just got off the tug and run off and when he got through messing around I got back on the tug and continued on. It was kind of exciting there for awhile.

Q: Yeah, I'm sure. What was going through your mind this whole time? How were you feeling?

A: Well, I was feeling I was... I wanted to get out of the way of them bullets mostly and get my airplane in commission. That was about my main thoughts. I wasn't mad at anybody or anything like that you know. Maybe, well I think I was too busy to be scared. I didn't jump and shake my fist at them or anything but when they came in on a strafing run why I lay down on the grass wherever I was and make as small a target of myself as I could.

Q: The next few days after the attack, what did you do during that period?

A: Well I had to get a fuel tank, replace a fuel tank in my plane, and that took most of the night and that was kind of interesting working up there. You had to crawl up in there, and one reason I had the job was I wasn't quite so stout as I am now and I could get up in them little holes. Took you five minutes to crawl up in there with a tank half way in and every fifteen minutes somebody would run by and say, "They're coming back! They're coming back! Get that flashlight out!" and all this and that BS.

Well we finally got the tank in and then they brought some rifles around and told us to guard the airplane. They thought they might make a landing in the dark and come across the swamp out there at the end of the field. So we was out there ready to go and hearing all kinds of noises and... Three planes came in, three Navy planes come over I guess around, I don't know, 9:30, 10:00 and all of Pearl Harbor lit up with bullets and tracers and kitchen sinks and whatever else they was throwing at them (laughter) I don't know. Maybe it was toilet paper.

Q: I guess folks were pretty tense then.

A: What's that?

Q: I guess things were pretty tense then.

A: Oh yeah, they... not that the Navy was any more ticklish than us because some of our boys shot at our B-18's which is... they knew that plane. They knew the silhouette and they had seen them. That's practically all the planes they had ever seen. They still put a few holes in ours when they was coming back. We got some .... couple of three B-18's off and couple of B-17's off that afternoon and gad it was worse trying to get back into the field than it was if they going over.... course they never found the enemy. Yeah, things there was kind of jumpy.

Q: What's the one thing you remember most from December 7th?

A: Well, probably standing there in the doorway and it finally dawned on me that them little red balls bouncing up that sidewalk would hurt quite a bit if they hit you. Of course it was all... that was probably... I remember going by the guardhouse. They blew the corner off that. One of my buddies was in the guard-house, so when they blew the corner off he came out and came down, was helping us fellows out, which was his job. That's... It was almost you know, it was almost too much to have one outstanding...

Q: Well, I appreciate your taking the time to share this with me.

A: Yeah, well I guess this is about the first time I've really.... well this is the first time I've ever talked officially. Not that I mind talking but I just never had the opportunity and as far as newspaper people went, why I had kind of a dim opinion of them. The first time I came home from down this way, a guy met me and even in those days, newspaper people in my opinion weren't too constructive. So this is about the first time. I don't know whether I've contributed anything to...

Q: Sure. You have.

A: ... your situation, but...

Q: Well, you have and I thank you for it.

A: O.K.

Charles James #93
July 15, 1985

Q: Mr. James, let me ask you first, when did you first join the Army?

A: November 3, 1940.

Q: How did you get into the [*Army*] Air Corps?

A: Well, this was right after that, in 1940 they came through with that initial I think it was 12 months training that was going to be required of all young men at that time, and my name was right up there. I was going to be in the next bunch to go into the Army and I... there were three other friends there in the same block there in my home town. We all decided to join the Army Air Corps.
We went down and the only thing open was the Hawaiian Department. So we all joined and a month later we were on Oahu.

Q: So pretty quickly then you got here?

A: Oh yes.

Q: What kind of duties were you first given when you got to Hickam?

A: Just routine maintenance at that time. Uh, Hickam Field was pretty much of a show place and there was a lot of maintenance to be done on the grounds and I was with the lawn mowers and just routine maintenance of the field. Then I went on to mechanics school. Then was assigned to flight line mechanic.

Q: When did you first get assigned to the flight line?

A: Approximately, September 1, 1940.

Q: What sort of airplanes did you work on?

A: We had B-18's and B-17's.

Q: How would you compare the two airplanes?

A: Well the B-18 was nothing more than a DC-3 that had been converted to a bomber, a two-engine airplane; whereas the B-17 was a 4-engine flying fortress. And those that we had were the Model B's and didn't have any tail gunner. It was really a faster ship than the later Model E's and but of course the Model E with the tail gun was more effective in combat.

Q: What was would daily routine be like just say the week or so before the December 7th attack?

A: Well, the daily routine? Well, reveille was at 6 AM and that is six days a week. There was not reveille on Sunday. And of

course you go to breakfast and report back to the flight line. I've forgotten the time really. Seems to me it was around 7:00 and we were usually through and relieved of duty late in the afternoon around 4 or 4:30.

Q: What sort of work would you do in a normal day there as a flight l ine mechanic?

A: Well, we had the routine repairs to make and if there were no repairs, many times I flew with the pilots on the training missions. We had bombing missions. We had a practice bombing up on Kauai and many times they just... it was fun to go on those and watch the bombs and see how close they could come to the targets. But, it was.... oh, there was one other thing, yeah. We had a... what was that called... a ground defense training, where we were trained to use, I don't know, there was about two dozen of us in the squadron assigned to that. We were trained in the use of the old Springfield rifle and bayonets, and machine guns (ground machine guns), .30-caliber and we went through that training. When we finished that we were able to detail strip the guns and put them back together again and we never did fire them, but we had just completed that around the 1st of December.

And then I remember we were put on alert. We had had alerts in the past and whenever in the past, whenever we had an alert, why well everybody was just on 24-hour duty; on the flight line, everyplace, wherever your duty was. But this time it started out the same way, but then finally it just relaxed. But the alert was not called off. But it just went... you know, back to the routine schedule again.

And on Sunday, everybody... I, December 7th, I was just laying there in my bunk reading the newspaper. The newspaper boy came through the barracks every Sunday and that's where I was December 7th when it all started.

Q: What was the first thing that you noticed that let you know that something was happening?

A: Well, we heard those explosions over Pearl Harbor. I was up on the 3rd floor of the barracks. I could see most of Pearl Harbor from the barracks window. I remember hearing some fellow saying, "What do you know! The Navy's having maneuvers on Sunday." and so I walked over there and I saw a big twin-engine biplane coming up after and smoke coming from battleship row, and black smoke, and a lot of it. And I saw this twin-engine biplane and I'd never seen a twin-engine biplane before. I knew it wasn't ours. I was a pretty good student of airplanes at that time. And I couldn't imagine what such an airplane could be. I'd never seen one, and certainly there was nothing in the American Armed Forces with anything like that. I knew something was wrong (laughter).

But I stood there watching it for a few minutes and saw these other airplanes, they were too far away for me to see the insignias on them. But finally two came across at a very low altitude. I'd say no more than 100 feet, right across Pearl Harbor and right across Hickam and within a city block of our barrack, and that's when I recognized the Japanese.... I knew it was a Jap plane. They were both Zekes, Japanese Zekes.

And they bombed one of the hangars and I saw those big hangar

doors blow up just like barrels. One door fell on a sentry walking across there. And that's when everybody cleared out of the barracks. Somebody had a radio on there and (whistle), "Oahu was being attacked by hostile aircraft. Everybody take cover." We weren't.... well, we had no other warning.

Q: What did you do at that point?

A: Well, I wasn't even dressed yet. I went over and got dressed, very hurriedly of course and went downstairs and got outside. Our barracks was a poured cement building and was very strong and I probably would have been better off staying inside.

But I went over near, it was across the street where they were building a new theater, and they had poured the foundation for this theater and had the wall up about three feet. It was about 12 inches thick, pouted concrete, and about 3 feet high or a little less. But I... there wasn't any, I thought were tracks(?). I tried to figure out what we could do.

But most of the activity at that time was over in Pearl Harbor. There wasn't much around. The Jap planes had come down and strafed. You could see their tracers, and I was sitting here on that wall and was thinking about an article that I had read in the Saturday Evening Post about somebody in England who had given advice to people who were in air raids. The thing to do was to get in one safe place and stay there and not move; not to start running around. And I thought, when I looked down that corner, if I got in that corner I would have 12 inches of concrete on two sides of me at least. There wasn't any place you could go underground on Hickam. It was just practically at sea level, and I thought 12 inches of concrete was pretty good protection on two sides of me.

So I stayed right there and more than an hour passed I believe and it seemed to be kind of a lull in the activity. The (axis??) weren't around for awhile and then it all started again. And it was during that second part, after that little lull, that must have lasted 12-15 minutes or maybe longer, that Hickam
really caught it from then on; mainly from high altitude bombers. They were coming from the west in a perfect V-formation. I was admiring their formation.

Q: About how many of them were in a V?

A: Seven. And it looked to me like when the lead plane dropped his bomb, the other six all dropped theirs. Because the bombs... you could see the bombs coming down in a V, and I still think that's the way they did it. Or else he maybe called them on the radio and they all dropped them because they all came down together from all seven airplanes.

And most of them was fragmentation bombs because they didn't make any big craters. The... most of the buildings there were all cement but they really tore big chunks out of the buildings. I mean pieces of cement as big as your head from the side of the building where those fragments of those bombs hit.

And I remember one time I just happened to look up and here was a bomb coming. I thought it was going to hit me between the eyes, and I was sitting on this wall. If I hadn't thought ahead of time about diving down in that corner, I might have gone to the other side because it was kind of coming at an angle. But I went down in that corner and that bomb hit right on the other side and the dirt and rocks and everything came right down on top of me, but I didn't get a scratch. But there was a big crater there on the other side.

And I figured no two bombs are going to hit in the same spot. So I jumped over the wall into that crater which was about three feet deep and that was, I was below ground level and would escape those fragmentation bombs. And that's where I stayed the whole rest of the... until it was all over.

Q: What was going through your mind during all that time? How were you feeling?

A: Well, I was, all the time I was thinking where could I get a weapon and what could I do to combat these guys, especially at low level. You could do that with small arms but there was just wasn't any. We were so ill prepared and we had no live ammunition around that anybody could get to.

There was I remember, two fellows in my squadron, did break down the door in the armament training school, which was about a block away, and they managed to get an old water-cooled machine gun out of the school there. And it had some ammunition and they had that set up out there in that baseball diamond and were firing that. But as far as I know, that's the only gun I know that I heard of anybody getting out, was that old gun that was in that school.

Q: What was the aftermath of the attack like? What did you do after the attack was over?

A: Well, let's see. I don't think I did much of anything. I mean I remember I helped one fellow who was wounded. We had a new hospital there in Hickam. I don't think they had even opened it yet. But it was open when I helped this one man who had... he was bleeding badly from his side and I put his arm up over my shoulder and walked him all the way over there. It was about two blocks away. I got him inside the door and those nurses grabbed him right away and started, I don't know, what they did because I turned around and left.

But I know there were a few cars there in the parking lot across from the barracks that were burning. The fire station down on the corner was burning and the fire trucks were burning inside the station there. Because one of my friends lived above the fire station there. There was also the MP [*Military Police*] station above the fire station, and Fred was in the MP's and I was wondering how he made out. Finally, it was several days before I found him.

But that night I remember I slept in a car with somebody. We stayed out of the barracks. They passed the word around for everybody to stay out of the barracks.

Q: Why was that?

A: I don't know. It was.... things were just too disorganized at the time. I do remember after it got real dark that night, suddenly somebody, I don't whether it was in Pearl Harbor or in Hickam but somebody fired a machine gun and I think every machine gun on that end of Oahu started firing, because the sky just lit up with tracers just like the 4th of July and I think it was just a couple of our Navy planes coming in for a landing. They thought they were Japs, or what it was, but they weren't taking any chances.

But I don't even remember what I did the next morning really, because that day, the previous day, the day before, we had had aircraft inspection out on the flight line and of course all the airplanes had to be lined up in perfect rows and that's the way they were December 7th; perfect targets.

And well I don't know how many survived if any did that were on that flight line. I'm not sure any did because the next day, it was the first time that I had ever seen a B-17E and they had been coming in right during the raid from the States. And they were all painted in olive drab, War time paint jobs. Whereas before all of our airplanes were unpainted with bright shiny aluminum.

And we of course dispersed all the airplanes out through the field beyond the runway so they wouldn't be as good targets. And I was assigned to one of the new B-17E's. That's about all there is to it. I certainly didn't contribute much to defending ourselves against the...

Q: Well, I don't know if there was much of anything anyone could have done.

A: No, that's true (laughter). We were terribly ill-prepared at the time.

Q: Well thank you. I appreciate your giving me some of your time here.

A: That's alright. I just hope I can be of some help. What are you going to do, write a book about December 7th or...

Q: Well... (tape ends)

George Korothy #94
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. Korothy, let me ask you, when did you first join the Army?

A: I joined the Army March 5, 1941.

Q: What brought you into the [*Army*] Air Corps?

A: Well, I enlisted in the [*Army*] Air [*Corps*] and I (laughter) asked For foreign service and I figured that Hawaii was the best place I could go to; the safest place anyway, because the War had already started in Europe and I figured well, Hawaii is a good place to go. So I asked for Hawaii and I got it. They uh... I, like I say, I enlisted and I went to Ft. Slocum, New York for until the boat came in. Then we took a boat from Brooklyn Navy Yard, up around through the Canal, and San Francisco, and then into Hawaii.

Q: What sort of duties were you assigned?

A: Uh, well when we first got to Hawaii we went through recruit training, and all the marching, and the "yes sir", and "no sir", and stuff like that. We were in boot training, I think, for about oh, two weeks or so. Then we were assigned squadrons in the 11th Bomb Group. (telephone)

We were assigned to the 11th Bomb Group and at that time I was assigned to headquarters, and of course I went to AM school and uh..

Q: What's AM?

A: Air mechanics. Uh, then the normal duties.... and about two weeks before the attack, well, we had been on like I said, we went on the red alert, and I had had a Water Safety course up in Aiea. One of the people that own this home up there allowed us the pool and I was instructing water safety uh, at the time. And uh, of course it was a daily thing. Every morning I'd go out to Aiea and have this Water Safety course.

And then during the red alert, uh, I can't remember whether it had been called off or what it was, but naturally everyone was on needles and pins not knowing what was going on because of the alert. And it was normal duties I guess uh... going down the line, and whatever.

Then we uh, the alert was called off Friday, December 5th at 3:00, and naturally it was just like being let out of jail. Everybody wanted to go off to town.

And then, like I say, Sunday morning, well I usually stayed around camp because I like tennis and swimming and stuff like that, and we had plenty of that on the base. And I was waiting for my tennis partner to come up from breakfast that morning. We were supposed to play at 8:00 and at 7:55 that morning we heard bombs... a bomb hit and we thought the Navy was still practice bombing (because during the alert they had done a lot of that practice bombing) not realizing that it was the actual thing

until we saw the HAD hangar go up; get a direct hit. And that went up and everybody knew that it wasn't practice anymore.

And as the Japanese planes came over you could see the markings and not realizing that they were Japanese. We thought that it was Russian planes because of the red circle. Because they have the star but it was real fast and... But then everybody, a few of the fellows said the Japs. And that was it.

And we got strafed pretty well and they were dropping bombs on the line. And they knocked out... I think they hit almost all the hangars and HAD [*Hawaiian Air Depot*] hangar of course, like I said, went up. I think the first thing they hit was the HAD hangar. They must have known exactly where it was because that was their primary target, when they came in.

And of course, the bombs were popping like crazy over at Pearl. We got hit but not as bad as Pearl. Because actually what they went for was the Navy really.

Q: Were there any of the men firing back at Hickam?

A: Yes, we had the .30-caliber Springfields that used in WWI that we went out and took "pot shots" at them. But like (laughter) it was more or less of a reaction than anything else.

And we got hit, the barracks. They came in over the barracks fairly well and strafing and bombing. And the one bomb was practically a direct hit right outside of the barracks. And we all dove into the barracks to get away from it because we saw them coming. And almost all of us made it excepting a few.

A good friend of mine got hit and not realizing that he had been hit I tried to push him inside and my hand got inside of him. He had a hole about the size of a football in his back. Larry Lawrence was his name. And of course I don't think he ever knew what hit him.

And then seeing what they were doing with the barracks we figured maybe we'd be better off if we got out and ran out to the ball-field because they had dug outs on the baseball field. And several of us took off and hit the dug outs and watched from there. It was devastating. They just... they had a field day. Uh, they didn't rush. They took their time. They knew exactly where they were going and what they were doing and it was something that's unforgettable.

It uh... after it was all over we... that was the first attack. We thought that maybe they were gone. But then they came back at about uh... well, they left us about oh, it must have been about 8:30 I think, and they came back again at about 10 with a new all loaded up... I guess it must have been a second flight, whatever, came back in and they finished off what the first flight had started. I think they really worked on Pearl and they hit us again, but not as bad as they did the firstflight.

And of course, from what we understood, had gone up to Schofield Barracks, which is about what, 10 miles away from Hickam or so, and they strafed and they bombed Schofield and Wheeler Field which is adjacent to Schofield. They worked on them and that lasted for about another half hour. Then they just took off. I guess they ran out of bombs and ammo.

But in the mean time some of the pursuits, the pilots up at Wheeler got off and I think there were a couple of them that got... they must have gotten about five or six of them, that I can think of, and that was about the only opposition they had.

And then uh, our B-17's came in later on that same day and in the evening. And of course everybody was on needles and pins not knowing that they were friendly; that they were our 17's. Everybody took "pot shots" at them. But thank God nobody... I don't think we got hit any of our own planes came in.

And it took several days to kind of get over it, but after that it got to

be a joke around the base that if the Japs came in we'd be eating fish heads and rice. But it did a lot for the ... I think if they had thought that they were going to ruin the morale of the [*Army*] Air [Corps], or the Navy, or any part of the Services, I think that was a shot in the arm.

And to this day I still carry a oh, say a vendetta or something against the Japanese. I can't seem to get it out of my mind. And people say, "Oh you should forget about it. It 's been years ago." But it's very easy for people to say that that hadn't been there. And it's, I don't know, maybe in time I'll... it'll taper off a little bit, but as of now, I still feel the same way. I have a, like I said, maybe a personal vendetta. But uh, we learned our lesson and subsequently it proved fruitful as far as I'm concerned. I think they got everything that they should have gotten and I don't know.... I uh... something that I'll never forget.

Q: No, I can imagine. Well, I appreciate your coming by and sharing your experiences with us.

A: Well...

Q: Did you have anything else you wanted to add?

A: Oh no, not really. I uh... I get a little tongue tied sometime when I think about this thing and it's uh... brings back a lot of things that I'd just assume not think about.

Q: O.K. well thank you.

Donald Englund #95
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. Englund, let me start off by asking you, when did you first join the Army?

A: 1940. November of 1940. November 20.

Q: How did you come to be put in the [*Army*] Air Corps?

A: Well I specifically enlisted to go to Hawaii as an Army Air Corps member.

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: December 11, 1940.
Q: So that's almost a year to the day. Almost a year before the attack.

A: Just under a year, yes.

Q: What were your duties?

A: At that time I was working maintenance around the... they had a Base technical school where they were training people for aircraft mechanics and they also had an armament school there. And I had gone through the school and happened to be assigned to an airbase squadron. So that we had no aircraft and they put me over there at the school doing maintenance; general maintenance around there.

Q: On the grounds and that sort of thing?

A: Well, it was not much ground work being done by us. They were like, any lawn mowing and that was done probably by duty rosters. But this was, in fact we have a desk where we would take the varnish off and refinish and do all kinds of things.

Q: I see. What was your daily routine like just before the December 7th attack?

A: Well about two weeks prior to the attack there was some thought I suppose that there would be a lot of sabotage going on in the Islands. They knew that there was something in the air I'm sure. So I happened to be working at the school. In fact they shut down the school; the classes were terminated because of this impending event I guess. Not that anyone mentioned that they thought it would happen but they did suspend the school about two weeks before then. And uh, I had for those two weeks, had carried a side arm. So they were expecting possible trouble with Japanese Nationals living around there I would think was the reason for us being armed.

Q: Was there some kind of intensified guard duty, uh, patrols around the area?

A: Well, they were training a good many people for air... they call it ground defense is what they call these people. They were assigned that duty and they were I suppose being instructed in the use of machine guns and those things.

Q: And where were you when the attack began?

A: Well, I was at uh, like I say, for two weeks prior to that we had been on alert... certain people. And I had been on duty the night before until oh, midnight. And I was up at 7 then and I fortunately, I cleared the mess hall before the bombs hit the mess hall. And the place where we had our headquarters was over at where the school was; the technical school. So I was there and nobody was expecting it, and suddenly we saw aircraft that we knew weren't our own or that they had to be something different than we ever saw before, and I guess everyone instinctively knew that we were being attacked by the Japanese because you could see their red insignia on the side.

Q: What was the first thing that happened that made you realize that Hickam was under attack?

A: But we did hear some explosions but right away we knew by the pattern of their flight that... We were in a position where you could see planes going over Pearl Harbor and you could see there were torpedoes hanging under them. They were so slow moving it seemed like they just like they were suspended there. If we'd have had enough air defense there, I'm sure we could have inflicted a lot of casualties on the planes.

So after we knew we were under attack, prior to that, the night before, they had brought over ten .50-caliber machine guns for anti-aircraft use. They had a high tripod and they were water cooled guns. And uh, I had never been in armor, but apparently, when you worked the job I had, they thought you were a jack-of-all-trades, so they had me clean these guns up. They were all in Cosmoline the barrel extensions, and parts that needed to be protected from rust and so forth. And so I had cleaned these guns up and assembled them so that they would be available for use.

Q: Did you see the flight line or the hangars get hit?

A: I saw almost everything being hit from the place where we set up our defenses was on the baseball diamond right across the street from the school was a baseball diamond. And you could see when they hit the barracks and everything it went up the whole roof you could see was a flame. Apparently it ignited anything combustible, and there were fires all over.

Q: What about the aircraft that were parked on the field?

A: They were basically destroyed. They had aluminum apparently when they got that intense fire like that, it was almost as though they evaporated. The only thing that would be left would be like your steel parts. But any magnesium alloy parts like your ... you know the power section of your engines and all those things were magnesium alloy, they burn. So the cylinders and stuff like that would be there but it was almost totally... that

is a big part of them; some of them naturally didn't completely... but they were all... practically all destroyed.

Q: Did these .50-caliber machine guns get into action?

A: Yes. As soon as we knew we were under attack, they distributed them around the Base and we kept one there and set that up. One of the officers in charge of personnel there at the school shot down one Zero with that gun I know that. And we happened to have a rifle rack there which was locked and I knew we needed guns, so I did go and get permission to open it. I just took a wrecking bar and there was a hatchet I took and broke the lock and we got some guns and I shot up about two bandoleers of ammunition. I don't know if I got anybody but I saw one go down. He went right into the Hawaiian Air Depot Hangar. The big hangar there? And uh, who got him I don't know but it felt good to see him go down when you're shooting at them.

Q: Do you remember which direction you first saw the Japanese planes coming from at the beginning of the attack?

A: Actually, the first one I saw was actually going.... making a run at Pearl Harbor as though he had come in, not over the pass like the planes had come, he must have come back in there to make his run. The first one I saw wasn't going in the direction that the main attack was supposedly from. But after awhile they were milling around pretty much, because they were strafing at everything. But apparently the first planes came in, in some kind of formation which I think had passed before I had one in my vision.

Q: What's the most vivid memory of any single incident in the attack?

A: I think the thing that was... I don't know that it was but I thought... it probably was when the Arizona was hit; the impact of that sound wave. I thought they had struck an oil tank. I thought, well, they're going after the fuel because I saw the big black smoke come up, and that smoke was visible for a long time after that. It took a long time for that to burn off and I'm sure that had to be what I heard, although I didn't... I couldn't see the Arizona but after the attack was over, I'm sure that's what I heard.

Q: Excuse my I think somebody... (pause) Do you happen to recall what time it was when you heard the impact of the *Arizona* explosion?

A: I would have thought it was probably... it seemed like it was not too long after I first noticed the attack. I think they said it was 7:55 that the attack took place. But I would have thought it was ten minutes or more after... maybe longer than that. But time is hard to estimate after that length of time. But it was a little while after the attack began that I was aware of it.

Q: Did you take part in any of the clean up there at Hickam.

A: Quite a bit of it, yeah. That's one thing about an airbase squadron; that's their duty. So we cleaned up quite a bit of the stuff. In fact I scratched my arm on some of the ....

Q: Talking about scratching your arm.

A: Apparently all this metal that had been burned and broken up into parts; I scratched my arm and it seemed as though I got a kind of an infection. Scars gone now but it took a long time for it to heal. I don't know if there's something in that material that caused it to be infected, but I didn't have to be hospitalized or anything. But it did have a bad scratch from it and it uh... that was some days after the attack though.

We didn't, at least I didn't, do any clean up at that time because it was about a week or so that we were left at the duty we had. In fact I was put on a machine gun after that... a .50,which was located in the officers quarters. They had evacuated the women so we were using an officers home as our you know, headquarters for this gun emplacement. Col. Ferguson, who used to be the morale officer I believe, at Hickam Field assigned me to that gun duty there. In fact, that was the first time I met him so... (laughter).

So I was there until things were pretty stable. Then I went back to my squadron. It didn't take too long to restore the barracks to where you could stay in it. You know, they did a little bit of cleaning the mess up and making it habitable; even though it had been, some areas I guess weren't.... because there were large holes in the floors where bombs had burst inside the building. So...

Q: O.K., well thank you.

A: Yeah.

Q: I appreciate your coming by to share your time with us.

William Rembt #96
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. Rembt, why don't you tell me when you first joined the Army?

A: I believe it was 1939. I was working for Texas Oil Company and beside I had a good friend of mine was stationed in Mitchell Field, and one night we were over having a few beers and stopped by the breeze(??) and he says, "Why don't you join the Service and be a bombardier." You know, I was interested in it and I was willing. He said, "You know you could join up and you can go to school later on and all that you know." And I said, "Oh, alright." and went down there.

A couple of weeks later I went down to New York, Whitehall Street, I guess it was, and signed up. I signed up to go to Philippines and well.... from there we went up to Ft. Slocum, to Brooklyn Army Base, then took the Republic down through Panama, and Panama up to Frisco, and Frisco over to Honolulu.

Honolulu, they had something up in the mountains and they needed bulldozer operators and anything. So it didn't make any difference if you were in the Air Force or anything else, the 6ªfooters and over went to the MP's and the others went wherever they wanted to put you. So I never did get to the [*Army*] Air [*Corps*] in the Philippines.

So about six months later when I was up at Schofield they sent me down and got transferred to Hickam and that's where my career started in the [*Army*] Air [*Corps*].

Q: What were you doing there at Hickam?

A: Mechanic. Then we had B-18's. That was all we had then.

Q: What sort of an airplane was the B-18?

A: Twin engine bomber and I don't remember how many crew... a bombardier, navigator, pilot, co-pilot, engineer, and maybe one gunner.

Q: Was it a good airplane?

A: Yeah, one of the best. I thought it was. I believe it was built by Douglas. It was a good aircraft and for why it was made for at that time. And later on we got the old, well it was new then, B-17's. But they no ball turrets on them and no tail gunners on them. We had those.

Then when December 7th came along, they had all the pyrotechnics, like in the radio compartment, around the walls and all that. And I think that's why half of them burned because they just burned right in half as soon as them pyrotechnics went up, that was the end of the airplane.

Q: What were the pyrotechnics?

A: The flares and all that stuff. And I noticed myself that most of them were right there in that particular part when you

know, as soon as that got burning, that's it; burn right through concrete and anything.

So then, I guess December 7th, the morning of it, I was going to town with another fellow. We were gonna... I don't know what we were gonna do but I had a date that afternoon. So we (something??) on our cars and went back and got cleaned up and was gonna go to town. And about that time all hell broke loose.

So I was in the barracks and this other friend of mine, he was in the barracks, George Holtz I think his name was. So we didn't know what to do. So he went across the street behind the mess hall or the kitchen, and they were building a new building there, and there was a big hole. So we decided we'd dive in there for awhile.

And George says, "Well, there's nothing we can do here. Maybe we can get back in the barracks, after the first raid, and if anybody's hurt, we can at least carry them out you know? Try that." So we went in the barracks and there was nobody in there that we knew and nobody was hurt. We didn't see anybody.

So then the second raid started and we went outside and we hid next to the building, which was rather stupid. And I forgot who it was... one of the officers came by and seeing about six or seven of us in there, he says, "Come on. We'll go down to the flight line and see what we can salvage." So we went down there and had to break in the, whaddaya call it, the tool room... not tool room but supplies and stuff and they had a tow bar in there. We got that out and towed a couple of B-17's off the jacks, pulled them out you know, tried to save them. And they were doing a modification on the fuel tanks at that time. They had rubber tanks in there and they were really.... a lot of problems with them. And we got out and George was... I said, "You ride the brakes and I'll pull it." and we went our across the field. So we unhooked it and I went, "Alright George, give me a tug and let's get out of here." Anyway he was already gone... (laughter)

Then we was laying in the bushes and about that time the B-17's came in from the States, and one landed and he ground loped and went into the tall grass there and stuff like that. And a fellow made one remark that, "Gee, you guys really have rough maneuvers over here." (laughter) and we said, "Well this is not a maneuver. We don't think it is anyway. It's causing a lot of damage."

And then all we... that night or that afternoon, after it was all over and people began, and I was never scared until it was all over and you had a chance to think about it, and you think about some of the dopey things you did you know. And it was all over.

Then they finally, the airplanes we could, we worked on them, got them back, B-18's especially, get them in commission. Used them for patrol; that was about all. They had a few bombs they could carry I guess and that was that. And then I think we had one over in Hilo, on the Big Island, he was home for the weekend, and then he came in that night, and we got him all serviced and ready to go; guns on it and everything else.

The next day or a couple of days later, we didn't have nothing left of our squadron, the 26th [*Bombardment*] Squadron was fairly wiped out. So they broke us up. Some went to the 42nd [*Bombardment Squadron*]; some went to the 50th [*Reconnaissance Squadron*] I guess, and different places.

And our CO, he was back in the States that time picking up new B-17's; him and several of the crew you know. And when he came back our CO was Major Cobb (great guy) and he came back and he had no more squadron. Boy

he must have raised heck, because he got a hold of Saunders, old blondy Saunders, he was the group CO and he says, "I want my Squadron back." and he got a couple of trucks and he rode over to Bellows Field and looked at Wheeler Field and no matter what you were doing, "Get your tool box, or get this, and get in the truck, and get your gear. We're going back to Hickam."

From there we stayed at Hickam and we formed, you know, got the Squadron back in shape and went near up to Wheeler. We stayed up in Wheeler; from Wheeler we went back to Hickam I believe. Then we went to Midway. Then I was on a crew, Capt. Kinney(?) was our pilot, Kimmy Gates(?) the navigator... uh Bombardier; Charlie Ward, Grieve, radio operators, uh, I can't think of the names of a lot of them anymore.

And then we went to Midway; we were in the battle of Midway.

Q: What did you folks do in the battle of Midway?

A: We were at patrol; bombing patrol. And came back from Midway... well, we stayed in Midway for three or four days. Our photographer, believe it or not, on the plane was Ford, the movie producer.

Q: Oh, John Ford?

A: Yeah. And every time we were in the foxhole they'd come over or something like that, he'd say, "Get up there and take a picture of it." He'd stay down and we'd kid him you know. (laughter)

And then we went from Midway, we came back and we had trouble with two engines so we landed on, I believe it was right here on this Island.

Q: On Maui?

A: Yeah, but there was nothing here then. I mean there was just like a small base you know. The town, I didn't even know there was a town. So then we got it fixed up and we flew back to Hickam. Then from Hickam we stayed there on patrol. We got patrols almost every day. Then from there we went to... we left there to go down to the Solomons. Well, we went to New Hebrides first, went to Christmas Island (I forgot what the other one was), and then into New Hebrides that Espiritu Santos. Then we flew out of there on our missions and raids, and from there we went down to the Canal; flew some more out of there, and then it was time to come home.

Q: Sounds interesting. When uh... on December 7th when you were back at Hickam, what was the first thing that you noticed that led you to believe that something out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well, where the parking lot was, you could look over to Pearl Harbor and you could see the smoke billowing from the ships, the buildings, and stuff like that. And definitely you know, that was no maneuvers. Well, see, Sunday morning, always on Sundays, they had about the ships coming in to Pearl Harbor. They never wanted so many in at one time on account of all the sailors in town and everything else. So they tried to battleships would come in one time and then maybe they would go back out and a carrier

would come in or something. Carriers used to always fly their planes in before; maybe day before. And everybody, when you first looked up you figured hey Jeez them the guys from the carrier coming in for the weekend you know, or the week day stay or whatever it is. That's what we all thought they were. So we seen the smoke arisin'. Then we realized you know, what was going on. We were all scared to hell for awhile then you know, you did so much, you don't realize that it was all over you know?

Q: Did you see the hangars and the planes...

A: Oh yeah, as a matter of fact, we went right down to the hangar when this... I forgot who he... he was a Lt. then who he was. But he said, "Let's get down there and see what we can salvage and see if anybody's hurt and all that." And the only person I seen get killed, he didn't get killed, I think he died of concussion. We were standing between two walls and I guess the concussion got him. But uh, we seen everything burn and that was it you know. We knew then.

Then the second raid came and the only thing you could do was just hide and that's what we did. We had no guns, no ammunition, or nothing. Then we finally got some you know; then finally got some old pistols from WWI, I think... old Colt 45's. Then cleaned them up and use them. That was the last of the...

Next day, as I say, we got all the aircraft together and what we could and salvaged, and made a squadron out of them I guess. But most all the old B-17's, they were gone, because they burned like I said you know, from the incendiaries. I mean you couldn't help missing. I mean I think a blind man could have shot them down. I mean they were all lined up just as pretty as could be.

Q: O.K., one thing I wanted to ask you... What's the single most vivid memory you got in your mind from that day?

A: I don't know. Just maybe, we were in this hole where they were digging some sewer pipes or water pipes (I don't know what it was) and like this fellow, black friend of mine says, "Let's see what we can do." and we ran in the barracks and there was nobody there. We didn't believe it you know, the way they were hitting and bombing everything. We figured there'd be people wounded all over the place and knock wood or something like that, they were... nobody was in there.

And then the next thing, going right on down the line, the firehouse was right on the corner from where our barracks was.

Q: Oh yeah?

A: Yeah, and that was on fire. So, that was it.

Q: O.K., well, I thank you for your time...

A: Your welcome.

Q: ...and for coming by.

Paul Marsico #97
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. Marsico, let me ask you to start with, when did you first join the Army?

A: 1940. May, 1940.

Q: How did you happen to get into the [*Army*] Air Corps?

A: I went to Aeronautical Trade School in New York, and I was inclined to study toward the Air [*Corps*]. The Army wanted to put me in all different branches of service, which I didn't particularly want to get into. So I waited a few months and they got me assigned for overseas. I didn't have much choice in the matter. The Sgt. just stamped it and said, "Where would you like to go?" I says, "Hawaii." and he already had it there. So that was it (laughter).

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: Uh, June, 1940.

Q: What duties did you have with the 11th [*Bombardment*] Group.

A: Well, when the War broke out, I was actually in Headquarters Squadron Hawaiian Air Force. After that they formed the 98th [*Bombardment*] Squadron, which was a part of the 11th [*Bombardment Group*]. They disbanded that Headquarters Squadron. But I went to AM school there in 1940 (mechanics school). I was assigned to Headquarters Squadron. I was on the flight line. I had worked up to Buck Sgt. 1st AM, when the War broke out. I had an O-47B aircraft; the old North American observation plane.

Q: What kind of.... well, how would you describe that aircraft?

A: It was a single engine, three place, observation plane, with a camera in the belly, and it was used to go out and spot emplacements from the air; see how their camouflage was and their gun emplacements and so forth. But it was used primarily be the Headquarters people to get instrument time in, because it was one of the few single engine airplanes on the Base that had a canopy; that you can close inside your canopy. And you can get instrument time "under the hood" (they used to call it "under the hood" then). So all the general officers, and all the staff officers and so forth, from Headquarters Squadron Hawaiian Air Force used to like to fly in that airplane so they could get the instrument time in.

Q: What was your daily routine like, just before the... in the week or so just before the attack?

A: Oh, primarily going up preflight in the aircraft, servicing the aircraft, and helping the pilots in it; occasionally going along as a safety observer in the back seat and land the

airplane, service it up, and time was on your own. You put in about maybe eight... and then if you had night flying you'd have to go out in the evening. But it was normal operations on an even keel. No excitement. No pressure. Very pleasant working conditions. We had a lot of training when the airplane was flying.

Sgt. Dave Jacobson was our line chief at the time; used to take us into a little area and teach us radio code. And he'd always teach us to do things the hard way because he had a premonition. He said, "One of these days, we're going to be at War." and he says, "You ain't gonna find shops. You're not going to find the facilities you got here, and you're not learning how to do things in the field." So a lot of times we'd just try working on the field conditions. He was a very, very, knowledgeable individual. He had 28 years service and he was killed on the 7th.

Q: Oh really.

A: Yeah. He was from New York. He was a Master Sgt. and his name was Dave Jacobson.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of the 7th when the attack took place?

A: Reading the newspapers and reading the funny papers, and I was in the barracks, the wooden barracks, on the north side of the parade ground. And I was a Bay Chief, and my window, I could look right into Pearl. I looked over past the hospital right into Pearl Harbor. I was facing the hospital but I could see right into Pearl because Pearl Harbor is on the other side of the hospital from the barracks.

And I heard the explosions and seen the debris going up. And the first plane I seen coming by us with a big red ball on it, I didn't even know what country it was. I knew we were being shot at, but I didn't know by who. I mean that's how naive we were, I mean, in my element; just the average working guy on the line, flight chief, crew chief, and so forth. We weren't involved with the politics. The nation at the time, was I strongly interested in politics, just doing my job, and that's about it.

Q: What did you do then, when you first realized that you were under attack?

A: Well, how to get some guys out of the barracks, especially the upstairs portion of the barracks the hard way. They didn't believe it, you know? I says, "Hew, somebody's shooting! Get the hell out of here!" you know. A couple of the beds I got, like Sgt. Carrol(??) that lived on the other side. I took this bed and dumped it, to dump him out of bed.

And everybody went down stairs to the lower floor and of course there was a lot of strafing and bombing going on at the time. Then we made our way down to the almond shop, where we picked up our weapons and so forth.

And about that time the first raid had just about subsided and we went down to the main hangar (our hangar... it was in Hangar 7) and it was completely demolished actually. Between the first raid and the

second raid they completely did away with the hangar, you know, demolished quite a bit. And we lost a B-18 in there and quite a few friends of mine got hurt in that one.

We were in the hangar when they hit the second time. We were trying to salvage equipment in there. We were moving guns out, typewriters, parachutes, whatever you want. I still got a parachute bag that I took out of that hangar, when it was burning. And I took it, and I was going to carry it with me. I took it out of the locker that was burning and I just threw it into another locker that wasn't where it was burnt. And about a week or so later I remembered it and went back and got it. I still have it; it's home (laughter).

Q: So...

A: It was chaos because you were totally unprepared for it. There was no foxholes. There were no gun emplacements. Like I went... when I went down the hangar, I went through the barracks. And when I come by the second time, when they hit the barracks, I had lockers and everything, just debris in lockers right and blowin' right over me. I lost my wrist watch, I had a cut on my arm, and I had plaster. I had a swollen lip just from plaster being blown. And when we crossed the parade ground, there were some men trying to set up a machine gun emplacement on the parade ground. They were all laying down; they were just out. I mean frag bombs got them in that area.

Q: Did anybody get any shots off against the Japanese?

A: No, small arms fire that our guys, that we picked up... What are we going to shoot at them with...a .45? There were some people of course that had shots. The people down by the Bay fired on them. They had some machine guns set up there. And the second raid, it was a lot more fire, coming from the Navy and Ft. Weaver, and you know, the immediate area... anti-aircraft fire and other fire. Then there was from, say from Hickam or the first raid. The first raid there wasn't much return fire. There was some but not enough.

Q: Which directions did the Japanese planes come in from?

A: I haven't the slightest idea. I just seen them come right across the parade ground. I mean, the first one I seen come right over the hospital from Pearl Harbor, come over the hospital right across the parade ground heading towards base ops. They had a big torpedo embankment and there was a guy in the back with a machine gun. And they're just spraying all over the place. There's a couple of them that come by after that. But what approach they made to the Island, just where I read in the papers and see in the movies. Course they were just all over the place after they arrived at Pearl and Hickam. I've seen the Hawaiian Air Depot [*HAD*] go up.?

Q: What did that look like?

A: HAD? Oh the two big enormous (well in those days they were enormous hangers down on the end of the field and I just seen the debris. I happened to be looking in that direction when I seen

all the debris go up. That was hit about the same time that our mess hall was hit, and the *Arizona*, the Battleship Row, just all happened all one time.

Then of course when they come back the second time they hit different targets. What surprised me is that they didn't get the fuel tanks at uh, at Hickam... not Hickam but Pearl; the big fuel tanks... They didn't get the fuel tanks at all.

Now, they dropped a whole bunch of bombs (and this might be an interesting story for historians... not too many people know this). They dropped a whole bunch of bombs in an area that was supposed to be fuel storage tanks. When I arrived in 1940, uh, before I went to AM school, I worked for a man named Mr. Peoples and he was in charge of planting uh... We planted the old trees around the Officer's Club, the trees down the center line of the boulevard at Hickam. It was a detail type of thing.

Now he had a map. In fact, after I worked for him a week or two, he used the map and he said, "Well pick up these flowers and bring them here and plant them here. Now there was an area on that map that was designated as a POL area, which was a petroleum area (storage area). They never put that storage area in. They never used that as a storage area.

Q: Where was that?

A: It was in Hickam. They never designated that. Evidently some Jap must have had this old map because they dropped a bunch of bombs there and there was no POL area there.

Q: Was there anything there at all?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: It was just dirt (laughter)... dirt and grass.

Q: Did the Japanese planes seem to be flying in any kind of formation?

A: Oh yeah, especially on the second raid, you could see them in formation. The first raid we were too busy to even notice. We were too busy to even notice. Like we, trying to get the guys just out of the first floor, and get them out of the first floor, get them down stairs, and get them dispersed; just trying to cover up. And this was enough in itself so ... uh.... We weren't paying attention on how... if they were flying in formation, flying, or what they were doing. I mean I wasn't, personally. There might have been some people that were.

Q: Did you work in the clean up effort after the attack?

A: Oh definitely.

Q: What did you do there?

A: Oh, well, we had some B-17's that crashed on the field that needed work on. We had to clear stuff out of the hangar. Well, during the day of the attack, we were still clearing stuff out of

the hangar, because the hangar was burning and we wanted to save things. So we formed a daisy chain; we pulled typewriters, guns, and stuff we pulled out of the supply room, that was in the Hangar 7. That's went a friend of mine, Richard, on the second raid got shrapnel across his back.

Q: Who was that?

A: Richard Kam(?) I believe... Kam. I got his picture and name in a book. Uh, he was on my crew, and we lost several people in the outfit. One guy had an old Model A Ford, uh, that got blown up and he got killed in that. He was driving it out of the parking lot near the old snake ranch. You'll see pictures of our beer garden; the wooden beer garden destroyed . Well, he had his car in that area and a frag bomb hit in that and .... wiped him out.

But it was a type of a thing that uh, was a complete surprise. I think that most of the men; the higher ups might have known or had an indication that it was something like this happening. But I think the average Buck Sgt., PFC, Corporal, whatever you want to call it, the average working guy around there, was not aware of it; unless he was a politically motivated guy who read newspapers and stuff. We read the comics first, you know. And they didn't follow all the national politics. So I know nobody on my crew or anybody knew. And a fellow named Mike Capuanl kept running around saying, "Where's the baby! Where's the baby!" you know... (laughter)

Q: What was his name?

A: Mike Capuanl.

Q: How do you spell that?

A: C-A-P-U-A-N-L. I haven't seen him in years.

Q: Things must have been pretty tense right after the attack.

Q: Well, strangely enough, things... people had things to do, and you were so engrossed in doing the things (at least I was). Uh, we went up set up gun emplacements up at the, what they call the "Bomb Dump Road." And by that time we had guns. Like I had... somebody had handed me a BAR. Now I didn't need a BAR no more than the man in the moon. It was 118 pounds soaking wet and I fired one time with it and the darned thing run away. So I gave it away for a 1903 Springfield.

But we set up gun emplacements up the "Bomb Dump Road". Then after we set them in, then I though about my car. I had a 1935 Ford, a sports model Ford, and it was in a parking lot down near the barracks (near the main barracks). So it was in the parking lot and they had dumped frag bombs iin there and they had the car (a whole bunch of cars) burnt. Mine had a lot of bullet holes in it and had the two rear tires flat, completely flat, and shrapnel through the tires, and my spare tire in the trunk, I had a bullet hole go through that... the rim, you know, the old '35 sports car had the rim thing in the back? That tire was shot out.

So we went and seen a man named Tim. Tim, Sgt. Tim, now was it

Tim Wood. Anyway, his father used to work down at the motor pool. And he says, "Go down and see my dad and he'll give you some replacement tires for it." So we took me and another guy that owned the car; we took it down. We went down there and got the tires and right at the parking lot, and there was still cars burning and everything. The old hand... tire irons, changing tires hand pump. We put the new tires on and drove the car; rode the car out of the way.

It was shot up a little bit. We had to... the roof interior was up on it. It had the mesh type with the tar paper roof or whatever you want to call it... cloth roof. That had completely blown up and I had a bullet hole right through the window, right in front of the driver and it was a ... I don't think it was a bullet hole. It was probably a piece of shrapnel. We had to patch it up. We put a washer front and back and put a bolt through it to keep the glass from shattering anymore. And we patched it up so it got us around.

Strangely enough the car ran. I mean nothing was....working... no working mechanism on the car was hurt. The car

next to me was partially burnt and the one next to that was completely burnt, and same way on the other side. I just happened to be in the center where it was the least damage. So we lucked out on the cat.

And then we used the car to haul... the rumor went around, "Don't drink the water." right? Big rumors went around, "Don't drink the water." So we went down to the snake ranch, that was bombed (the old building) and we got soda pop and stuff like that and put it in the car and brought it all up to the area where we were all setting up emplacements up by the old bomb dump road. Sowe used the car to haul stuff around in.

But everybody was engrossed in doing something that I don't think you were really concerned about the long range. I think it was just the immediate part of survival. Because there were rumors going around that they had landed down in Honolulu, Ft. DeRussy and they were coming up in that area, you know. There was all this typed of thing; very, very unorganized in some places.

Q: What's the one thing that you remember most vividly of all your experiences there on Dec. 7th?

A: Probably that airplane coming across the parade ground with that red ball on it, and I didn't even know what country it was. And I can still see the guy in the airplane with the helmet on, and I can just still vividly see this guy going by. But at that time I didn't know what country it was. Of course as the day progressed we figured it out, but immediately we didn't know at the moment it happened (laughter). And the disbelief of some of the guys that we were under attack. Some guys come in late Saturday night you know, and they wanted to sleep, and you had to take and throw them out of bed.

Q: Well, thank you. I appreciate your coming by to...

A: Oh, you're quite welcome... quite welcome.

Q: ... share with me what you remember.

Allan Davis #99
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. Davis, when did you first enter the Army?

A: October 28, 1940

Q: How did you get into the Air Corps?

A: I enlisted in the Air Force or [*Army*] Air Corps at the time with the hopes of becoming an aviation cadet. I had taken the examination, but then the recruiting Sgt. talked me into enlisting, which I did. So, I joined in October 28 and went to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and from there to Hickam Field, Hawaii.

Q: When did you first come to Hickam Field?

A: It was in the last part of 1940. I'm not sure of the dates. I don't remember the exact date.

Q: What kind of duties did you have between the time you came to Hickam and the time the War started?

A: From the time that I first was on Hickam, I took ground defense training, worked on the line (more or less just as a trainee). And then just before... just prior to the 7th, I was assigned to General Rudolph as his personal driver, and I was Rudolph's driver for about 2 1/2 months.

Q: What was General Rudolph like? What sort of person was he?

A: He was a very serious person as far as I was concerned, but very likeable, and he was not a demanding boss to me. He just always told me when he wanted me available and other than that why he made little demands.

Q: Just before the attack came, what would be your regular work day routine?

A: Well of course, the Saturday before the attack came we had been on an alert for several months. In addition to being General Rudolph's driver, I was also (having had the ground defense training) I was also assigned to that duty. I had both duties.

And then on Saturday was the first time that they had had 'liberty' and it was the first time I had been to town in several months. I had gone to town and come in quite early the morning of the 7th and had gone to the mess hall, and had breakfast, come back to the barracks (the squadron barracks), had taken a shower,

and gone back to the bed, and really just about ready to get back into bed when the attack started.

Of course at that time I didn't realize what it was, and just a few minutes later however, some of the bombs hit real close to the squadron area. Someone came in and said the Japanese were attacking Pearl Harbor. And at that time I remember looking out the barracks window and seeing these planes that had the Japanese insignia on them.

And so I put on my coveralls and a tin hat which I had, and reported to the headquarters building. And I had just gotten to the headquarters building and up the steps, and General Rudolph was up on the top of the steps, and I just told him I was reporting to him.

And he told me to take.... there was three P-40 pilots, and he told me to take them to their airplanes. And his car was parked right down at the base of the steps. During that time I could look right down into Ford Island and look down into the ships in Pearl Harbor and see the Japanese dive bombers coming in about, seemingly, below the mast height of the ships.

And anyway, I took these three officers. They all three got in the back seat, and we went to their aircraft, which, they were from Wheeler Field and their aircraft were dispersed. And I 'm not sure exactly where they were, but their ship(??) not too far from Pearl Harbor. Took them there and let them out and started back and I got to... I was above Pearl Harbor looking down and I saw the *Arizona* blow up. I couldn't tell, it was too far away to see the aircraft but I saw the *Arizona* blow up.

I proceeded on down; got down to sea level and in a... just short of the gate of Pearl Harbor and Hickam which were close together, a planes strafed the car that I was driving, and hit the car, and I lost control of it and went into a field, right across the street. And I don't know whether I lost consciousness or not, but anyway, when I got up, I got out of the car, and started walking back towards the highway, and there was a man and a woman (and I've never known their names), they got me by the arm just short of the highway and put me in the car and took me to the Hickam Field gate. And I'd been hit in the head..

Q: By the strafing?

A: By the strafing. And that hurt. Other than that when the car ran into the field I had just been bruised. And about that time the ambulance was going into Hickam and they put me in that ambulance, and I was taken into Hickam, and they had set up an aid station.

And of course, I was bleeding quite profusely, and they took me into a room there, where there was a doctor who was helping those who had been wounded. And the only thing I can remember, he said he did not have any anesthetic or anything and handed me a water glass about 3/4 full of whiskey and he told me to drink it. I did.

And the other thing I remember, the first thing that happened when I go in the ambulance, was somebody gave me a tetanus shot and then marked my forehead with macurachrome; just made a cross to indicate that I had had a shot. Of course when I go into the doctor, well the doctor was working. When they washed off my forehead why that went to and so I got another shot. Then he took some stitches and so forth and then they put me in an

ambulance and took me to Tripler [*General Hospital*].
And at Tripler of course, they took some further stitches and I stayed at Tripler about six days and then returned to duty. And then I was assigned to... as a special messenger, driving messages between, well I drove them all over the Island. I drove mostly at night, and had an officer to guard and a driver. And I did that until I was .... late in '42 I was sent back to the states. They finally did send me back as a cadet trainee. But that's uh...

Q: That's an interesting story. How old were you at the time?

A: Well, I'm just short of 65. I was just short of 21. One other interesting thing is that they had... my mother, that day, got a telegram from the War Department that said, that we regret to inform you that your son had been killed in the line of duty. And uh, then later the same day, which I think was probably the next day on their time, she got another telegram which said that... correcting the first telegram that said I had been wounded in the line of duty. Then she got a third telegram which said that I had been slightly wounded. So within the same day, she got three telegrams.

Q: O.K., thank you.

A: O.K.

Donald Murray #100
July 16, 1985

Q: When did you first join the Army Mr. Murray?

A: I joined in March, 1940; arrived in Hawaii on July 4th, 1940. And one of the... I was always kidded about fireworks and things like that (telephone rings)... excuse me. I was always kind of a nut about fireworks on July 4th, and when we arrived here and didn't see a thing, it was kind of disappointing to me. But New Years in Hawaii, well, that was when all of the fireworks went off. Because it was still a territory, it was a little bit hard to realize that you were in the United States, but yet it was so different from where you had been brought up at.

Q: What Unit were you assigned to?

A: I was with the 13th Field Artillery at Schofield Barracks.

Q: What kind of weapons did they have?

A: They had the 75mm guns that were... their objective was to protect the fresh water inlets around the Island of Oahu that would allow ships to come in and land there. Because the fresh water killed the coral and made a deep enough passage that a ship could come fairly close in and off-load people. And our Unit sat up in eucalyptus groves on the north side of the Island with their guns all pointing out toward these little fresh water inlets.

Q: What was your particular job?

A: At the time of the attack, I was a clerk in the headquarters unit and basically recorded all the daily history of the Unit as it progressed.

Q: Where was the Unit, the 13th Field Artillery on December 7th, '41?

A: They were right at Schofield Barracks and they had a 11th Field Artillery, and the 13th. And then just a short time prior to the attack, the whole Unit, it had originally been regiments...

Q: Excuse me... go ahead.

A: It had originally been regiments and they'd reorganized into battalions, and it was a new more streamlines type of maneuvers. I'd imagine what the reason was for it, was the 24th and the 25th Divisions at Schofield Barracks, and the 13th was part of the 24th Division.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of the attack?

A: We'd just gotten up and was looking out the window. We saw

planes attacking Wheeler Field and lot of black smoke coming up. These airplanes were diving down numerous times and we saw the red ball on the wings and one fellow says, "Well that's the Japanese airplane." and somebody else says, "Well, how could Japanese airplanes be here. That must be some type of a Navy maneuver or something." So we really didn't realize even after seeing the attacks on Wheeler Field, that we were being attacked by a foreign country.

Q: What direction were those planes coming from?

A: Well, they were... had already arrived over the field. They were just kind of circling around, dive bombing, time after time. And a little bit later there was one that came up over our area, probably 300-500 foot above the terrain, and you could see the gunner sitting in the back with his goggles pushed up on his helmet and the sun reflecting off the goggles as he turned his head back and forth.

And he tried to swing his guns around to a group of people that had lined up for breakfast down below there and his guns were limited so that he could only fire to a certain extent. But he fired his guns and these bullets came across through the quadrangle and these guys were down there waiting for breakfast, split in two different directions and after the airplane passed by they got back in line for their breakfast again. And then as they stood there and got to thinking about it, well one guy went out and dug his bullet out of the quadrangle and looked at it and brought it back to the other fellows and I heard him say, "You know those son of a guns were shooting real bullets at us!" They still... it was hard for anybody to realize that we were being attacked.

And the field artillery personnel was equipped with a .45-caliber pistol (that was their normal weapon they carried for defense) and naturally it was useless to try to fire at an aircraft and besides that, they were all locked up in the gunnery building and we had no access to them anyhow.

Q: So, what did you do?

A: Uh, we were just kind of automatically been trained enough so that we realized that we were going to be called shortly out into the field, and everybody just started gathering up their field gear and putting it all together. And pretty soon the bugle sounded for the alert call and we were all notified to get to the motor pool. And so we all loaded up just like we'd practiced many, many times before and went out to an area that had been assigned to us and that's where we took up our bivouac area.

Q: Do you recall where that was?

A: Just that it was on the north side of the Island. I don't recall any specific name for it or just how... I remember it was probably about oh, four or five miles from the beach itself.

Q: Did they tell you to expect any kind of invasion or...

A: Uh, I don't think anybody gave us any formal briefing I can

remember of. There was a lot of expectations of what could possible happen.

Q: Were there a lot of rumors going around?

A: Oh yes, there's always rumors in situations like that.

Q: What kind of rumors were in circulation?

A: Well, there was rumors that the Japanese were going to land on the beach and that we had to be prepared to defend it. And the first night or two of guard duty, people were pretty trigger happy. They did have some BAR [*Browning Automatic Rifles*] rifles that were one per about a squad I think it was, and so they used those on sentry duty and several times during the night they'd let forward bursts of gunfire that weren't anything in particular, but maybe a shadow moved or something like that. They were all pretty jittery.

Q: I can imagine. What's the single most vivid memory you have of December 7th in the attack?

A: Well, that airplane flying so close to us and the pilots and the gunners sitting up there so unconcerned about what was going on. They just.... just like they was on a training mission themselves. That sticks in my mind real vivid.

Q: Let me ask you, what rank were you at the time?

A: I was Corporal at the time and later on I had put in for flying training. I was sent back to the states. I took my flying training and became an aircraft commander and eventually ended up with the 11th Bomb Group and got there about January of 1944, and stayed through until I'd flown 40 missions in the Pacific. And so I'd felt that I kind of retaliated a little bit against the Japanese. I think that took a lot of the animosity out of my system to be able to do that. I had no hard feelings against them anymore.

Q: O.K., thank you.

A: O.K.

Robert May #101
July 16, 1985

Q: Mr. May, when did you first go into the Army?

A: I chose, shortly after graduation from high school, to seek the Army career because there was no jobs to be had, and it seemed like the logical thing to do.
I wanted to... immediately I knew I wanted to go to Hawaii, and asked for the same and received the authorization to go to Hawaii, and told me I was going to a place near Pearl Harbor. Never having heard of it, I didn't even know what Pearl Harbor at the time, but then I did go there and found out that I was going to a place called Hickam Field, which was right beside Pearl Harbor, and I went directly there.

Q: When did you arrive at Hickam?

A: I arrived at Hickam, I believe it was sometime in the first part of April, 1941.

Q: What was you first assignment there?

A: Well I took basic training first. All the new people who had not received basic training had to take basic training someplace. So I took basic training first at Hickam Field and then I put in for radio school. And after about 6 or 7 months of waiting I had finally been accepted to a radio school, shortly before the attack. And I went to radio school. And in the mean time, prior to going to radio school, I had an assignment; I drove a truck for awhile. And so I did both, I drove a truck, and then when radio school started, then I went to radio school. At the time I had learned how to receive and send 8 words a minute and then of course the War broke out and that ended that school.

Q: What were you doing the morning the attack started?

A: Well, on the morning of the attack, like most GI's, I was in bed asleep and my buddy came over who had just gotten off guard duty and woke me up about 7:35, 7:40, and wanted to go to breakfast with me. But I just didn't feel like getting up to go to breakfast that Sunday morning so I laid there and talked to him and kept refusing to go to breakfast. I just didn't want to get up. I was very happy that day because the mess hall was completely blown apart, and had he and I went to breakfast, we probably both would have been killed immediately. Because tremendous damage was done to the barracks, that is, the mess hall itself.

Q: What was the first indication you had that something out of the ordinary was happening?

A: Well, when he first (my buddy) first came over and woke me up to go to chow that morning, we were sitting there talking and as I said previously, I was refusing to go. And we heard this

distant booming and booming and at first when it got a little louder, we had assumed it was the Navy come over on Sunday to wake us up with their dive bombers (which happened a lot on Sunday morning.) They come over on different missions and so forth, that they were out practice flying and so forth, and we thought it was them.

And the explosions seemed to get louder and so finally, I got up out of bed and walked over to the window and looked out of the window in between two of the wings of our stone barracks that we was in and I seen this plane shoot by on the end. But it went by so fast I couldn't realize what it has. And then I heard the rat-a-tat-tat and looked right at the very end of the two open wings and here come a plane flying right down through there, and I saw this object go out his belly. And I turned around to run from the window and I got about 5 or 6 feet from the window (and I was on the second floor when the explosion happened) and the screens flew off, and the dust just filled the whole wing of where I was at from all the dust that was in the screens and so forth. I realized right then that something was really bad. And along and about that time someone was running in the end of the barracks hollering, "The Japanese are attacking! The Japanese are attacking! Everybody out! Everybody out of the building!"

Q: What did you do then?

A: Well, as I once again, as most of the GI's did, it was either we'd sleep in our skivvys or even in the bare. And I didn't have any clothes on, and I just slipped on a pair of the old blue denims. And all I had on was a pair of pants. I didn't have no belt, no underclothes, no shoes, no shirt, no socks, no nothing. And my buddy was fully dressed, having just gotten off guard. So he and I ran out barefooted, (me) and out across the door, down to the first floor, and out the side, and across the parade ground, (planes buzzing all over and rat-a-tat-tat and all over the place) and went over and stood alongside the Snake Ranch, which was the local beer joint there, and we watched the planes go by. And my buddy was having a ball because he still had his .45 on his hip and he was just firing away like mad, and I was standing there just a shakin'.

Q: So how long did you spend over there?

A: Well, we probably spent about, I would say in the neighborhood of somewhere around 20 minutes to 25 minutes, and then it looked like there came a little, oh, kind of a stoppage of the diving and strafing and so forth. And we decided to run back across the parade ground again and go back to the barracks so I could get some more clothes because I didn't have any clothes on except for the pair of skivvy's that I ... uh pair of blue pants that I had on. So we did.

One of the episodes (that this has never lost my memory) is that as we stepped about away from the back end of that Snake Ranch and ran across the road and up onto the parade ground, we saw three men setting up a .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun, and here come a dive bomber. Now it was just almost like he stopped long enough to lay the bomb right square in the middle of them and BOOM, they were all gone; nothing but a big hole.

And we never broke stride or anything. We just kept right on running and right on by them afterwards, and right on back in the barracks, and then I got more clothes on. And when I got the more clothes on, my buddy waited for me, and we went back downstairs and we went from one wing into another wing. We were heading for the parking lot where the automobiles were, to get away from the building because they were really blasting the heck out of the building. And as we went from this one wing to the other wing, we looked back across the parade ground where we were standing at that Snake Ranch, and the whole end of the Snake Ranch was gone, right where we was standing just a matter of about 4 or 5 minutes before that.

Q: Did you see any of the planes on the ground get hit or any of the hangars get hit too?

A: Well, we saw the planes, that is the bombers from the air, drop a few bombs. Most of what we saw dropping bombs were dropping on Pearl Harbor. We did see a couple hit some of the hangars. We did see a couple miss the large stone barracks. But the most that we did see dropping was actually landing on Pearl Harbor. It missed Hickam Field all together. And we did see Coast Artillery shooting. They didn't hit anything but they were leaving a lot of puff marks all around in the sky like that.

Q: So what did you do after you left the building there?

A: Well, after we left the building, by the time we got into the second wing, the word came down very fast that everybody that worked on the line was to report to the line. So my buddy and I split right there. He ran back across into our wing, where we were stationed and got his directions to where he was supposed to go. And he was ordered back over on the line to work, that is to help out over there.

Seeing as I didn't work on the line (I was going to radio school) those people had to stay wherever they could stay. They didn't want them on the line. They had people do the jobs and so forth, so they didn't want those people bothering anybody over there. They had plenty of help.

So I had to stay there and I was trying to seek a place to go, or I had no job at that particular point, going to radio school, so I headed back out with about 6 or 8 other people toward the parking area, where the cars were parked. I didn't know what I was going to do but I was going to get out of the building. And as we left this wing to go out, a dive bomber dived down and a Captain was leading us out (there was a Captain and a Lieutenant and the rest was enlisted men); he was the first out and we heard this rat-a-tat-tat-tat real fast like that and he turned around and he hollered, "Back in! Back in! Back in!" and so we ran back in.

And he of course, being the first one out he was the last one in. And bomb went off right outside the door and we all flew through the air from the concussion. And the only one who was hurt was the Captain and he got a piece of shrapnel right in his rear end and the blood was running out his leg.

And so we waited until that was over with and then we got back up and went out and we dispersed outside this wing and went toward the parking lot. And I didn't really know what I was going to do. I was just looking for someplace to go. There was no place to hide. We didn't have any dugouts. We didn't have any holes to crawl into except the ones that was already made by some of the bombs. And I spied an electrical hole, where the electricity and stuff was going through the ground and this great big steel cover, and so I looked around. I couldn't hardly get it up myself because it was stuck so fast. But I managed it after struggling considerably, to get it off. And I looked down into the hole and there it was, a nice big hole with all cement in it and everything like that, and some lines going through it.

And so I jumped down in that there and I wasn't in it, I don't suppose, 30 seconds and I had 6 guys right on top of me (laughter). They saw me going down the hole. And I actually spent the rest of the attack right in that hole.

Q: What was the sight that greeted your eyes when you came out?

A: Utter chaos. Utter chaos. I never realized so much damage could have been done in so quick a time, and especially the parking lot where I was close to (right beside actually). Cars were burning and of course, when I looked up, one of the first things I seen was Old Glory flying up there, and just all tattered and torn from everything, the shrapnel, and so forth and uh...

Q: Is that the one that the picture was taken that was made into a poster?

A: Yes, that is the same one, and by the way, it's still in existence and last I heard it was in Denver out at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Now I think they brought it back to Hickam and they had it over at the PACAF building in the Hale Makai over there. And I think that's where it is right today, at the present time. I think they brought it back home and that's where they display it over there.

But in addition to saying that there, of course then I saw all the fires and so forth raging in the buildings. The stone barracks you know, they was on fire. And we have photographs in our archives today that show the actual fire coming, shooting out of the wings of where the beds and so forth were. And that's the stuff that I had seen too. I think one of the ... I told previously, when I answered your question about coming back across the parade ground and seeing these three guys blowing up, I think more so than anything else, what probably has never left my mind is when we ran by those guys that had been blown up and came around the building to go into our wing to get more clothes on for me, I seen about 6 or 7 guys backed up in a corner of one of the wings, where two wings came together, and they were all firing their rifles as we come around the corner and as we did come around the corner, we heard this rat-a-tat-tat of another dive bomber coming down strafing, and of course we ducked. We thought he was after us but he wasn't really after us, he was after those guys, they were all firing their rifles. And one by one just like ten pins at the bowling alley, BING BING BING, from

what didn't hit them directly bounced off of the sides of the walls, but every one of them within a matter of 30 seconds, all 6 or 7 of them was gone just like that; one at a time BANG BANG BANG the bullets glanced off of the side of the building and I have never got that out of my mind. And when I went to see TORA! TORA! TORA! show, my wife and I walked into that show (we didn't get there right at the beginning of it) and the first thing I seen on the screen was a replay of that scene, and I just let out an "Oh my God, I saw that happen!" and when I walked into the theater. And that was embarrassing but that same thing happened that they showed on the screen is what I happened to see that morning like that. And I've never got that out of my mind. It was just like I said, just like ten pins, BING BING BING and they were going down one at a time.

Q: Would you say things were disorganized right after the attack or...

A: Very disorganized. Very.... it's something that no one knew really, I'll say, us guys, we didn't really know that it was going to happen like that. And everybody was excited and everybody was in a strain and the stress and not knowing where to go. You couldn't hide. There was no holes to hide in. You'd get behind a building and they come after you there and the wooden barracks, you know, that was just impossible. I... it just seemed that nowhere.... the right hand didn't know what the left hand was doing, you know. And it wasn't intentionally but these poor... but it was just the terrible excitement of what was happening you know. People just didn't know, and in my estimation I could say it in two words, it was "utter chaos" at the beginning, you know, and then cooler heads prevailed and when they did, then things turned to an assemblance of the right thing to do and which they did.

There was a lot of bravery that day. I have a very dear friend of mine today that I saw carrying a young man to the hospital, and he and I went over in the boat together before the War, and I asked him, I says, "Joe" (his name was Joe Muzual(??) I says, "Joe, do you need any help?" He say, "No, I think I can get him. I'm going to put him in that car and take him to the hospital." and he was... the man that was hit real bad was trying to hold his guts in, and Joe was trying to hold his guts in and put him in the car at the same time. And that's when I asked him if he needed help and he had him in the car by that time and headed toward the hospital in this car. First he had him on his back, that's when I first noticed him. He had this boy on his back. He had him across his back and he was holding his intestines in by having him across his back. He had his arm and one hand, leg, and the other holding and I saw him do it. And that's when I ran over to him and by the time I got to him he was putting him in the car.

And uh, you talk about bravery and things beyond the call of duty. This Joe Muzual was just a tremendous young man, and as I said, I knew him. He came over in the boat with me. And then nothing ever happened. I went in another direction to do something else. I don't know what it was but I went in the other direction and I completely forgot about this episode.

When I formed the 11th Bomb Group in 1960, I started hunting for Joe Muzual's address. And I think it was about 1961, I found it, and I wrote him a long letter. And in it I said, "Joe, did you ever get a medal for the one deed that I saw you doing on December 7th, and that was saving that man's life?" and I said, "By the way," I said, "did he ever... did you make it? Did he live?" And he wrote a real nice letter back to me and he says, "You know, you're the only person who ever mentioned that episode." And he says, "I never said anything to anybody." He said, "But I remember you coming and asking me if you could help me, and I told you I thought I had it well in hand. The answer is, no, he didn't make it, and I didn't get him to the hospital because a plane ran us off over the curb and ruined the under carriage of the car and stopped, and then I tried to get him... I had about a block and a half to go." He says, "By the time I got him almost to the hospital he was already dead." But he said, "You know, that's odd, all those years from 1941 of that attack, you're the only one that ever mentioned that episode about me trying to save that young man's life." And he says, "No, I never did get a medal for it."

But you know, even as late as today, I still think the man really deserved a medal because it was something that he did, this extremely trying good deed, to save that young boys life like that.

Q: Did you see any of the B-17's that came in during the attack?

A: No, I did not. I didn't see any B-17's. I knew they were coming in uh, you know. Well, I guess I could reiterate that just a little bit. I didn't see them land. I saw one after it landed. But I didn't see them land. I didn't even see them flying in. But I saw one, as I had told you previously, when I was driving the truck part time, while I was going to radio school, one of my jobs was I had to go over and disperse my trucks. I had three trucks assigned to me, and I was dispersing a truck. By this time the B-17 had already landed on Hickam and I seen that B-17 and it was cut in half. It was burning. But actually, I didn't see any of them land.

Q: What about the crew? Did they....

A: I didn't even see the crews or anything. But I am assuming that you probably know this by now. I think everybody else knows this, that Major Truman landed; was bringing them in. And Truman landed them. Today he's a Four-Star General. He's a member of our association; life member of our association.

Q: Did you work at all in the clean-up and repair activities at Hickam after the attack?

A: Uh, the part that I played in that there, was in some of the ground work. Everybody had a little bit of job to do and we were trying to fill in a lot of the holes that was made, and to get some of the assemblance of all the stuff that was picked up. I think we all did parts of that work. Picking up debris of some kind, the roofs and stuff that was blowing off; things like that. I helped on that type of stuff.

Q: What was situation like.... just generally the atmosphere, in the first few days after the attack?

A: Well, right after the attack was over with, this same buddy and I. We were very, extremely close. We found each other right after the attack was completed and things were still in utter dismay at that particular time. And so a lot of the men were ordered to disperse and to take up machine guns if they could.

My buddy and I got a .50 caliber machine gun and we took off with a tug across the landing strip with our .50 caliber machine gun and then I don't know how many cases of ammunition we had, and a couple of shovels with this tug. And we went clear out to what we called the boon docks, in those days, and went out there and we dug us a trench. Actually we dug three trenches before we could get one that we could go in. The first one we get, we hit some coral. We couldn't, down through the second... we hit water. And so it was just filled right in with the water. Of course it was a marshy area out there.

So we dug out there, and we dug it in the form of a "T" and we set the machine gun up right in the middle of the "T", so that we could be in any direction down in the trench itself without getting hit. And so he and I maintained that machine gun for the rest of December 7th, and the 8th, and the 9th, and before we even came back over here. One of us run back an forth and brought food for both of us, and that's where we stayed for two days; almost two days and a half, out over in the boon docks over there, until they ordered everybody back in that they could use.

Q: Was there a lot of rumors floating around after the attack?

A: Rumors galore. That same day we changed uniforms three times. The uniforms we had on, then we went to khakis, so we one on at that time that was the blue denim, then we went to the khakis because they said they were going to land and we wanted them to make sure that they would show up good at night. If they were going wear black, we were going to have the khakis on which was a light uniform. Then we went to the dark outfits again. That same day we had three different changes of clothes on because we thought they were going to land and try to take us over.

They also told us that the Japanese were going come down; that meant cold steel to cold steel. And that sent shivers right up and down your spine the minute they talk about cold steel because we had our rifle with us of course, with all the gas masks and everything else. We actually put our knives on the end of our guns.

Q: Sounds like a really interesting experience.

A: Well, it's one that doesn't leave you. I have admitted many times I was very fortunate. I escaped.... The only time that I really got hurt... not hurt.... The only time I even came close is when I told you I was going out the door with this Major and this Captain... this Captain and this Lieutenant going out, when he come in the door and got hit. I was blown through the air probably about 15, maybe 16 feet and landed on my knees around the

corner. And that's the closest I came to getting hit that particular day.

I felt... I still feel to this day that the good Lord had something in mind for me. I don't know what, but, I believe that maybe as far-fetched as it might seem, that maybe all along there was a job for me to do and that was to bring this (something??) of people back together again after all those years, and that's been my.... I've dedicated my life to these people.

Q: Well, you've certainly done a fine job of it. I wouldn't have been able to get these interviews if it hadn't been for you.

A: Well, I'm very happy to do it because it's not for Bob May but it's for my people. I call them my people, my association, my members. I love every one of them and as I said, I've dedicated my life to them. My family gave up just about everything there was in the world to let me do this for 25 years, and I'm real happy to do this. And every time I see these guys grab each other, and hug, and even kiss each other after all these years together; seeing each other for the very first time. It's worth all the heartaches and the hard work and so forth. I've been very fortunate. I've been very fortunate. I give many thanks to the good Lord for letting me live this long, even though I've had three heart attacks and open heart surgery, I'm just happy about the whole thing.

Q: Well, that's great. Thank you.

Ray Dudley #102
July 17, 1985

Q: Mr. Dudley, when did you first join the Army or the Air Corps?

A: Well, in June, 1935.
Q: What was your first assignment?

A: My first assignment was at Randolph [*Field*] and then after that why I went over to Honolulu.

Q: When did you come to Honolulu?

A: June, 1939.

Q: What was your first assignment when you got to Honolulu?

A: My first assignment was they, at that time, they had not finished building Hickam Field, the barracks and what not, and we stayed over at Ford Island in the huts. And then after we moved over to Hickam Field, I was assigned as an air mechanic and engineer.
After doing that for about a year, then I taught mechanics in a school. Then after that I went back to being a flight engineer.

Q: What was your daily routine like just prior to the Dec. 7th attack?

A: Daily routine was more or less as usual. You wake up at a certain time and you go with all the rest of the troops to your duty station which was in the hangars at Hickam Field, where all the airplanes were being kept. And then after that of course, we'd go back to the barracks and some of the men of course would stay there, and some of the men would go to Honolulu.

Q: Were you a member of a flight crew?

A: Yes I was.
Q: What kind of airplane did you fly?

A: At first we had B-18's and then after having the B-18's for awhile after I was there, why then we got B-17C's.

Q: What sort of an airplane was the B-18?

A: Well, it was an old Martin two-engine, oh, you know, silver-colored aluminum, and it had Hamilton props, and I used to know the type of engines they had but they were smaller than the regular, like our 2800 engine.

Q: You said the first B-17's you flew on were the B-17C's. How did those compare with the later models of B-17's?

A: They just looked all together different. Uh, to my

knowledge, the first B-17E's that came over there was during the Pearl Harbor attack. And at that time we had never seen them. I'm quite sure most of us had seen the pictures of them though. But they were different, the enfinage(??), the rear, was altogether different. And their profile was absolutely different from our old C's.

Q: What were you doing on the morning of December 7th?

A: I was sleeping in the first three greeters quarters right near the Pearl Harbor and Marine... The Marine barracks they were situated right across the fence from our house. And I was sleeping at that time.

And after all the racket and noise, well then I woke up and went outside and I could see then what was going on. But for a few minutes it was hard to contemplate on what I was seeing. But after a minute or so I realized thaat it wasn't play; that it was the real thing. I could see the sun under their wings and their insignias and I could see all the smoke and the ships burning in Pearl Harbor, because there were... you had a straight view from there.

And at that time, why several of the wives that were living around there, their husbands were already doing something apparently, because they came out and "I wonder how Fred is? I wonder... oh my God, I wonder how Jim is?" And about that time why, an ambulance came by and the driver came over and I asked myself and two others, Sgt. Sam Durrant(??) and Johnson, if we would go with him and help him. You know, help him load casualties.

And at that time the driver was by himself and he was bleeding; his face and his head and everything. He had already been wounded. So we immediately jumped in with him and went over to the parade ground and flight line and helped load injured people.

Most of them I knew; or a large part of them. And they were still joking, some of them with their legs missing and arms missing. And there were so many of them, that we more or less had to throw them up, you know, on top of each other; the ones that we thought we might be able to get to a hospital and save.

That was the worst part about it for me.

Q: Was there a lot of damage done also to the hangars and the planes?

A: Extensive damage was done to all hangars, the best I remember. And the barracks, the nice barracks, they were damaged considerably, the mess hall, and they used machine gun fire on the Hickam barracks. Oh, and then they did extensive damage with a bomb at Hickam Depot Kitchen, and it seems to me they did a job on the PX too. Some of it, you know, I don't recall exactly what it looked like.

Q: Did you take the wounded men over to the hospital when you were working on the ambulance?

A: Right.

Q: What was the scene like over at the hospital there?

A: Oh, it was all panic, you know. But everybody was cooperating and uh, the girls that were volunteering from Honolulu, they were all participating and doing a good job. And volunteers from the community, Honolulu, they were all doing an excellent job.

Q: Did you work on that ambulance all during the attack?

A: Uh, most of the day. And then I happened to be breathing so much smoke that I got to where it was very difficult to breathe and I had to go have treatment. I had pleurisy from breathing smoke. And that was the only extent of my... in other words, I wasn't injured in any other way.

Q: Right after the attack, was there a lot of rumors? a lot of tension in the air?

A: Oh yes, a lot of rumors, that they were coming back. They had two waves anyway. The first, you know, the torpedo bombers and the fighters, machine gun pursuit planes, and later on, the higher bombers came over and... Now let's see, did you just ask me a question about the...extent of the...

Q: I was just wondering about some of the rumors that might have been going around.

A: Oh, the rumors, yes. Oh, we heard all kinds of rumors you know, that they were coming back and they never came back of course. But I think we lost some of our own planes though, due to the fact that everybody was a little bit trigger happy.

Q: What's probably your most single vivid memory of the attack?

A: Oh, the uh... well, where I could see it real well was right there in the yard; right there by the Marine and Pearl Harbor, the Marine barracks, and Pearl Harbor. And the Marines were out in their barracks lawn, firing at all these planes with their rifles and machine guns.

Q: Did you ever see anybody hit anything?

A: Well uh, they were so low right there, and there were other planes dropping their torpedoes and what not at the ships... and machine gunning. I really didn't... I saw it looked like one or two that was smoking real bad. But there was so many Boom, Boom’s that you don't know whether they crashed or not.

Q: What about any of the men at Hickam? Were any of them firing back?

A: Well, everybody that had anything in their pocket, rifle, or .45 Colt, they were firing at the planes.

Q: Did you work at all on the clean up and the repair work that was done after the attack?

A: Uh, no, right after that, like I told you, I had the pleurisy

and some people had me in bed, doctoring me all night with mustard packs or something, I don't know. And so I was doing that about two days and then I went back out to Hickam and started working at the Highway and Air Depot flight test. You know, where they'd repair the planes and then would test off them and turn them back over to the squadrons.

Q: Did you see any of those B-17's that came in during the attack?

A: No, I didn't see any of them on the ground. They were already on the ground, you know, when I left my house in the ambulance and we were busy. But I did... the best I remember, I did see two or three of them, you know, real low coming in. But I do remember that they were different from our C's; very distinct.

Q: What rank were you at the time?

A: I was Staff Sgt.

Q: Staff Sgt?

A: And I stayed over there at Hickam Air Depot for until January the 1st, '44, working in flight test. And during that time all of our planes were being brought back into Hickam, you know, that were damaged from down in the Marshall... you know, all the other islands during the Pacific War. And ATD they would repair them and test fly them and turn them over to crews to go back under, you know... down.

Q: Did you participate in the Battle of Midway at all?

A: No, I didn't. I flew down there a couple of times but wasn't involved in any battle.

Q: O.K., well, do you have anything else to add?

A: Oh, no, that's about it. You know, it's been so long ago, a lot of little details you forget. But something like that, you always retain something.

Q: Sure.

A: But it was quite a day.

Q: O.K., well thank you. I appreciate your taking the time to come by this morning.

A: Well, I'm glad to talk about it. It's very unusual that I talk about it.

Q: O.K.

Jay Jordan #103
July 17, 1985

Q: Mr. Jordan, when did you first join the Army?

A: Well, I was commissioned from Kelly Field in May 29th of '41, and so I went in as a cadet in October 12th, 1940 and that had ROTC and National Guard time before that so when you say when did I join the Army, it depends on what you mean.

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: I came to Hawaii after graduation from Kelly in July, 1941.

Q: What was your first assignment?

A: I was assigned to 11th Bomb Wing at Hickam... at that time Hickam Field, Hawaii.

Q: What was your duty?

A: I was a pilot, 2nd Lt., in a bomb squadron.

Q: What sort of plane did you fly?

A: B-18's. We were B-17's like all of the squadrons in the 11th. We were B-17's but we only had one or two per squadron. So we young guys flew the old airplanes - the B-18's.

Q: What kind of an airplane was the B-18 to fly?

A: The B-18 was a clumsy... I don't know whether... you know what the B-18 is?

Q: I've seen pictures of it.

A: Well, it's a pregnant C-47. No, it was made by Douglas at the same time they made the DC-3 and... so it had a lot of the interchangeable parts. But it was big and heavy so it was a slow airplane. I wasn't a combat airplane. It was made to be but it was obsolete when it was over here. And... but it was strictly training us pilots to be bomber pilots.

Q: What was your daily routine like in just a few weeks before December 7th, 1941?

A: Well, we're in Hawaii, so we had a great deal. We'd go to work about 7 - 7:30 in the morning and if we were assigned to fly, we'd fly. But usually, unless we had squadron duties, we were off by about 12 or 1:00 and have afternoons free. But we worked hard and trained hard and maybe we'd fly afternoons a couple of times a week; maybe once at night every couple of...say

a couple of times each two or three weeks. Go ahead...

Q: What were you doing on the morning of December 7th, 1941?

A: You're going to edit this I hope, so I'll take you to the first (laughter). As officers, at Hickam, the Club was the cheapest thing and the thing we usually did. We had to wear a tux to get in after 5:00. So naturally a weekend like that was a big party back then. So I'd been to the Club with my white tux and I had a date (a nurse), and my roommate had a date with another nurse.

We started at the Club but we ended up out here in the pineapple field someplace (laughter) just goofing off. We got home about 1:00; we took the girls home and we went on up. I don't mean to make this something nasty or anything. I mean, it was just a regular date, but we did drink a lot that night. So what you want to know is what we did the night before, or you want me to go ahead with my War stories?

Q: Well, lead up into it.

A: Uh, O.K., so we went to bed. I just dumped my tux out in the middle of the floor and this terrible shaking you know, woke me up, and I thought, "What the hell's going on!" and my quarter... Are you familiar with Hickam?

Q: In a general sort of way.

A: My... you know where the Club is?

Q: Right.

A: My quarters were the first building on Signor(?) you know, right on the road that runs into the Club; right there almost to the Club. So our back was right on the flight line. My back window of my bedroom was on the flight line.

I looked out and this airplane was going up in the air, you know... I mean exploding, and it was a B-24 that was on a world trip. They'd hit it. And my roommate and I both looked out the window and we were a little groggy you know. "What in the hell! The damn Navy's been out here. They're bombing us!" (you know.. Navy) and they... one of them hit the ground is what we first thought.

Then we saw these other airplanes coming up. They were Zeroes in what they were. But we didn't know it at that time. And this fog... what in the world are the British doing over here with Spitfires! Finally we said, "Hey, that's the damn Japs!" And we stood there and shook hands and said, "We'll whip them in about three months." (laughter)

But, so this destruction was out on the line. Naturally they were hitting it pretty hard. We jumped in our clothes and ran down to the flight line which was our orders. And so, we... the B-17's had all been destroyed (ours had been). They were just burning.

But we jumped into the old B-18's and taxied them across a rebutment or something. And I says, "Hey, I'm checked out now." I hadn't been checked out as the first pilot, just brand new 2nd John. "Well I'm checked out now." I took that old thing; it had

one flat tire on it and it had been hit. The seat I was sitting in had been hit by some small, like a .35 mm... I mean about a .20 mm or something. And uh, I dispersed it.

We went back to our hangars and we watched the show. This is something I've been scared many times in my life, but I was never frightened that day. Evidently my adrenalin was so high and all of us were like a bunch of tourists.

We'd see them, if a Zero or something come over here and he pointed at us, we'd jump down to the floor and hide and then when he'd gone we'd go out there and gawk some more. And then when the high altitude bombers on the second... see, they hit early and they hit on a second deal. We could see them up there. They were 18, 20,000; at that time I couldn't have told you but I happened to have read it. We could see the bombs leaving the bomb base and as soon as they did that, we'd all go charging back in there and hide in the counter someplace. We could hear the bombs start hitting...BAM, BAM, BAM. And when they'd pass us we'd jump up and start looking again (laughter)... crazy thing!

Q: So what did you do when the attack was over?

A: Well, we gathered around and looked at the pieces and really, we didn't have any airplanes, so we stayed there the rest of the day... or most of the rest of the day.

And then later on, I mean things were rather disorganized obviously, but the next day they put me out in the periphery of the base and we had... ground security and I stayed outdoors about three days or so, in charge of a group of machine guns and things like that, in case we were attacked.

Q: During the attack, did you see anybody shooting back at the airplane.

A: Uh, they shot back but it was a silly deal because I mean here they were just firing away with .30 calibers and you couldn't hit anything with them. Now I saw... no I take that back, because somebody, somewhere, one of the Zeroes came over smoking like hell and hit over at Fort [*Kamehameha*]. You probably read about that one. Yeah, I saw that one. And see, our bombers from the states were landing at that time. You're familiar with that; part of the 19th Group. Our people had gone over, some of them , to pick up airplanes. But the 19th Group is the ones we saw land. They tried to land and one landed down wind and we blew the tires, because he was going like hell with Japs right on his tail (Zeroes) you know.

I saw one airplane try to get off. I'm jumping around now, but you can figure there... One B-17 and Al Stewart(??), (I don't know whether you've heard his name yet or not.) He was our squadron commander the 26th later on and was killed at Guadalcanal. But he tried to get an airplane off but he just picked up a co-pilot, and while he was making his run, trying to get off, the co-pilot, instead of locking the tail wheel, locked the controls and so the airplane was really out of control and he went charging down... kind of wrecked the airplane.

Nearest I saw to anybody getting off on it, but...

Q: Was that a B-17 or ....

A: Yeah, B-17. But, uh... yeah, I'll have to wait for a question.

Q: Well, I think you've covered just about, you know, anything that I had to ask. Things must have been pretty tense right after the attack. A lot of rumors and that sort of thing?
A: Yeah, uh... the days following it weren't exciting but I can't remember what I did really. When we got organized, (as I say, we had no airplanes) well it just almost that time, they sent my squadron up to Wheeler Field and that was ours until the Battle of Midway, when... after Battle of Midway, well then, we went south. But we weren't at Hickam anymore after just a weeks after the War started.

Q: Well, what did you do in the Battle of Midway?

A: Oh, hell, B-17's, I'll start out with, you know, we had gone through the thing, we can drop them down a pickle barrel and all that. As a matter of fact, it wasn't only Midway, but it was all through Guadalcanal and so forth. We couldn't hit a moving... by the time we'd dropped our bomb, the ships were out of the way. So we never got any hits. We bombed them at Midway.
Now what did I do at Midway? I was out there (I was co-pilot now) and our crew was out there with several others before Midway, a week before.

Q: Did you have B-17's then?

A: B-17'... B-17E, we'd got new airplanes from the states. And...they alert us, but we were using too much gas. So they sent us, by say four or five airplanes which I was one. They sent us back to Hawaii to wait.
But the amazing thing, and I don't suppose this is classified, because it's been published since then, but an Admiral sat us down out in the bunk (this was five days or so before Midway.) So as the Japs are coming, well of course, they had the purple V(??) on it and all that, at that time. Of course I wouldn't have known that. That is just hind sight ... thinking back.
But they sent us back to Hawaii, and when they hit Dutch Harbor, I was sitting in the Waikiki Theater, with my now wife, and it came on the screen. We immediately went out, cranked up , and went back to Midway. So we missed the first... where the Japs get Midway first, we weren't there. But then we went out looking for them and so I'll quote you my part in the battle. It's written up in several of the books, (uh... Miracle at Midway, and so forth) so..."But the battle wasn't over," it says, "One group of B-17's came back, reported they had dropped bombs on a Japanese Cruiser. He sank within 15 seconds." And it comes back to say, That was a miracle, but it would have been more of a miracle to watch that same cruiser come back to the surface!
We bombed the cruiser, uh, Grayling... I mean the uh, American submarine Grayling and we shot him up. We bent him up pretty well (laughter) and we later on met him back at the Royal Hawaiian and had parties with him. But... and they were lost a little later than that. But they were our buddies but we weren't their buddies then.
But the B-17 was not made to bomb ships and we did it. I was at the Battle of Santa Cruz. We had them had them lines up. We

dropped fine... hadn't hit a goddamn thing. But they should have used us for reconnaissance because the PBY's couldn't handle it and at Guadalcanal, the Zeros, (and I've read this later and I thought so at the time) we could more than handle them with the B-17's; just one B-17 against two or three of them. They knocked down some of our B-17's but in general we more than carried our own with them.

Q: Was the later models with the heavier armament the E?

A: We had the E. You mean the later models, the B-17?

Q: E's and later.

A: Well, we had the E's all through that yeah. The E's were the first to have tail guns you know. Well, no... yeah, yeah, a tail gun.

Q: O.K., thank you very much.

A: Well, I'm glad to do it. You're with the Park Service.

Q: Right.

Everett Gustafson #105

July 26, 1985

Q: Mr. Gustafson, why don't you start from the time you first joined the Service.

A: Well, I joined the Service in 1940 and arrived at Hickam Field that year, and was working as a mechanic at the.... I belonged to the 14th Bomb Squadron. Then later when the 14th Bomb Squadron was split up, one half of it being sent to the Philippines, I was transferred to the 26th Bomb Squadron.

And at the time I came to Hawaii, there were five fellows from our home town that enlisted together, three of them at Wheeler Field and two of us were assigned to Hickam Field. But on the day of the attack, all five of us were at Hickam Field attending school.

Uh, previous to the time of the attack, while we had been going to school, about two weeks before that, roughly speaking, they had pulled us off of that, and those of us that had had ground defense training was assigned to the ground defense around the Hickam Field. The main purpose was to protect underground installations such as telephone communication lines and so forth.

And in the week previous to the attack, my place of duty was on the parade ground right to the east of the barracks, and my job was to patrol that area, carrying a shot gun or a rifle (rifle most of the time) and to watch so that there was no one interfering or getting near the manhole covers in that area.

But on the evening previous to the attack, a friend of mine from back home and I were assigned to a pick up truck and we had .30-caliber machine gun and we were supposed to be on ready alert in case there was any sabotage around the field. We were supposed to go in that truck to any position where they needed help.

And this buddy and mine, course, being everyone knew, or thought that war was eminent in that area, we spent the evening from approximately 8 until 12:00 discussing WWI. And his, the buddy's father had been in WWI, so we had exchanging a lot of stories on things we had read.

About 12:00 at night we were relieved of our duties in this pick up truck and were assigned to patrol the tent area for about two hours, from about 12:00 until 2, and at that time we were equipped with 12-gauge shotguns and we patrolled the area for about two hours and then we went to bed.

And he and I slept in adjoining beds and the next morning at about 7:55 you heard a loud explosion. We rushed to the outside of the tent, which probably held 20-24 men and there was a plane flying over towards the Harbor. Of course, there had already been an explosion. There was plane with the red circle flying towards the Harbor making a bomb run.

The fellows all rushed back into their tents, grabbed their .45's and grabbed their shot guns and proceeded to shoot at other planes coming in. Although most of them were out of range, especially for a shot gun. But you could clearly identify the pilots and the plane.

And meanwhile, the first bomb hit. Apparently, it was either at the fire station near the barracks at Hickam Field or the HAD [*Hawaiian Air Depot*] hangar. I mean from our position, in this tent city, it was a little bit hard to say. I've always heard it was HAD hangar. Some fellows insist that the fire station received the first direct hit.

Some other planes came over and there was a wooden building in this tent area. We stood behind it when the plane came in strafing, and I don't think he actually strafed the tent area though.

And then they came up with a couple of trucks and we were loaded into the trucks and transported across the air field in the midst of the first attack. And there they dropped us off, scattered us through the area directly across from the hangar area. There was one Buck Sgt. there had us disperse across the area, told us to keep our heads down. But we were in such a good position to see what was going on that we sat rather upright in this short grass, not realizing that all the whizzing sounds that were going past us were pieces of shrapnel, either from bombs exploding or from our own artillery.

And so we were out there in that area for the duration or most of the first and second attack, and even when the horizontal bombers came over, you could look up to the planes and actually see the bombs being released from the planes before they gained speed and landed on the airfield.

We stayed out in there until after the attack, all afternoon, later that evening, they brought us in to the area north of Hickam Field near the Pearl Harbor area and gave us sandwiches for the evening, and we had a chance to talk to some of our buddies about what had transpired, and to find out who'd been killed and so forth.

Later on, from then on, I was assigned to protecting the area beyond the airfield and seldom left it for the couple of weeks before our Squadron moved up to Wheeler Field just previous to Christmas of that year.

But that's basically... in other words, I had a birds-eye view of everything that was going on. I can't remember all the details but it's a unforgettable sight.

Q: Do you recall how you were feeling at that time, while it was going on?

A: Astonishment, I suppose. Really not a great deal of fear because we had no idea of the dangers involved and we didn't see, from our area, we didn't see the fellows were being slaughtered. So, I mean, it was a big show; something different, and we didn't realize the seriousness of the damage at that time.

Q: What did the scene on the hangar line look like right after the attack?

A: Well, from what we could see, it was smoke, confusion. We were a little bit too far away to really see just what was taking place, but just smoke, and debris, and confusion. I mean trucks going everywhere. About that time they were moving into the area, the artillery outfits were moving into their guns. We were, our primary purpose at that time was to keep our eyes out for anyone coming in from the sea, because they more or less passed word along, that they expected an invasion after the attack. And that was our job, to repel any invaders, if they came ashore.

Q: Must have been pretty tense.

A: Right. It was very tense, yes.

Q: A lot of rumors going around?

A: Well, we weren't near... at that time we weren't near enough to anyone else to hear any rumors. But uh, probably towards evening, we began to hear rumors of the parachute landings and landings on our different Islands; different things, which no one, I don't think, really believed. But I mean, there was a lot of rumors floating around later on. But that particular day there was not, no. But I mean we were told to just watch because they expected that something would happen.

And we did watch as one B-17 tried to take off and... but we could see both the dive bombers, and the torpedo bombers, and the horizontal bombers from our position. In fact, one plane in particular, I know came in and strafing, and he was flying well below the height of the hangars when he came down across the field; very low.

Uh, earlier, I know that there was another one on the east end of the airfield that came whizzing in from the south and he opened up his guns and it looked as though he was trying to strafe troops rather than equipment.

Q: What direction did most of the planes seem to come from?

A: I don't know. To me, it seemed like they were coming from the west. The horizontal bombers were crossing from the west to the east direction. The others, I don't know, seemed like they were coming in from all directions though. I mean I really couldn't distinguish... I really couldn't remember that.

Q: What's your most single vivid memory of that day?

A: Well, I suppose it was the initial explosion, the initial sight of the plane with the red circle on it. I imagine it was such a.... you knew instantly what it was, because after all, from reading the papers and realizing how tense things were in the Pacific, in a way, there was no surprise, in a way there was a surprise.

But of course, the higher commands seemed obsessed with sabotage defense, and previous to that we had had our planes dispersed. And a few months earlier when we had... we had, had training, insofar as we'd had our planes dispersed over the field.

But this particular time, they had been dispersed, they moved them back to the hangar lines. However they kept those of us on ground defense patrolling the area. So, I mean, we were not... we were still on alert as far as the ground defense forces were concerned. And that was comprised mainly of fellows that had had ground defense training that were at school... at the mechanic school at that time.

Q: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

A: Mmhmm.

Ellsworth Jung #106
July 26, 1985

Q: Mr. Jung, let me ask you first, when did you first join the Service?

A: November 1, 1940.

Q: How did you come to be in the Air Corps?

A: Well, actually I enlisted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and I just saw an ad in the local paper that if you had a high school diploma, you could come down and join the [*Army*] Air [*Corps*] and serve in Hawaii. And that's something that was intriguing to me, so I did it!

Q: When did you finally get to Hawaii?

A: Well, it was the first week of December of 1940. I don't remember the exact dates... 6th of December or something like that, in '40.

Q: What was the first duties you were assigned to?

A: Well, our first duties, of course, were some drilling and ground training. We were put in a tent city as soon as we arrived at Hickam Field, before we were assigned to barracks. And shortly after that I was assigned to the 26th [*Bombardment*] Squadron and put into the main barracks and I guess one of the first duties I had was

Q: After you finished KP, what did they have you doing?

A: Well, I had asked to go to AM school (airplane mechanic school) when I enlisted, and they did. They sent me through airplane mechanic school.

Q: Was that at Hickam there?

A: That was at Hickam, yes.

Q: When did you finish that, roughly?

A: I think I finished it in June of 1940.

Q: Were you assigned to a Squadron then?

A: Yes, I'd been in the 26th Squadron. I'd been in 26th Squadron from the time I arrived. And after finishing AM school, then I went through flight training. I went through flight engineering school.

Q: What types of airplanes did you fly?

A: We were B-18's at that time.

Q: What sort of plane was the B-18?

A: Well, the B-18 was a twin-engine bomber. It was... well, we used it... we did use it to dropping little 100-lb. sand bombs we were bombing tow targets that the Navy took for us, and bombing some of the islands out there that we used for targets. But I was flying before the War broke out, as a crew member, in a B-18. Our Squadron I think at that time had been assigned two of the early Flying Fortresses (the ones without the tail guns.) But I hadn't flown a [*B*-]17 until right after the War broke out.

Q: Just before the War broke out, what was your daily routine like?

A: Well, the daily routine was on the flight line. As a flight engineer, I worked with the mechanics, I worked with armament, and we flew. We flew our missions where we were training pilots in instrument... I remember one of my duties as a flight engineer was to put the black shroud around the co-pilot so that he was flying in the dark. And we would fly over here and do all types of simulated things, just for the pilot training really.

Q: Where were you when the attack began on December 7th?

A: Well, I was in the main barracks at Hickam Field. Actually, I was taking a shower when I first heard the bombs go off.

Q: What made you first realize something was happening?

A: Well, actually, Fort Kamehameha, which was the entrance to Pearl Harbor, just below Hickam Field, had large coastal guns, and they would fire those once in a while. So when I first heard the first explosions, I thought it was their guns exploding. But then when it continued and started to shake the barracks, well I figured then there's something else going on, and ran out of the shower and went into the wing of our squadron, and we just started to wake up other people that didn't know what was going on.

By that time, I saw one of the Zeroes come over real low, and I could see the insignia on it, and new something was happening that we weren't trained for.

Q: When did you first realize that it was a Japanese attack?

A: Well, about that time, you know. Then everybody else was getting excited and talking about it and saying, "Hey, this has gotta be for real". The Japs are really attacking us, which was kind of unreal to me, because I was a 21 year old kid. I didn't know anything about fighting a war. We were a peace time Air Force and hadn't really been trained for something like that.

Q: What did you do during the attack? Where did you go?

A: Well, the first thing most of us did, as I recall, we just assembled down on the first floor, and we were looking out the

main doors and just watching it, until some old timer, I guess he was a Tech or a Master just came over and said, "You fellows get out of the barracks and just disperse someplace. They're going to hit these barracks!" So luckily, we did, because they didn't hit the barracks on the first bombing. They waited and they dropped bombs which really hit the mess hall on the barracks, after we had all got out of the barracks.

And the group that I was with, most of us just ran out in the ballfield which was adjacent to the main barracks. And about that time or shortly after we got there, I remember, is when they came over without the dive bombing. They came over in a higher level bombing and dropped a bunch of bombs that I suppose were to hit the barracks, but they really did hit the baseball diamond where most of us were laying out there.

Q: Was the baseball diamond adjacent to the barracks?

A: Yes, it was. Yeah, it was just a little bit south of it I would think... or no, that would be, north... that would be south. It was south towards Pearl... towards Pearl Harbor. The diamond is still there. In fact, I saw it when I was there this last trip here.

Q: What did you do when the bombs started falling there?

A: Oh, didn't really know. I guess uh... I'm sure we were all scared. We were just to dumfounded to know what was going on. And when the bombs did drop, we had craters all around us and the dirt and the debris kind of hit me and covered me. And I remember when it was over I just looked myself over and thought I've got to be wounded. But I didn't get a scratch. I came out of it pretty good.

Q: What about any of the other guys that were there with you?

A: There were people in there who had lost their lives and were hurt.

Q: Did you see anybody firing back at the Japanese?

A: No, I didn't at that time. No, not there.

Q: What was the scene like over where the hangars were, and the aircraft were?

A: Well, I didn't get on the hangar line, but I could see it, and I could see the flames and the fire and destruction over there. But shortly after the raid ended, a truck came by (an open 4x4 I guess we called them at that time) and they just grabbed everybody they could find, and I was told to get aboard. And they took me out and took me on the perimeter of Hickam and put myself and another gentleman in a machine gun position and just said, "This is it. Don't you leave." and I tried to tell them at the time I was combat crew, I should report to my Unit, but I was actually stuck out there I think for two nights before they did come and get me.

Q: Do you recall what directions the Japanese planes came from?

A: No, at the time, I really didn't. At first I heard the explosions and I saw the planes flying low enough that you could see the insignia real well, and I guess you could almost make out the pilots. But I realize of course, they came from the north over the mountain passes. But I didn't know it at the time, from what direction they came.

Q: While all this was going on, what were you feeling?

A: Well, I really, you know, don't know what my feelings were at the time except that changing in just a few seconds from a peace time operation as we were, into a War, of course, everybody has some thoughts. What is going to happen? Most of us thought the Japanese were landing, and didn't think it was just an attack and they would leave again. We thought for sure, you know, it was not only a surprise or a sneak attack, but the Japanese had followed it up and were going to land. We didn't know what was going to happen the next couple of days.

Q: Were there a lot of rumors going around?

A: There was, yes. Especially that first night. There was all types of rumors going around, that they had landed, and they landing on various sides of the Island. In fact, that evening, everybody shot I guess what was one or two of our Navy planes, because I was in that machine gun nest and everybody else was filling the skies with tracers and we did too (laughter). That's just... we're not organized. We didn't know exactly what we were doing. We were just kind of following what everybody else did.

Q: What's your single most vivid memory of the attack?

A: Well, I really don't know. One of the things that does stick out in my memory is the parking lot where the enlisted personnel had cars parked, just next to the barracks. And some personnel during the strafing had jumped underneath the cars and when I went by there I did see a couple of the bodies that had been burned very, very bad. They had shrunk and just burned up. That always stuck in my mind. I remember that.

Q: Sounds like a grim experience. I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

A: Well, thank you.

Q: Thank you.

A: It's the first time I've ever been interviewed on what happened on Pearl Harbor day.

Harold Fishencord #107
July 26, 1985

Q: Mr. Fishencord, when did you first join the Army?

A: I came to Hickam Field in 1939, and I was assigned to the 23rd Bombardment Squadron of the 5th Bombardment Group at that time. And later I was transferred to the 11th Bomb Group after the Midway Battle.

Q: So you were in the 5th...

A: When the War started.

Q: ... when the War started.

A: Yes. I've been here two years.

Q: O.K. So, what was your first assignment when you got here as a member of the 5th?

A: With the 23rd Bombardment Squadron, I was a gunner, tow-wheel operator, uh... just a little bit of everything, grease monkey... you name it. I was on flying status, flying in the B-18 and the B-17C's that we had. We had a couple of those in the Squadron at that time.

Q: So you had experience in both types of planes?

A: Yes.

Q: How would you compare the two?

A: Well, of course the B-17 had a much greater range and could carry a larger load. Now I might add that the old model B-17's, we didn't have the powered turrets. They were all hand-operated, and the fire power on the new aircraft, the B-17E, which landed during the attack, was much more effective, in that the power turrets, there was more guns. It was just a better aircraft.

Q: What's the difference in the way a power turret operates and the way a hand turret operates?

A: Well of course in the power turrets, they were electrically and hydraulically operated. So the gunner, in comparison, on the old B-18's and B-17's would have to manually turn the turret and operate the guns by hand. And in the power turrets, everything was done with a button or a stick (something like flying an aircraft). You could direct your guns in any direction just by pushing the button. And of course the later model B-17's had the twin .50's in the turrets, whereas on the old model B-17C's and the B-18's, it was usually .30-caliber hand held machine gun. So everything was done by hand then. Of course the E had much more fire power than the C's and the old B-18's.

Q: It sounds like you had a wide variety of duties there.

A: Yes, as a matter of fact, in the Battle of Midway, I was a tail gunner, in the B-17's and it was quite a shock to the Japanese because they had never seen a B-17E with tail guns in it. So most of their attacks were from the rear, or they was thinking there was no fire power in the tail of the aircraft, and they got quite a shock when they found out we had tail guns back there, that were very effective. So then they started making their frontal attacks, because the fire power on the E-model was very limited from the nose.

Q: What was your daily work routine like just before the December 7th attack?

A: It was quite normal. We were of course, five days a week... five and a half days a week, actually, Saturday was always reserved for inspection by our aircraft and a barracks inspection. And then Saturday afternoons and Sundays was a free day to do whatever we had money to do with, which wasn't too much at that time. But... and the rest of it was fairly routine. I can recall that two weeks prior to the attack that we had all gone on maneuvers and we had dispersed our aircraft in bunkers. And some of us had gone over to Bellows Field and some of the other outlying fields around too. And we'd go out and practice with the Navy on simulated bombing attacks. The Navy would set up fighters and so forth.

However, on the 6th of December, I can recall very very faintly... or not faintly... in that we lined all of our aircraft back up on Hickam Field, just like we did every day, in perfect alignment for our daily Saturday morning inspection, which to me, I always look back and say, "Why didn't we leave them in the bunkers and we wouldn't have lost all the aircraft that we lost on the 7th." Of course, I was just a yard bird, but I look back now and say that was ridiculous to pulling maneuvers two weeks and then Sunday morning have them all blown off the runway (which is basically what happened).

Q: Where were you when the attack began?

A: Now I was in the barracks when I heard the explosions. So I raised up out of my bunk (we could look out through the windows... the screen windows in the barracks) and just as I looked out I saw this Kate dive bomber making a pass right over the parade ground which our barracks was located adjacent to the parade ground.

And I can still see this little Japanese gunner up in the back with a flexible machine gun, spraying.... strafing the barracks and the people who had run out to the parade ground. And I can always see that big red meatball on the side of the fuselage and they were so close that actually, I could see the pilot and the gunner.

And of course, at that time, I slipped my coveralls on and ran out of the barracks, and there was an officer coming down from the officers quarters, going like crazy. So I followed him over to the flight line which was oh, only a block or so from the barracks, and we hopped in a B-18 and taxied it down to the end of the runway.

And about that time we were all under attack of course, and shortly thereafter, there were some 17's that had landed and I've

forgotten the officer now, (I think it was Col. Godman, who I was with, who was a Lt. at that time) but at any rate, he told me to park that B-17 in one of the bunkers that we had at the end of the runway and stay with it.

O.K., after he told me to stay with the aircraft, the crew that had flown the aircraft in was of course, the aircraft was unarmed. But it did have bomb bay tanks in it, and I was familiar enough with the aircraft... with the older models. But at any rate they had bomb bay tanks in it. And he told my to get the bomb bay tanks out of there. Well, of course, I was all by myself and we're under attack. So I went up an get the salvo switch, the tanks were empty of fuel, thank goodness. But I salvoed the bomb bay tanks, got out of the aircraft, pulled them out (they were pretty heavy and I don't know how I ever pulled them away from the aircraft).

Then I got the wild idea, well I'll go back up in the aircraft, and not being that familiar with the E-model and the turrets, I sort of experimented, even though there was no ammunition in them. But I turned the main battery switch on, jumped up in the turret, flipped a few switches and at least got the turret going around like I was... had ammunition in it.

Q: Is that the turret on top of the plane?

A: The top turret. Well, there again, not being all that familiar with the aircraft, and during this attack, and I thought well, at least I'll scare somebody (laughter), which.... but I run the batteries down, because they were hydraulically operated from the power system in the aircraft.

And then, of course there three main attacks that occurred, as most people know. So there was a revetment right behind the B-17 and about the only thing I could think of doing at that time was, the Naval ships and the artillery had begun to fire their ack-ack guns and about this time the shrapnel began to fall, which scared the living heck out of me.

And then somebody came along and said, we're going to have a big gas attack. So get your gas mask. Well, mine was back in the barracks. So I took off running from that flight line and I can't judge exactly how far it was. I know it was at least a half a mile or more to where our barracks. So I ran back to the barracks, went to my footlocker, got my gas mask out, had no sooner got out of the barracks, then the high altitude bombers had (I think it was on the third wave) had made a direct hit (thank God I wasn't in the barracks at the time) but they made a direct hit on our barracks, and they wiped out probably five to ten of my comrades who had stayed in the barracks for some reason.

But at any rate, I ran back to that aircraft, and I think I must have broke all records for 100-yard dashes getting back down there. And of course during the day it was strictly chaos. People giving orders, reascending orders, trying to upload aircraft, trying to get ammunition in them, trying to get them refueled. And of course, this went on; time just seemed to fly, and you did things... or I did seem to do things automatically that I can still recall to this day that I didn't remember doing.

And of course that night, uh, when some Naval aircraft were coming back off of carriers I believe, this entire Island looked like the 4th of July. They were shooting at our own aircraft and they did actually shoot two or three of them down with our own guns. And I think that was probably the scariest bit of the whole bit. During the initial attack, it was such a shock that of course I was very scared. But it hadn't had time to catch up with me. And of course that night we were all very, very afraid

that we were going to be invaded by the Japanese. So that night I think was probably the scariest part of the whole bit. Uh, of course, we hadn't had anything to eat, very very little water to drink.

And the next day was picking up the pieces, and trying to get organized, and getting assigned to crews, which we did gradually. And then... (outside interruption)... sorry about that... (laughter)... usually they don't get here until 3:00. (people coming in to clean the room?)

Q: What did the scene over there at the hangar line look like?

A: It uh... some of our aircraft were actually taxied away from the hangar line, but the hangar line... we had the first hangar next to base operations, and looking down from base operations, if you're familiar with Pete Field... with Hickam Field. It was a total fire ball of the aircraft burning. Uh, there was a B-17 out there burning. It broke right in half. Many of our B-18's were on fire.

And another thing, of course, I'll never forget, is that one of the B-18's that had been taxied out into this area I was talking about, there was an individual trapped in that aircraft and the Japanese had strafed it and had set the fuel tanks on fire and I'll never forget his guy still screaming. He couldn't get out of the nose section of this B-18. And we tried everything in the world but the aircraft was just burning completely out of control and of course, he had panicked and couldn't get out the hatch. So that thing will always be on my mind I suppose until I die.

Q: Sounds pretty grim.

A: Well, it... when you look back on it now, of course I was young then and I don't suppose I had any better brains to know what really went on until well... a few days later it catches up with you. I don't let it bother me now because... But every now and then I will recall some little thing that I'd forgotten for uh... 45 years I guess. It'll be 45 years next year.

And of course, the buddies I lost up in the barracks, I think about them every now and then. We were very close. We went to town together and the beer gardens and so forth and so on. But as far as it bothering me psychologically, I don't think I'm ready for the whacko house yet (laughter).

Q: Things must have been pretty tense right after the attack.

A: Very tense, and there was a lot of confusion too, because people just didn't know what to do. There was just disbelief really. So uh... and trying to get reorganized because many Squadrons had lost people, crews; they had to reorganize crews to retaliate (or try to retaliate). And of course another problem was we couldn't get to the ammunition during the attack because the ammo rooms were locked up. But that afternoon we finally became a little organized and were able to load some of the new [*B*-]17's and they took off that afternoon to search for the Fleet. However they were off 180 degrees and went the other direction. It's a good thing they did I guess because they would have clobbered every one of them.

Q: Well, I don't have any other questions. Do you have anything else that you think might be...

A: No, I appreciate this interview and...

Q: Well, I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me.

Frank Ernst #109
July 26, 1985

Q: Mr. Ernst, when did you first join the Army?

A: I enlisted in St. Lois Missouri in November, 1940, and at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. We were there for about six weeks... well, maybe three weeks it was and we were then shipped to San Francisco and boarded a ship there for Hawaii.

Q: About how long did the voyage take?

A: Oh let's see... I remember my birthday being on the boat, at December the 4th, but I'm sure it was about December 20th or something around there, that we arrived in Honolulu.

Q: What kind of duties did you have in Hawaii, before the attack?

A: Well, I was aircraft maintenance, working on the airplanes, on the B-18's and B-17's that we did have at that time; just a regular aircraft mechanic.

Q: What sort of work did you do?

A: Repairing and inspection of the aircraft as a whole, and doing engine repair on the engines; replacing spark plugs and magnetos and that kind of stuff.

Q: On those B-18's, do you recall what was the most common sort of problem that you had to deal with there?

A: Well, I myself come run into any problems on the things. They just seemed to... we didn't have any major problems with our B-18's, to my knowledge.

Q: What about the B-17's?

A: Nothing major on those.

Q: Which Squadron were you in?

A: I was in the 14th.

Q: What sort of planes did the 14th have?

A: We had both B-17's and B-18's... and the B-17's. Started out with the old B-18's and then the B-17D's, and then we got our newer ships later on.

Q: What was your daily routine like? In other words, how did your day usually go?

A: Well, they get you out for calisthenics, breakfast, come back and straighten up your area, and march us over to the hangar, and

if there's any clean up to do we did some of the clean up in the hangar, straighten up things, then go out to our ships, and pull the daily maintenance pre-flights and ...

Q: What had to be done for preflight maintenance?

A: Well, we had to drain the fuel tanks out, any condensation that would collect, and we'd have to run the engines through by hand, or turn them over with the propeller to eliminate any oil that would be in the cylinders, and then just go right through and check all the controls, control cables, ailerons, and the elevators, and our tires, and check those for damage, and that kind of stuff.

Q: Where were you on the morning of December 7th?

A: Well I, after they had taken the 14th (they split it up) and sent half of the people to the Philippines and those that stayed they just assigned us to different organizations. And I was assigned to the 50th Reconnaissance Squadron, which later on was the 431st.

And at that time, a few of us fellows had joined the camera club and we were going to go on a trip around the Island on that Sunday to take some pictures. Well we had just had our breakfast and was up in the washroom getting ready when the first noise came around... explosions you know? We thought maybe it was just the Navy still pulling some more of their mock attacks on us, because we just came off of a maneuver and had our ships dispersed in other areas.

And no one thought too much about it at first, until one hit pretty close, and then everybody began to move around. And I ran to the area that's right in the middle of the barracks. It's open and you look right straight up. And as I looked up there went a Zero right across with a torpedo hanging on him for a suicidal attack on the Hawaiian Air Depot.

So we immediately grabbed everything we had there, shaving gear and everything like that and run down to our bunk, stuffed it under the pillow, grabbed all we had in the way of any emergency equipment, which was nothing more than a training mask and an old campaign hat (laughter). So that's all we had there. And made our way outside and got out of the clearing and got our bearings and everything and see what we could do.

So a group of us went on over to the hangar as quick as we could get there. And when I got there, all there was to lay our hands on the way of guns and ammunition was a .45 pistol. And the ammunition was all loose so we just grabbed a handful of ammunition and shoved it into our pockets. And my cousin happened to be with me at that time and we ran out into the middle of the airfield and to the center of the runway. We had some foxholes dug there at that particular time for that maneuver and we got in there and buried ourselves as much as we could at that time until the attack was over with.

Q: Did you see anybody...any kind of anti-aircraft guns shooting back at the Japanese?

A: Not at that time. Not at that particular time. I think there was something from the Navy was doing some action, but it was rather early in the attack.

After they kind of quiet down around two o'clock I believe it was, in the afternoon, why we were able to scramble out and went back to the hangars. And there was an airplane that didn't get damaged that we pushed out into the center of the field to get it ready to fly. And of course in that process, while we were trying to get it ready to fly and loaded up with bombs, why every once in a while you'd have to run for cover.

And we finally did get one ready to go, and out of the excitement at that time the airplane had aileron rudder locks and elevator locks on the inside, and they were in the floor on a lever down there. And on the take off, why the pilot... not the pilot but the co-pilot got excited and he forgot to unlock that, and therefore the ship didn't get off. He just nosed over and all four props hit the runway and that was the end of that.

Q: Anybody hurt in that one?

A: No, huh-uh. It just couldn't take it... because the props hit the runway, why that stopped that. So we worked around there on different areas. And that evening they came in with some bulldozers and pushed part of those airplanes that were of the new ships that were coming in at that particular time from the states. Those that got damaged by the Japanese, we pushed them up into piles and made those as bunkers for our protection at that particular time.

Q: Did you see any of those planes coming in, landing during the attack?

A: Yes. Yes, flying right in, and of course like they say, they were low on fuel. They couldn't go anyplace else. So they had to land and there were the Japs right behind them. Just as soon as they stopped they dropped their hand grenades right in the middle of the bomb bay... or the radio compartment, where we had flares...

Q: Excuse me, speak of the devil...

A: Yeah.

Q: This is about B-17's.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: You were describing... you were starting to describe the B-17's coming in on the field.

A: Yeah, as they were coming in, they had landed because of the shortage of fuel; couldn't go anyplace else and whenever they... after they got on the runway, why the Japanese were right over them with dropping hand grenades out of their two passenger airplanes...(two person), which went right into the radio compartment where the flares were. And as soon as it exploded why, of course it just set the plane on fire and it just folded up like that right down in the middle and laid there and burned. And it was a horrible sight, I'll tell you.

Q: I can imagine.

A: Some of the crew... biggest part of the crews were able to get out before they got hit. But some of them didn't; got shrapnel wounds and stuff like that.

Q: What was the scene on the hangar line like?

A: Well, it was pretty chaotic. Uh, bombs were falling all over the place. Some were hitting the hangars and knocking the doors off them and busting the windows out. The ammunition from the gunners, you know from the Japs, were strafing everything out there.

Q: Do you recall how you were feeling? In other words, what was going on inside you during the attack?

A: Well, I guess I was... really didn't take time to think. I would just... more or less numb and just did instinctively what I really thought I should and that was get protection as much as I could. And then whenever there was time available we could go back on the job and work as hard as we could on everything that was there, to get it back to going.

Q: I imagine things were pretty tense... a lot of rumors going around...

A: Oh yes. Sure, sure, sure... When we were in these ... those bunkers we had made temporary out of these airplanes, they drug in the desks and stuff out of the offices and laid over the top of this as more or less of a protection too. And of course it happened to be kind of a misty rainy night and everybody was scared to death because they had heard on the radio that the Japs were coming in by boat to take the place. And of course every time there was a movement from aircraft to some unidentified thing on the ground, why there was just ground fire all over place you know. The sky was just lit with tracers all the time, even though they didn't know whether it was I, or the planes, or the enemy. And uh...

Q: I don't really have any other questions? What do you recall as probably the single most vivid memory you have of that day?

A: Well, the vivid memory of it would be the attack as we were out on the hangar... out on the hangar line, and seeing these other crew members coming in with the new ships, and seeing those blown up as they hit the ground. That's just about it.

Q: O.K., thank you.

Ben Miller #110
July 26, 1985

Q: Mr. Miller, let me ask you, when did you first join the Army?

A: 1940.

Q: When did you first come to Hawaii?

A: Uh, I came in '40.

Q: Same year.

A: Same year.

Q: When you got here, what were your duties?

A: Well, I was put in line supply and that was with the engine parts and paraphernalia that the pilots wore and all that. That's what we had in our building at the time.

Q: Why don't you describe to me what the period was like leading up to the December 7th attack, if you would. What was your daily routine and that sort of thing?

A: Oh, our daily routine was just being out there on the runway. That's where our building was that we had the line supply in. Then the other outfit, if they wanted to draw engine parts or complete engines, they would come to us. And they'd have requisitions, and then we would get that for them, and take it out to whatever plane they was working on. And that's about all the duty that we had.

Q: Do you recall what you did on Saturday, December 6th; the day before the attack?

A: Yeah, I know what we did. We, every Saturday, had inspection on the runway. The planes were all lined up and about 10:00 we were dismissed. Then you got to go to town or whatever you wanted to do. The rest of the weekend was off.

And that particular day, there was four or five of us from my hometown, we all went to town. And we got home about one in the morning. And then early Sunday morning why, we heard this commotion, and I can remember a couple of them moaning because they thought that the Navy was practicing again, which they did on Sunday mornings.

Well about that time them planes started coming over the building and they dropped them bombs onto the center of the building which was the mess hall. And I don't recall, somebody said 35 cooks were killed right off, and some of the fellows that was closer to the windows looked out the windows and they could see the darn planes not very far above the building. And they wasn't ours so he hollered something, and we all just grabbed pants and what we had and dashed. We were on the second floor, and we went down to the first floor and sure enough, there they

was. So we waited till they went past us. Then we run from the building towards the baseball field.

Well, we got out to the baseball field and here come some more. So we fell down, or laid down, or whatever you might say, and they were strafing around, and they went over us. Then we got up again and we ended up over in the officers quarters, which was next to the water at Pearl Harbor. And we stayed out there probably two hours and it seemed to calm down a little.

Then we went back to where we worked. Well, that was the hangar and it was hit, and we looked out and all the planes were hit. There wasn't one of them that I noticed even got off the ground. There may have been. I don't know of any that got off the ground. They were all hit.

But I do remember how low the planes were. They weren't more than 20 feet at the most over the top of the building and you could look and see a guy in the plane. And it was pretty scary and at that time there was nobody shooting back at them because the armament was taken out of the airplane on Friday night and put into the armament building, and then the planes were just sitting there. That's about all I remember and...

Q: What did you do afterwards?

A: Afterwards, you mean later in the night?

Q: Well, after the attack was over.

A: After it was over, we came... well, like I say, we came back to the hangars and there wasn't nothing to do over there. There was nothing to do anything with, and everybody was running wild. So, like I say, our bunch got together and we were sort of... we seen guys laying, but being new to that... I didn't stop. We didn't stop. And see there was other fellows there and so we kept going. And I know that the majority of the officers got their wives out of their shacks that they were living in and they went back to town. But we all stayed there, and we ended up that night out in the hangar with machine guns that had been set up by personnel that knew what they were doing. We didn't know anything about guns. But we were out there in the hangar, but nothing happened after the... nothing happened that evening.

Q: Must have been pretty tense though.

A: Very what?

Q: Pretty tense.

A: Yeah, it was. It was. And I don't know what happened to the fellow four beds from me. I don't know what happened. His name was Maddocks(??) and I don't know.... there had to be a shell or something, strafing come through there. He never got out of bed and I can remember hollering at him, and the other fellow from my home town hollered at him to come on and get out of here. And we got down to the bottom and out and he wasn't there, but there was no stopping because they were there. And he had got killed in bed. He never got out of bed. But, that's about all I can say.

Q: What were you feeling, you know? What were you thinking

while all this was going on?

A: Well, there wasn't much time to think of what was going on. We didn't know what was going on. We didn't know why this was happening or what. I, myself, didn't know what was going on. Everybody was running and getting out of there and saying that the Japanese were attacking us and we better get out of there.

I can remember Sgt. Larson. He was on the floor below, and I... the first one I heard I thought was him, hollering. He must have been up or... but I can remember him hollering upstairs to get out of the building. But when that shell lit in the mess hall, our wing was right on the corner, and the mess hall, as you know was right in the center. It wasn't very far from us. And that's when the building emptied.

And we later found out that we... I don't know how many men we lost. The number is weird. You can hear twelve and you can hear fifteen. But when they run outside, there was trees and shrubbery next to the building, and they got in behind them, where the rest of us took off and run across the street through the baseball field. And these guys that got behind a shrub... it was 8 or 10 of them got killed out of our outfit that didn't never got away from the shrubs. I don't know, some guy said 8 and some said 10. I can't remember which is right. But they stopped and got in there and we kept going.

And we spent that night over at the officers quarters which they were all empty so the enlisted men just got so many in every one what would hold and we stayed there that night.

Then the next morning, we went back to the runway and seen the damage that was done and...

Q: What did that look like?

A: Well, that was the part of the... where we worked, that's the first part that we went to. We wanted to go where we worked so we went there first and whole side of the building was gone. Where there was windows, that was all gone. You could.... there was nothing there and the planes were right out from us lined up like they did every weekend and some of them was really strafed a lot more than the others. But we seen them strafing the runway, and they weren't...oh, footage gets me... I would say they were 50 feet above the ground coming down there because there was nobody shooting back. They didn't have to worry about that. Nobody was prepared for that. But that's about all I can remember of seeing out there.

Q: O.K., well, I thank you for your time.

A: That's fine. Fine. Glad... (tape ends)

James W. Duncan #111

July 26, 1985

Q: Why don't you just tell us about your experiences here, Mr. Duncan.

A: Well, the thing that I'd like to lead off in my conversation with is I was a Private. And the significance and importance of that is the fact that the majority of the overview, or of the big picture was not particularly known to me at the time the attack came about.

I enlisted in the Service in 1940 and came to Hawaii as a Private in the Army Air Corps. I took my basic training here and I was very happy with the substance and the surroundings that I was associated with at the time.

December 7th was obviously a shock to me because of perhaps a little lack of preknowledge of what the overview was in the political arena at that time and the military standing between the United States and Japan.

The basic thing I remember is the fact that I was stationed at Hickam Field in the 11th Bomb Group, 42nd Bomb Squadron, as a Private. I was in Air Operations, which was no more than scheduling flights of a local nature.

And on December 7th I was in the barracks at Hickam Field on a Sunday morning, anticipating going to the beach. My first thing when I got up in the morning was thinking about going down and getting some breakfast and possibly catching a truck out to Nanakuli at about 9:00 in the morning.

However, as I was sitting on my bunk, waiting for my friends to come out of the shower, and going down... getting ready to go down to the mess hall to get some food, we became aware of the fact that there was some bombing going on at that time, and we thought it was the Navy doing a little experimental work, until we suddenly discovered the bombs exploding close by. And the first indication that I knew that it wasn't the Navy was a bomb exploded in a hangar close to the barracks called the Hawaiian Air Depot.

And about that time, looking out the window, and being on the third floor, we saw the aircraft go by that were bombing and strafing Pearl Harbor. We knew that this was not a Navy Maneuver, that it was simply, we were under attack. It didn't really dawn on me or register in my mind as such, that the Japanese were attacking us because I couldn't comprehend or realize that we were at such great odds with the Japanese Empire.

About that time, I got out of my bunk and started down the hallway and the barracks was hit with several bombs. Then I knew that this was reality. We were under attack. I distinctly recall going down the hallway and down the steps out of the barracks, and my first impression was to report to my duty station which at that time was the operations building, and I did.

By the time I got there the whole field was under attack. The aircraft had been strafed and bombed. There wasn't anyone on my office, and I decided to go back to the ordering (??) room section to get instructions from my 1st Sgt. And on the way back through that area, I ran into a friend of mine who was in the... fellows name was Beckler(??) and he was a radio operator and he was going up to an emergency section for operating a generator, and he had two five-gallon cans of gasoline in his hand and he asked me to help

him. We took the gas up to the generator and it so happened it was a lull in the attack.

And so we got the gasoline to the generator and I went back to the barracks, which by that time was burning. And I saw my 1st Sgt. and I expected to get some instructions from him as to what to do because my area of operations wasn't functioning. At that time we came under attack again and we were bombed in the immediate vicinity. And of the 21 people that were in the immediate area getting instructions from the Sgt., 17 of them were killed. I happened to be one of the people that wasn't killed at that time. (emotional pause) The 1st Sgt. was killed.

And then I went to another area and I was instructed to draw some weapons and we did...(pause)... and it appeared that the raid was at an end. Then I was instructed by the Sgt. to take my material and weapons and go down to the Harbor where the Officer's Club is; the entrance to Pearl Harbor, where I was assigned guard duty. That was my basic activity for the day.

Q: What did the scene out on the flight line and the hangar line look like?

A: Well as I recall, at the time I was going up the flight line with my friend Beckler, the B-17's, and B-18's were on fire. They had been strafed, bombed, the barracks had been hit. But we were apparently at that time under a lull.

As far as the attack was concerned there was a little confusion ("a little" is quite the wrong description)... a lot of confusion. The Command was in somewhat of a disarray. I said my 1st Sgt. was killed. The basic essence of the people that were there (I'm talking about the troops) were to report to their sections and perform the duties as they were instructed.

My particular area of performance was not functioning, and as a consequence I was at somewhat of a loss for direction. However, when I did find a Sgt. that gave me the directions to go, we proceeded accordingly.

The field was under attack. We were... the aircraft was basically destroyed, the hangar was hit, the barracks on were on fire, the mess hall was destroyed. These were the reflections that I had at this time.

Q: Did you see any of the B-17's that came in while the attack was still on?

A: I saw one B-17 land that was hit and the crew apparently got out. I saw several people running from the aircraft. It was struck and later, from a distance, I saw it burning. I don't know the number or the name of the aircraft, nor did I ever become acquainted with the people that flew it in. I believe that a fellow by the name of Edmundson (??) was the pilot. I'm not positive. [*Note: This most likely refers to Captain Raymond Swenson*]

Cpt. Edmundson brought a aircraft in at that time, and he could have been the one that was in that aircraft. I never obtained the correct information on that. So I really don't know.

But I did see the aircraft burning, probably 15 minutes after it landed. I left the area immediately. I took some people over to the hospital at that time. And when I came back, I remember the aircraft was destroyed.

Q: What was the scene over at Hickam?

A: Hickam Hospital was a rather chaotic scene in the sense that uh... a friend of mine, his name was [*Carmel R. Calderon, PFC*]... (emotional pause)... [*Carmel*] and I took several people to the hospital... that were dead and dying, and we put them in what would be the outer patio, or the deck, as you came into the hospital. And at that time a doctor was present, performing a, what I've come to later know as a triage. He was deciding who to treat and who not to treat, who was dead, and who was going in for treatment.

It was quite a chaotic scene in that there were probably 50 people laying around in the various stages of being wounded and not being wounded. And as the doctor checked them, he said to me, "Are you wounded?" and I said, "I don't think so." He said, "Take off your shirt." and I did. I was covered with blood from handling these people, as was [*Carmel*]. And we took off our shirts and our pants while he examined us. And there was nothing wrong with me and he told me to leave, which I did. Uh, [*Carmel*], at that stage of the game had a broken arm and he was told to stay and I've never seen him since...(emotional pause).

The reason I feel so strong about this guy... is that he helped me carry these people in...(pause)... with a fractured arm. I realized he was in shock, but he did it out of pure basic training and guts.

Q: That's quite a feat.

A: Yes. I'm sure he's alive... or he was, after the War, but I've never been able to meet him. It was after that session that I reported to a Sgt. and went to a guard duty position at the entrance to Pearl, and that was....

Q: What did the Harbor look like?

A: Well at the time, the Harbor... we were assigned to duty at the entrance to the Harbor, and obviously you could look back into Pearl and see all the debris and all the ships still burning. And as I recall, we saw the three destroyers (and I can't think of the names of them now), *Cassin* and *Downes* were two of them, as they blew up in the dry dock. They had been hit and they were burning and that was to the right of the entrance as you go into Pearl. To the left, you could see the major vessels, the battleships burning, and obviously the most emotional one was the *Arizona*. But as I recall one of the ships was under way and I don't know which one it was, but he didn't get out of the Harbor... or the ship didn't get out of the Harbor. It veered off to the right and apparently grounded itself. And I believe it was a major vessel, possibly the *Utah*, or some other vessel of that capacity. But at that stage of the game I didn't know the names of the ships that were struck, or sunk, or sinking. The only thing that I could see was this tremendous smoke billowing from the vessels that had been hit. And the only thing that I could think of at the time was that we were instructed to repel the enemy. At that stage of the game, we were told that they had possible landed paratroops across the channel, next to Ford Island. And that's the position I was in at that time.

Q: Things must have been pretty tense about that time there.

A: They were. They were very tense in the sense that the

instructions that we were receiving obviously not to authentic. There were a lot of rumors, a lot of things that were going on that we really didn't understand, and the fact that we were without an immediate supervisor (I'm talking about an officer) to explain what the situation was. We were in a position, rumor was almost controlling what we did. We stayed overnight, and obviously there were no paratroopers, there was not attack developed on that side of the channel.

The next day, we were assigned duty on the other side of the Base. But it was a very traumatic evening in the sense that any time something moved, everyone fired their guns. I distinctly recall some Navy patrol aircraft coming in over the channel, late at night, and they were fired on because they didn't identify themselves. I later learned that they were shot down by our forces. But under the circumstances, it was a natural reaction, as wrong as it may have been. But the evening was very confusing with rumors and (I'm talking about the evening of December 7th) ... rumors and nonfactual happenings with the fact that we had rumors that there were civilians that were going to try to breech the area coming in over the fence. There were rumors that there were paratroopers landing on the opposite side of the channel. We were really in a state of confusion at stage of the game. If anything moved we simply shot it. And as I recall I fired two bandoleers of ammunition out of a 30 ought 6 that I'd been issued and purely out of ignorance and lack of proper guidance.

Fay Stanley Shulman #112
September 25, 1985

Q: Where were you living, Ms. Stanley, in December 7th, 1941?

A: I had just rented a house in St. Louis Heights which is above Honolulu. And oh, I'd gotten a big house because my husband, who was aboard the *Saratoga* and a friend of his, and his wife, and the two couples were going to share a house. So I got a big house above the heights, just in time to have a real front row view of the raid.

Q: When did you first realize that morning that something was happening out of the ordinary?

A: When... there was a girl living in the house when I rented it, and she was going back the... like the 12th of December. So she asked if she could stay. Her name was Jackie and she came and woke me up and saying, "We are being attacked." I could sleep through anything and have slept through earthquakes, and God knows what else. But she told me what was happening. (brief interruption while others enter the room)

Q: What happened then?

A: I went out, and everybody I talked to later had really funny reactions of what they did during the War. Some people went and got their toothbrushes and God knows what. What I did was go get my movie camera and start filming it. And I filmed it off and on all day long until I ran out of film.

Q: Just out of curiosity, what happened to that film?

A: I still got it...

Q: You still do?

A: ...and I've got really good pictures of it. I've got pictures... we could see everything. Right about where we were people started peeling off for their long runs into Pearl and you can even see the faces of the pilots in my film. It's scratchy and funny now but still it's good pictures of what happened.

Q: Hmm. When did you... What about your experiences later that day?

A: Well right after that we kept.... we had the radio on. Only we kept getting these bizarre reports that the water system had been poisoned, that troops were landing on Waikiki. Then we had a report that troops were landing on St. Louis Heights, which is where we were. So I put on my house coat and got my camera and got some extra film and went up to St. Louis Heights to photograph the landing you know. God knows what I thought I was doing.

And anyway, there weren't any troops up there. And before the day is out, because I lived in the heights, several people I knew, and friends of people, would come and ask if they could stay with me. And during the next month, I had an awful lot of house guests; nearly all women with children, and all women alone. And so off and on, there were probably six different people that lived up there during the next month.

Q: Must have been tough feeding all those extra mouths?

A: It was. I even went into... threatened a grocery owner. The... nearly all the small shops were Japanese owned, and what they did was just go to earth and nobody would open up anything. And so I got my husband's service revolver and went in... essentially stuck up a grocery store. The problem with dealing with the shops and things was the money was frozen. Now not that day, but the next month or so, and I was left with something like two streetcar tokens or something. And there just was no cash. Nobody had any money at all. And so I had planned to give a party and I had several cases of sauterne and one case of champagne and I used the barter system through the next month. Any liquor and medicines were mediums of exchange. And I remember going up and down that hill swapping people, champagne and sauterne for canned goods, because we did have I think, three babies up there. And...

Q: How were you first recruited as a ward?

A: Oh, I saw a tiny little strip in the paper about it, and so I got hot on the phone. We had been... the owner of the house I lived at gave us evacuation notice. He wanted to move back to the [*St. Louis*] Heights too, on Christmas Eve. And so we really needed someplace to go and we all heard that we were being evacuated, women and children who were not doing service related jobs were evacuated, and I had no intention of being evacuated. And I remember, I called Nancy West and told her about it, and she was game to stay too. And so we both went down there together. I do want to get back to the day of the raid though.

Q: O.K., why don't you do that.

A: Uh, during the day, we found out for one thing that a lot of the radio reports we were getting were fraudulent. The... actually, the Honolulu broadcasters had gone off the air, and I still do not know what we were listening to; whether these were enemy broadcasts, or whether they were police short wave broadcasts. We were told at one time or another, that the Island had been taken.

And there was a lady who lived next door to me who had a shortwave radio and that night we went over there and huddled under blankets to... so that we wouldn't show a light, listening to the broadcast. We heard that the Island had been taken. We heard that the West Coast had been taken. There was an awful lot of erroneous information around, and it was not until we saw that the flag raised over the Royal Hawaiian the next morning that we knew that our part of the Island wasn't taken. We were under... because of the broadcasts, we were under the impressions that it

was. There were supposed to have been landings on Kaneohe. There were supposed to have been landings on Waikiki. We heard everything in the world. And either that day or the next day we heard that they needed people to help take blood. And so we went and helped with transfusions... not transfusions but just taking blood for transfusions at one of the schools. They set up a first aid station.

Q: Do you remember which school?

A: No, I don't, but it was up in that area. It was not far. And we... also, gal who had the short wave radio was a nurse and so she trained a team of us to deliver babies. She said that notoriously, bombings, thunder storms, any unusual occurrences brought on a rash of babies, and so we were trained to do it. My thing was to take alcohol and a pair of scissors and sterilize the scissors by pouring alcohol over them and setting them on fire. And thank God we never needed that, but one of the gals that came up to stay with me had a baby the next day. And I went down to the hospital with her and the black out was then in progress, and so I was there after black out... after curfew that evening, waiting for the baby. And there was no way for me to get back home because there were no cars, and I didn't have a car at the time, and the street cars and things didn't run. And so I finally went to the police station and they sent me home in the Black Mariah (laughter).

Anyway, we did an awful lot of volunteer work around the hospital. We hear that this group needed this and another group needed this, and we just got around. I don't know how we got around because we really didn't have any money. We didn't have a car. But somehow we got where ever it was that we were trying to go.

Q: Getting back to the wards, where did you receive your training as a...

A: At the Iolani Palace.

Q: What was the training like?

A: It was very simple and they were not only training, but we had to take written tests; we had to take medical tests; we had to have inoculations. The training was the Army Sargeant, I believe, from Ft. Shafter, who had been doing the work during the prior months, trained us.

And what we did was get radio or intercom things and we placed little icons on a position board which essentially tracked the movement of all and sea crafts in the area. Correct me Nancy, if that's wrong. Were they under sea things as well? (Nancy replies: I don't think under sea but surface craft.)... Anyway, it was easy training and we were particularly warned again and again against telling it was radar work. We were not sure that the Japanese knew that we had radar.

It was very hush, hush, and we were forbidden to tell anybody what we were doing, where we were going. The secrecy of it was the.... and we had a lot of background checks. Originally, only Honolulu people who will vouch for in every direction were allowed to enter. They found out later there just weren't enough of those, so personnel (Army/Navy Personnel) were allowed in if personally known by the people who formed

the organization or if real good credentials could be produced.
And I don't remember any problem about that but oddly enough it ended up with a very picked group of really bright patriotic dedicated nice kind of women. And getting together with them again, it's still a picked group. It's very...

Q: When, under training, when all the secrecy was emphasized, were you told that you were under military discipline at the time?

A: Yes, and we were under military discipline too. And in everything but name, we were a part of the Army under the 7th Command.

Q: Were you issued a uniform?

A: Well, we weren't immediately, but we had uniforms. They were pretty blue uniforms. There was a dress uniform and then a regular uniform. And they were pretty and flattering and we all liked our uniforms I think. On the other hand, we were all supposed to carry gas masks, and before too long we were using our gas masks to carry our make up in and using them as hand bags.

Q: (laughter)

A: Listen, before we get away from December the 7th...

Q: O.K....

A: ... In researching a book I wanted to do about this period, I got letters from a lot of people, and a lot of people answered questionnaires for me. And some of this material you might be interested in. I've sent questionnaires to at least 300 people and have gotten some marvelous things back.
Well, one of the things, I got a letter from my husband (my ex-husband) who was then my husband, and he said that I had watched a submarine being sunk off of Waikiki. I have absolutely no recollection of this. But he said a mini sub was... and I had binoculars and I did watch everything that was going on in town, and filmed what I could. But I don't remember that, but he does.
He also remembers...

Q: What was he doing at the time?

A: He was... the *Saratoga* was in birth in San Diego and so he had a very hard time trying to find out if we were alright; if I was alright. And it was days before we could let people know that we were... just things. Phone lines and everything were just jammed. You couldn't get out or in. And so somebody ran into him when he flew in (somebody who he had never seen before), and they said, "Burt, your wife lives in St. Louis Heights and she's O.K." and whoever it was knew that we continued to be a boarding house for everybody that came through.
And all the gals who lived at my house, when their husbands would come in, would... they would stay up there. And I remember the husbands gave us a drill and some guns so that we could kill

ourselves before we were captured. And so really, we were under the impression that we were about to be taken, for several months thereafter. Things really didn't return to normal until after Midway.

And there were always a thousand rumors going around the Island. We could see from where we stood. We could see the air bases. We could see Pearl and the smoke from everything, and everyone coming back from Pearl would have one horror story right after the other.

Q: As a ward, after you finished your training, what was your first assignment?

A: The very first assignment was taking over a night... uh, they gradually worked us in, in there. What they had been doing is manning the boards by day and manning the radar station. Now with the wards they were able to do through the night.

So my first shift was a night duty and everybody hated the graveyard shift and I loved it. So I used to trade people for the graveyard shift because I like to work at night. And of course we were frightened and interested in taking it over. But we were.... everybody emphasized that we were doing a valuable service, and quite rapidly we took over the entire running, both day and night, of the board. And this was in a place called 'Little Robert', which was a shack and we could have been bombed off the face of the Earth. It wasn't until later that we moved into the tunnel underground.

Q: How did the system work that uh... in other words, your job. It was a gather, a part of a system in which radar operators and fighter operations were all connected up somehow. How did that system work?

A: Well, the radar people were stationed around Hawaii and then

later, all of the Islands. They would report in; we wore earphones. They would report activity to us and we would plot it on the board. Then there were liaison men from all the Services. And say we plotted in an unknown flight of some sort. They would follow that flight and if it became suspicious. Then they in turn would plot... they would call, say, the Air Force, at say.... say it was over at Kaneohe. They would alert people and they would go up and intercept the flight. Or somebody would identify a flight as their own. These were Navy fliers coming in from someplace else and they... the military men, then later on (and Nancy can tell you more about this, because she was there longer than I was) you kept permanent records of the plots for every...

Then there was a thing, we looked in a clock and it was numbered by... there were say a yellow sector of the clock, and a red, and a green, and a blue, and so at every quarter hour, we changed colors of the plots we were putting on the board. So you could look and say, that was at 10:15 and this was into 10:30. And you got coordinates.

The men that you talked to, the actual radar men were called "Oscars", and we were "Rascals", and the military men were "Majors" (called Majors), right? Majors? (speaking to Nancy...) I've forgotten the nomenclature. But we were not supposed to talk chit-chat with the radar operators. But we weren't supposed to talk to "Oscars" but we would, and they would tell us that their cat up there had kittens. This was mostly during long night

watches when nothing was happening.

Then we got quite frequent breaks from the board. There were always alternates. I expect the real problem from the management stand point was getting enough people on every shift to where the people could be relieved at the board and we were trucked... we went to work... The shifts were quite short, I'd say about 4 hours? (Nancy replies: At first, it was different...) Uh, we changed this two or three different times. We fine tuned it all the time.

But we were trucked up to "Little Robert" and as I remember it, the first three or four months, it rained all of the time. It was incredibly muddy. Sometimes we took our boots off and went barefoot through the mud and sometimes we wore boots all of the time. But all I remember is it being cold and dark and muddy in the night struggling up the hill to "Little Robert" and at first it was scary and later on it became a lot of fun.

We had taken over Officer's Housing and there were usually three of us to a house, and an awful lot of good friendships were made of people doing what we considered hazardous work, and we felt useful and important. And being an "island" of women in a "sea" of men, we also felt cute as hell (laughter.) We really permanently got our heads turned because we dated all day and ... you would have dates for breakfast, lunch, before and after shift, for dinner, and then after dinner. And so we really had a good War.

And we had prisoners of war, I believe, patrolling the area, and we had something that was popularly known as a "wake bell" that we could signal headquarters if we were in any problems of any kind (laughter.) We had all officers privileges. We ate at the Officer's Mess. We had the golf course, tennis courts, swimming pool, hula lessons, the gym, everything anybody could want as far as recreation. We were awfully well taken care of.

Q: You mentioned "Little Robert" and then moving up to the tunnel. What was the tunnel called?

A: Well, it was "Lizard."

Q: What was that like? How was that different from "Little Robert"?

A: It was enormously bigger. It was underground. The whole thing was underground. There were special problems. Some girls ultimately left because they simply could not work underground all day long, and it was considered... I do think there were some increase in colds and flu and things from the... But you felt safer there and there were several rooms. There was the big plotting room; there was a room where you went when you were off shift; and there was artificial air-conditioning and everything. And most of the time, the climate was bearable, but sometimes it got very bad down there.

Q: What was your particular job as a ward?

A: I can't think of any particular job I had. Nancy was one of the officers of the wards, and she can tell you a lot more about the structure. And I've got several people that I would love for you to interview just because they were in superior positions, where they helped with the actual running of the organization.

Q: You mentioned that around the plotting board, there were Army, and Navy, and Air Corps officers around there. What did it seem to you, what the relations were like between the different services and the different branches?

A: They got on fine. We know for a fact, about all the inter-service rivalry which really impeded their setting up the radar... I understood from some of the people who were there for the reunion, that they would have at the time of the raid, by about two or three days (it was the closest margin you ever saw) they would have had to set up.... we ultimately had (were it not for inter-service rivalry) nobody could agree on who manned what and just how to work the things. And so they had all the technology.

One of the men had been in England and had studied the radar set up there. And they were ready to go, and to have it manned around the clock, and they just could not get everybody together. But the time that we were there, it seemed to me that there was perfect cooperation and cordiality. I think people didn't know that a lot of the goof ups before and around the raid, had to do with inter-service rivalry. And so I think they... as far as I knew, it was cordial and professional.

Q: You mentioned a couple of minutes ago that being one of the small number of women among a big group of men, you had a pretty active social life (laughter). How did it seem to you that the men accepted women working in, basically what amounted to a man's job?

A: They loved it! They loved it! They welcomed our being there and I think there was something about the niceness of the group and the seriousness of the work, that made for respect on both sides. We were very professional group. They loved having women there and oddly enough, they were very sweet to us and we weren't besieged all the time. We really didn't need the "break bells". They were very respectful of us. They were glad to just be able to smell a girl's hair, or have them across the table for breakfast. They were darling to us.

And there just were no problems with thinking that we didn't do a good job. Perhaps because we were efficient, they appreciated it. And they said, (several people said) that we were better at it than the military were; that we endured the fatigue of it, and the boredom of it, better than the men did.

Q: You also, I guess, you had different groups of women there; some women from the Islands, some military wives, I guess some, later recruits from the mainland. How did those groups of women... different groups of women.... get along with one another?

A: As far as I could tell, everybody just you know, were wonderful. Now I was not there when the people came over from the mainland. And we did coordinate some people from the high schools and colleges too.

The schools would make it possible for those kids to come up for four hour shifts, and there were a lot of people... We were also short handed so we welcomed any new people who could come

and help out. And as far as I know there were no problems. Now I know from my research that there were problems. I never saw any.

I was in a household of three people who just adored each other and there were a lot of stable households of people, and then they would assign new people to you and so you'd break your back to make them feel welcome, and fill them in on things.

Q: Did they give you living quarters?

A: They were living quarters. They were nice living quarters. They were usually two-story houses, three women to a house. And they were nice houses. Somebody just told me a funny story about, we went out so much that nobody cooked very much at home, though we had nice kitchens. And somebody did a refrigerator contest and they went through everybody's refrigerator, finally found one with food in it, so they gave her the prize. Everybody else kept their stockings and ordinance in the refrigerator... and their booze (laughter.)

Q: (laughter) Do you recall how much you got paid as a ward?

A: I think, and it seemed princely to me, I think it was a $150 plus all our living quarters. I believe we paid... now Nancy will probably be better at this, and I can... if it's important, I've got the amounts in my notes at home. But it seemed like a lot of money to me. We paid for our own food, but it was at Mess and we were able to go to the PX and things. And none of us were there... I mean we were all wives of servicemen or something. Had other incomes. So this was mad money anyway.

Q: Were you ever trained to use a weapon?

A: We were trained in pistols. We were trained in poison gases (how to detect them). We were trained to do a fire hose. We

were encouraged to go and do pistol practice. Yeah, I know I had a gun but I don't know how many other people had guns. And, but that was left me by Carl Fogg. Do you remember Carl Fogg? (speaking to Nancy) He was killed very early...

Q: Carl who?

A: His name was Carl Fogg, and he was from ...

Q: Do you remember how to spell the name?

A: F-O-G-G. (Nancy says: Carlton was his real name.) Carlton Fogg, yeah. And he left me... he was one of the people that passed through up on St. Louis Heights, and he left us his gun so we could kill ourselves. And I had that gun through most of the ... But anyway, we were obviously given target practice, but I don't know what guns we used again. Were we issued them or...? (Nancy says: No, we just used them for practice.) We just used them for target practice. (Nancy says: No, wait a minute...) It's... (... oh no, we practiced with rocks, strengthening our shooting arms; holding a rock.) I hadn't remembered that.

(Right, so that we could get strong. Because this wasn't like today. This was used for the site. This was one arm.) That's right... did like so.

Q: In all the time when you were working as a ward, do you recall ever having a real alert where they actually thought there was some penetration?

A: Oh, we had a number of them and we went to the air raid shelters from time to time. And there was indeed, one instance where somebody dropped some bombs up over the Pali or someplace.

Then there was (ask Nancy about this later on) there was a mystery flight that would come on in the night; an airplane somewhere would circle around. It would go above the air bases and then it would disappear off the board. And this happened from time, and time, and time again. I believe it was finally believed to be an airplane off of a submarine.

Q: Were you a ward at the time of the Battle of Midway?

A: No, I'd already gone. But then.... but I understand that everybody knew something was happening. I mean everybody was aware that there was a big push. We were always aware. We got information from a lot of different sources and you can feel the excitement and we could feel that there was a big build up. And of course you could see thousands of planes and ships going out. And every single action, we were aware of probably more than... sooner than other people. And one girl would get some scuttle butt and pretty well went around the... it wasn't just the girls. The major officers too got scuttlebutt. And all of a sudden they would turn out to be hundreds of people come up and watch the board, and we'd know something was up. And we'd find out later what it was.

There was one instance where there was a volcanic eruption that was thought to be something and we'd spoiled our black out and uh.... Incidentally, all the cars were blacked out and you had to grope around with blue lights on the cars. And then we would... I know my car, we would go to some airfield someplace and then would let us drain the gasoline out of the airplanes into the cars. So my little Ford didn't know how to anything but air fuel.

Also, people would fly in steaks and things that were hard to get from.... Any time anyone went to the Island of Hawaii they'd bring us back a bunch of steaks. Liquor was rationed and I remember we all used... when there was going to be a party, you used everybody’s rations. But we really didn't do without very much of anything. It was funny, we had.... sometimes things were scarce; just what hadn't come over on the boat, and there'd be a month when there was no toilet paper and there would be a month when there was some other scarcity.

We also, in food, I remember, we would have a fairly monotonous diet and we ate a lot of pineapple that year.... that first year. We would have it sliced for breakfast, diced for lunch, pulverized for dinner, and a lot of us got burned out on pineapple.

We also had a rest and recreation house on the other side of the Island which were one of the fun things that were done; the

many fun things that were available to us.

Q: I don't have any other questions.

A: Well, it was an interesting time and that particular group of women I feel not only made a contribution but are under reported. I do think we did a difficult job well and I'll remember the period of time as a period of growth (personal growth) and enormous wonderful friendships.

Q: Thank you.

A: O.K.

#144 JOHN FULTON: MARINE ABOARD THE USS *ST. LOUIS*

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an interview with Mr. John Fulton. It was conducted on December 2, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki at about 9:20 in the morning. Mr. Fulton lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Interviewer is Chris Conybeare and assisted by Mark Tanaka-Sanders. So, good morning.

John Fulton (JF): Good morning.

CC: Mr. Fulton, just a little bit before we get into this . . . where was your hometown, where were you born?

JF: Blues Creek, eighteen miles around the post office.

CC: Blues Creek is in North Carolina?

JF: Yeah, it's just real, real close to Winston-Salem. It's a country town.

CC: Country town, small town?

JF: Yeah, one post office, two stores.

CC: And maybe we could move up in time a little bit. What was your name and your rank on December 7, 1941.

JF: P. John Fulton, oh, 1941? I was Corporal.

CC: And the first initial is P?

JF: P. John.

CC: Is there a name that goes with that, or is that a secret?

JF: Yeah, yeah. No, Percy John.

CC: Percy John Fulton.

JF: (mumbles) John.

CC: And your rank?

JF: Corporal.

CC: And what branch of the service were you?

JF: Marine Corps.

CC: What was your job and where were you stationed on December 7?

JF: On the seventh I was on the fantail and a member of a color guard, which is comprised of four men whose duty was to raise the colors at the exact eight o'clock, after the bugler got through with playing "Colors." But this morning we raised the colors five minutes to eight, which you never do. We didn't wait for the bugler to get through. We raised the colors and took off for gun stations.

CC: Before we get into why that happened, how did you happen to be in Hawaii on that date? What . . .

JF: We were . . . there were two task forces here. We were a member of one of them. We had been up two weeks, our turn to come in. We came in, the other one went out.

CC: And what ship was this now?

JF: USS *ST. LOUIS*.

CC: And what kind of ship is that?

JF: Light cruiser, six-inch guns, heavy cruiser is eight-inch.

CC: So you came in on the St. Louis, when?

JF: Friday night, we entered the harbor, after having been out two weeks, about four-thirty, five o'clock, coming in the harbor.

CC: And what was the mood of the times? Had you been on general quarters a lot or were you expecting trouble, or what were things like?

JF: On Friday, we . . . our submarine, our destroyers had picked up, detected this submarine which was sank outside the harbor. Prior to that in October, we had been in the Philippines in a very tense situation all the way out and back, all Japanese ships we sighted went to general quarters, ready for battle. And the only thing we didn't do was train the guns out on this ship.

CC: So basically, there was a feeling that there was going to be trouble.

JF: Right. Right. And the army had been practicing defense of the isle on prior to the week before, and placements, gunning placements on water tanks, on high places, and they had just taken them all down.

CC: So the morning of December 7, you were on color guard duty. Maybe you can explain a little bit about . . . who else was with you? Do you remember the other guys?

JF: I don't remember. It was comprised of all other Marines, which was part of the duty of the Marines aboard the ship. And duties of the Marines aboard the ship was security for the whole ship and if the ship got out here and the United States ordered it to make a landing party on an isle along some small island that the government was being disrupted, it was our job to go ashore and take care of the situation and get it back stable. That was the primary purpose of the Marines aboard the ship.

CC: What happened that morning when you went to put up the colors? Do you remember what you did?

JF: Well, we got out there and were waiting to raise the colors. And of course the bugler had not started, had not started blowing "Colors" yet. The planes came in and across our stern, which we could see very easily, their outline of the men, their heads, eyeballs. This close. And as soon as the plane started coming in, we knew, having been in the Philippines and having sank the submarine; we knew what was going on. Nobody didn't have to say, "Man your battle stations, we're going to war." We took off.

CC: You say you could see the pilots of the planes, how were they dressed?

JF: Just like the movies shown at the memorial. With the old World War aviator caps.

CC: And you were that close.

JF: That close. Yeah.

CC: Did they fire on you?

JF: No, no, no. They were . . . their sight was on battle wagons. They were looking straight for the battle wagons.

CC: What kind of planes were they? Do you remember?

JF: Torpedo planes, real low. They were getting down to where they could just slip that torpedo right out.

CC: What did you do? Did the other guys all know? I mean, did you . . .

JF: Oh yeah. Everybody knew there, in this color guard. We just ran the colors right on up, which you -- when you're getting ready to raise the colors, you already have it fastened to the lanyard, ready to go. When, at the proper time of the color -- Colors are blown, we already had it fastened, we just pulled it to the top, lashed it down, took off.

CC: Where'd you take off to?

JF: To our gun station, which was an anti-aircraft mount, five-inch, enclosed in an aircraft mount.

CC: Did you wait for any orders to get that gun into action, or . . .

JF: No orders, you were . . . During the time, general quarters sounded, but you didn't have to ask, "What's this for?" You knew what it was for. We went on to get the gun in operation, which was a very short period of time. We were firing, I'd say, within a minute after. Within maybe two or three minutes from the stern of the ship to not quite halfway fore, but we were on the same level as this gun mount, same deck.

CC: What kinds of things could you see? What did you observe going on out in the . . .

JF: Well, we were starting to see, before we got into the gun mount, the explosions from bombs, from the torpedoes. And then, after we got into the gun mount and started firing, which we were sitting our timer, our fuses on these shells, lowest possible because you're firing almost directly -- and as you've read, lots of people were killed from our own anti-aircraft fire, which later I encountered this out here. An armada, one time, when planes came in through the armada and hit nobody and we had men killed from our own anti-aircraft fire. But that morning we were sitting as low as we could, at dive bombers, at torpedo bombers.

CC: And meanwhile, the *ST. LOUIS* got under way?

JF: Between the attacks -- the first attack was subsiding, and we were tied up alongside of the [*USS*] *HONOLULU*, which our task force commander was aboard. And the same type ships and bridges were almost jumpable, over, not quite. In a hurry, you could have, but they could talk back and forth. And our captain, talking to the commander, told him, he says, "I'm getting out of here."

He said, "If you go, you're going on your own." Which, in your view . . . even in the movie down here, you see incidents of people not wanting to assume responsibility. Now the commander didn't say, "Go ahead. I'll back you."

The captain says, "I'm going."

CC: Was that unusual, though? Didn't it usually take quite an operation to get a cruiser out of there?

JF: They usually took four tugs to maneuver it from these finger piers, but this captain, being experienced enough, having come up from submarine, I mean, destroyers. Maneuvering small ships, you learn to maneuver big ships much better. And he maneuvered it back out of the finger piers, narrow stream, reverse the screws, spun the ship around and we were ready to depart then.

CC: Could you see anything from the gun mount? I mean, were you able to observe anything other than what you had to do, which was fire the gun? Were you able to . . .

JF: Oh yeah, you have hatches on both sides of the gun mount, which you could open. And as we went out of the harbor, which -- in the book titled The Day of Infamy, which is -- and there are several books titles "*Day of Infamy*", but one of them shows us going out right by these battle wagons, and it's identified as the *ST. LOUIS*.

But we could open this hatch and see what was going on right there, by the battle wagons and all. And the Arizona was not down, was burning and listing, but not down yet.

CC: What about the *NEVADA*? Did you observe the *NEVADA*?

JF: Nevada was trying to get up, under way, ahead of us. And I have heard that coxswain was at the wheel of this. How true it is, I don't know. But, saw it was going to sink, swung over in the channel, set it down or let it set down, stopped its engines and we went by then.

CC: And what did you do, what did the *ST. LOUIS* do?

JF: Proceeded onto the mouth of the channel, and we got to the mouth of the channel, the submarines were lying there, waiting for us. In your movies, you see pictures of submarines, torpedoes running through water. We saw the torpedoes coming, and we started dodging the torpedoes. Ran aground, but didn't stop us -- threw one of our screws out of line a little bit. And out three days and the screws -- whomp, whomp, whomp, whomp. And continued to whomp until we got back into United States.

CC: What were your -- the first thoughts you had when you realized that you were under attack? Do you remember what you were thinking at that time?

JF: This is hell, this is it. We don't have to wait no longer.

CC: So you'd been expecting that something might happen.

JF: Yeah. From Manila, the submarines sinking, the news.

CC: Did your ship take any hits?

JF: During this first attack, we had a bomb dropped between our bow, the *HONOLULU* bow, and *ST. LOUIS* bow, which -- your bows spread out when you're tied together -- went down on the floor of the harbor and exploded on the floor of the harbor. And during the explosion on the floor of the harbor, raised the ship up almost crumbled you, standing on your legs. And some strapping of the ship. But other than that, no more damage.

CC: So you were fairly lucky, in terms of . . .

JF: Yeah, damage in the harbor, very lucky, yeah. But at the time, we were in the harbor, in the finger piers, which was part of the Navy yard. We were under pretty extensive repair. We had had glass portholes. They had cut them all out, steel, three-eighth inch steel plate, and were going to seal them up. These portholes were open, had not been sealed. First thing, out at sea, was to seal these portholes, which are an engineering department seal with steel plates. Another thing, we didn't have -- pertaining to personnel -- nobody had dog tags, nobody had insurance.

CC: Thought you needed some insurance?

JF: First thing we started making was dog tags and insurance. I had no insurance. The reason I had no insurance, I had been a buck private, twenty-one dollars -- I mean a private -- twenty-one dollars a month. And if you took insurance, that was a dollar and ten cents out of your twenty-one. Couldn't see it. (Chuckles)

CC: As a corporal, what kind of pay did you make as a Corporal?

JF: I think as a Corporal you got on up to about twenty-eight or thirty.

CC: What would you . . .

JF: I still hadn't -- didn't have insurance.

CC: What would you have done that day if there hadn't been an attack? What were you planning to do after you raised the colors?

JF: Well, I was on duty all the day.

CC: So you would have been duty on the . . .

JF: Yeah, after I got the colors up, yeah. After I got the colors up, I would have come back to the gangplank and had duty there. And of course you -- in the harbor, you have men patrolling up on the stern and bow all the time, armed for whatever.

CC: So, that afternoon, or during the first attack, you manned a gun all during the attacks, or . . .

JF: Manned the gun until about ten-thirty that morning, proceeded on out to sea. Stayed out three days. We stayed at battle readiness, battle stations,

until about ten-thirty, before they announced over the loud speaker system, "Secure from general quarters," which then you could leave your gun station, go to your quarters, but nobody went to quarters. Everybody just went up on the main deck. Some of them saying, "What happened?"

They hadn't seen or didn't know.

CC: That's right, they'd been below deck.

JF: Yeah, yeah, below decks.

CC: What kinds of things did you talk about? Do you remember what people were saying?

JF: How terrible it was and what's going to happen, and, "Where are we going now," which you didn't -- the words never passed, what you're going to do. And light a cigarette and I started smoking. I had never been smoking. The guys were smoking, I said, "Give me one of them cigarettes."

Started smoking, smoked for about -- until I get back to California, about a year and a half later, get off the ship, quit.

CC: But, so Pearl Harbor started you to smoke?

JF: (Chuckles) Yeah, that's right.

CC: How did you finish the war?

JF: After I got off, stayed aboard the ship. Made the first offensive action back against the Japanese, which was up in the Marshall, Gilberts, which was one carrier, two cruisers and about three or four destroyers. Now this is February, after December, which was an air attack from the carrier on the islands, up there. And which we supported, and of course we had very little naval armament left, which was 1500 miles in the Japanese territory, very dangerous, caught us. If their fleet had caught us, we wouldn't have had a chance.

But, anyway, we came back from that and into, around Pearl, still patrolling. But in the three days -- let's backtrack a little bit -- the three days we were patrolling for the task force that had launched.

CC: Where did you go? Where did the patrol go? Do you remember?

JF: No. It's out to sea from Honolulu here. But what direction . . .

CC: You don't know if you went south or north?

JF: No, no, no. Unless you happened to have duty on the bridge, which the Marines did have duty on the bridge, which one of the duties of the Marines was to relay messages to the skipper from engineer, boiler rooms, whatever, come in on the telephone, you relay that verbally to the skipper. But if you had the duty on the bridge, you would know. The compass was there, you could see where you're going, and of course the coxswain, usually, the coxswain was at the wheel and you talked back and forth, you knew which direction.

CC: But you really didn't . . .

JF: You were just following an azimuth, or compass.

CC: How about after the three days at sea? You came back in, what kind of work did they have you doing after that? Did you get involved in any of the clean up, or . . .

JF: Oh, no. The only work we were doing was resupplying our ship. We had small amount of ammo, small amount of oil, small amount of supplies, which we had to resupply, get our ammo back on, and whatever you want into a Navy yard situation. Took off all the ammo, except for what we had orders to keep on, due to fire, dangers, explosions. And this is a tremendous job to load these shells. And all the things that go back to was fine. And this don't get done with ten men, it's every man on the ship, almost. Of course, you've got your normal duties, got to go on.

But anyway, we were resupplying the ship, getting ready to go back out. And in twenty-four hours we went back out. But as soon as we came in, the first night, completely black out on the island. Any lights were sighted up in the mountains, they were shot out.

CC: Were things pretty tense?

JF: Very tense, yeah. Trusted nobody. Not if they were -- looked suspicious.

CC: So there was a lot of, shall we say, itchy trigger fingers?

JF: That's right. And this itchy trigger fingers occurs all, in any combat situation. To illustrate, one time this -- as I said a while ago -- we were on the way to New Britain, New Guinea, supposed to make an assault there. Our intelligence found out that some way, the Japanese had got a hold of it. Now, this is an armada ready to land; they called it off. Japanese hit us one afternoon, now here's ships three hundred-sixty degrees, as far as you can see. Torpedo planes came in on us. Low level, mast height. Flew completely through this armada, did not hit a ship and got out.

Back to the itchy fingers. Next day, we get the word, "Our planes are coming in. Do not fire."

Some of these ships didn't have too much communication on them. Small, the small ships with just all tanks and ammo and this type of thing. But anyway, the order not to fire. One guy got an itchy trigger finger, opened on these planes, knocked one down, 10,000 on a plane.

CC: Did you see any of that during the attack on Pearl Harbor? Any of mistaking our own aircraft, kind of thing?

JF: No. Because we had very few aircraft in the air, but my primary duties was inside this gun mount, which you couldn't see out too much. The only time you could see out was you opened the hatch -- which you weren't supposed to open the hatch, see.

CC: Basically kept loading, setting fuses . . .

JF: That's right, yeah, yeah.

CC: Okay, let's stop right now. I want to change tapes . . .

END OF VIDEOTAPE 1

VIDEOTAPE 2

JF: Yes, S-I-N-K-I-E-W-I-C-Z [*Sienkiewicz*].

CC: Okay, maybe we can reach him. Okay, why don't we kind of wind this up and maybe -- how do you feel about this? Here you are back, forty-five years later. How do you feel about this incident? Was it one of those things that's always been with you through this last forty-five years?

JF: Oh yeah, it's continued with me, but Pearl Harbor was bad. Terrible. But a beach head is another story. It's the reckoning of the real ante, on a beach head. But (sigh) there are some things that disturb me here, but I'm sure that the nationalities have nothing to do with it. But it's disturbing to go aboard this *ARIZONA* and know that there are men down below.

CC: Do you -- I mean, you have -- it's a dubious distinction to be sure, but to participate in an event that's of that historic nature, has it given you things to think about, in terms of a philosophy of life or how you approach things?

JF: Well, philosophy of life, we are living in one of the greatest countries there is. The opportunities, the freedom and we should -- as the movie explains down there -- never forget it.

CC: And do you think that young people today are -- really understand their history, or . . .

JF: No way they'd understand it. I worked -- I was an assistant register of deeds of a county of about 450 thousand people. And we had a big enough organization that many school groups, individuals -- we even had people from Hawaii come to observe our operation. And on the particular area that I worked, I had pictures of Iwo Jima flag-raising, Pearl Harbor, on a wall. And I would ask these students, high school teen-ager, how much they studied this in history. Some of them say, "I never heard of it." Some of them say, "Oh, a paragraph, one page." This is disturbing.

CC: Why is it disturbing?

JF: That it's not being taught more in our schools. To make them aware of what the country can get into if they're not properly governed. When I first was in the Marine Corps, I'm training with wooden rifles, rubber tanks. This all gets back to your legislation, defense department, congressman saying, "No, I don't want," -- "You can't have appropriations of 450 million to do this." This is terrible. We should never let our country get back to that.

CC: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

#144 PERCY JOHN FULTON: MARINE ABOARD THE USS *ST. LOUIS*

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an interview with Mr. John Fulton. It was conducted on December 2, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki at about 9:20 in the morning. Mr. Fulton lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Interviewer is Chris Conybeare and assisted by Mark Tanaka-Sanders. So, good morning.

Percy John Fulton (PF): Good morning.

CC: Mr. Fulton, just a little bit before we get into this . . . where was your hometown, where were you born?

PF: Blues Creek, eighteen miles around the post office.

CC: Blues Creek is in North Carolina?

PF: Yeah, it's just real, real close to Winston-Salem. It's a country town.

CC: Country town, small town?

PF: Yeah, one post office, two stores.

CC: And maybe we could move up in time a little bit. What was your name and your rank on December 7, 1941.

PF: P. John Fulton, oh, 1941? I was Corporal.

CC: And the first initial is P?

PF: P. John.

CC: Is there a name that goes with that, or is that a secret?

PF: Yeah, yeah. No, Percy John.

CC: Percy John Fulton.

PF: (mumbles) John.

CC: And your rank?

PF: Corporal.

CC: And what branch of the service were you?

PF: Marine Corps.

CC: What was your job and where were you stationed on December 7?

PF: On the seventh I was on the fantail and a member of a color guard, which is comprised of four men whose duty was to raise the colors at the exact eight o'clock, after the bugler got through with playing "Colors." But this morning we raised the colors five minutes to eight, which you never do. We didn't wait for the bugler to get through. We raised the colors and took off for gun stations.

CC: Before we get into why that happened, how did you happen to be in Hawaii on that date? What . . .

PF: We were . . . there were two task forces here. We were a member of one of them. We had been up two weeks, our turn to come in. We came in, the other one went out.

CC: And what ship was this now?

PF: USS *ST. LOUIS*.

CC: And what kind of ship is that?

PF: Light cruiser, six-inch guns, heavy cruiser is eight-inch.

CC: So you came in on the St. Louis, when?

PF: Friday night, we entered the harbor, after having been out two weeks, about four-thirty, five o'clock, coming in the harbor.

CC: And what was the mood of the times? Had you been on general quarters a lot or were you expecting trouble, or what were things like?

PF: On Friday, we . . . our submarine, our destroyers had picked up, detected this submarine which was sank outside the harbor. Prior to that in October, we had been in the Philippines in a very tense situation all the way out and back, all Japanese ships we sighted went to general quarters, ready for battle. And the only thing we didn't do was train the guns out on this ship.

CC: So basically, there was a feeling that there was going to be trouble.

PF: Right. Right. And the army had been practicing defense of the isle on prior to the week before, and placements, gunning placements on water tanks, on high places, and they had just taken them all down.

CC: So the morning of December 7, you were on color guard duty. Maybe you can explain a little bit about . . . who else was with you? Do you remember the other guys?

PF: I don't remember. It was comprised of all other Marines, which was part of the duty of the Marines aboard the ship. And duties of the Marines aboard the ship was security for the whole ship and if the ship got out here and the United States ordered it to make a landing party on an isle along some small island that the government was being disrupted, it was our job to go ashore and take care of the situation and get it back stable. That was the primary purpose of the Marines aboard the ship.

CC: What happened that morning when you went to put up the colors? Do you remember what you did?

PF: Well, we got out there and were waiting to raise the colors. And of course the bugler had not started, had not started blowing "Colors" yet. The planes came in and across our stern, which we could see very easily, their outline of the men, their heads, eyeballs. This close. And as soon as the plane started coming in, we knew, having been in the Philippines and having sank the submarine; we knew what was going on. Nobody didn't have to say, "Man your battle stations, we're going to war." We took off.

CC: You say you could see the pilots of the planes, how were they dressed?

PF: Just like the movies shown at the memorial. With the old World War aviator caps.

CC: And you were that close.

PF: That close. Yeah.

CC: Did they fire on you?

PF: No, no, no. They were . . . their sight was on battle wagons. They were looking straight for the battle wagons.

CC: What kind of planes were they? Do you remember?

PF: Torpedo planes, real low. They were getting down to where they could just slip that torpedo right out.

CC: What did you do? Did the other guys all know? I mean, did you . . .

PF: Oh yeah. Everybody knew there, in this color guard. We just ran the colors right on up, which you -- when you're getting ready to raise the colors, you already have it fastened to the lanyard, ready to go. When, at the proper time of the color -- Colors are blown, we already had it fastened, we just pulled it to the top, lashed it down, took off.

CC: Where'd you take off to?

PF: To our gun station, which was an anti-aircraft mount, five-inch, enclosed in an aircraft mount.

CC: Did you wait for any orders to get that gun into action, or . . .

PF: No orders, you were . . . During the time, general quarters sounded, but you didn't have to ask, "What's this for?" You knew what it was for. We went on to get the gun in operation, which was a very short period of time. We were firing, I'd say, within a minute after. Within maybe two or three minutes from the stern of the ship to not quite halfway fore, but we were on the same level as this gun mount, same deck.

CC: What kinds of things could you see? What did you observe going on out in the . . .

PF: Well, we were starting to see, before we got into the gun mount, the explosions from bombs, from the torpedoes. And then, after we got into the gun mount and started firing, which we were sitting our timer, our fuses on these shells, lowest possible because you're firing almost directly -- and as you've read, lots of people were killed from our own anti-aircraft fire, which later I encountered this out here. An armada, one time, when planes came in through the armada and hit nobody and we had men killed from our own anti-aircraft fire. But that morning we were sitting as low as we could, at dive bombers, at torpedo bombers.

CC: And meanwhile, the *ST. LOUIS* got under way?

PF: Between the attacks -- the first attack was subsiding, and we were tied up alongside of the [*USS*] *HONOLULU*, which our task force commander was aboard. And the same type ships and bridges were almost jumpable, over, not quite. In a hurry, you could have, but they could talk back and forth. And our captain, talking to the commander, told him, he says, "I'm getting out of here."

He said, "If you go, you're going on your own." Which, in your view . . . even in the movie down here, you see incidents of people not wanting to assume responsibility. Now the commander didn't say, "Go ahead. I'll back you."

The captain says, "I'm going."

CC: Was that unusual, though? Didn't it usually take quite an operation to get a cruiser out of there?

PF: They usually took four tugs to maneuver it from these finger piers, but this captain, being experienced enough, having come up from submarine, I mean, destroyers. Maneuvering small ships, you learn to maneuver big ships much better. And he maneuvered it back out of the finger piers, narrow stream, reverse the screws, spun the ship around and we were ready to depart then.

CC: Could you see anything from the gun mount? I mean, were you able to observe anything other than what you had to do, which was fire the gun? Were you able to . . .

PF: Oh yeah, you have hatches on both sides of the gun mount, which you could open. And as we went out of the harbor, which -- in the book titled The Day of Infamy, which is -- and there are several books titles "*Day of Infamy*", but one of them shows us going out right by these battle wagons, and it's identified as the *ST. LOUIS*.

But we could open this hatch and see what was going on right there, by the battle wagons and all. And the Arizona was not down, was burning and listing, but not down yet.

CC: What about the *NEVADA*? Did you observe the *NEVADA*?

PF: Nevada was trying to get up, under way, ahead of us. And I have heard that coxswain was at the wheel of this. How true it is, I don't know. But, saw it was going to sink, swung over in the channel, set it down or let it set down, stopped its engines and we went by then.

CC: And what did you do, what did the *ST. LOUIS* do?

PF: Proceeded onto the mouth of the channel, and we got to the mouth of the channel, the submarines were lying there, waiting for us. In your movies, you see pictures of submarines, torpedoes running through water. We saw the torpedoes coming, and we started dodging the torpedoes. Ran aground, but didn't stop us -- threw one of our screws out of line a little bit. And out three days and the screws -- whomp, whomp, whomp, whomp. And continued to whomp until we got back into United States.

CC: What were your -- the first thoughts you had when you realized that you were under attack? Do you remember what you were thinking at that time?

PF: This is hell, this is it. We don't have to wait no longer.

CC: So you'd been expecting that something might happen.

PF: Yeah. From Manila, the submarines sinking, the news.

CC: Did your ship take any hits?

PF: During this first attack, we had a bomb dropped between our bow, the *HONOLULU* bow, and *ST. LOUIS* bow, which -- your bows spread out when you're tied together -- went down on the floor of the harbor and exploded on the floor of the harbor. And during the explosion on the floor of the harbor, raised the ship up almost crumbled you, standing on your legs. And some strapping of the ship. But other than that, no more damage.

CC: So you were fairly lucky, in terms of . . .

PF: Yeah, damage in the harbor, very lucky, yeah. But at the time, we were in the harbor, in the finger piers, which was part of the Navy yard. We were under pretty extensive repair. We had had glass portholes. They had cut them all out, steel, three-eighth inch steel plate, and were going to seal them up. These portholes were open, had not been sealed. First thing, out at sea, was to seal these portholes, which are an engineering department seal with steel plates. Another thing, we didn't have -- pertaining to personnel -- nobody had dog tags, nobody had insurance.

CC: Thought you needed some insurance?

PF: First thing we started making was dog tags and insurance. I had no insurance. The reason I had no insurance, I had been a buck private, twenty-one dollars -- I mean a private -- twenty-one dollars a month. And if you took insurance, that was a dollar and ten cents out of your twenty-one. Couldn't see it. (Chuckles)

CC: As a corporal, what kind of pay did you make as a Corporal?

PF: I think as a Corporal you got on up to about twenty-eight or thirty.

CC: What would you . . .

PF: I still hadn't -- didn't have insurance.

CC: What would you have done that day if there hadn't been an attack? What were you planning to do after you raised the colors?

PF: Well, I was on duty all the day.

CC: So you would have been duty on the . . .

PF: Yeah, after I got the colors up, yeah. After I got the colors up, I would have come back to the gangplank and had duty there. And of course you -- in the harbor, you have men patrolling up on the stern and bow all the time, armed for whatever.

CC: So, that afternoon, or during the first attack, you manned a gun all during the attacks, or . . .

PF: Manned the gun until about ten-thirty that morning, proceeded on out to sea. Stayed out three days. We stayed at battle readiness, battle stations,

until about ten-thirty, before they announced over the loud speaker system, "Secure from general quarters," which then you could leave your gun station, go to your quarters, but nobody went to quarters. Everybody just went up on the main deck. Some of them saying, "What happened?"

They hadn't seen or didn't know.

CC: That's right, they'd been below deck.

PF: Yeah, yeah, below decks.

CC: What kinds of things did you talk about? Do you remember what people were saying?

PF: How terrible it was and what's going to happen, and, "Where are we going now," which you didn't -- the words never passed, what you're going to do. And light a cigarette and I started smoking. I had never been smoking. The guys were smoking, I said, "Give me one of them cigarettes."

Started smoking, smoked for about -- until I get back to California, about a year and a half later, get off the ship, quit.

CC: But, so Pearl Harbor started you to smoke?

PF: (Chuckles) Yeah, that's right.

CC: How did you finish the war?

PF: After I got off, stayed aboard the ship. Made the first offensive action back against the Japanese, which was up in the Marshall, Gilberts, which was one carrier, two cruisers and about three or four destroyers. Now this is February, after December, which was an air attack from the carrier on the islands, up there. And which we supported, and of course we had very little naval armament left, which was 1500 miles in the Japanese territory, very dangerous, caught us. If their fleet had caught us, we wouldn't have had a chance.

But, anyway, we came back from that and into, around Pearl, still patrolling. But in the three days -- let's backtrack a little bit -- the three days we were patrolling for the task force that had launched.

CC: Where did you go? Where did the patrol go? Do you remember?

PF: No. It's out to sea from Honolulu here. But what direction . . .

CC: You don't know if you went south or north?

PF: No, no, no. Unless you happened to have duty on the bridge, which the Marines did have duty on the bridge, which one of the duties of the Marines was to relay messages to the skipper from engineer, boiler rooms, whatever, come in on the telephone, you relay that verbally to the skipper. But if you had the duty on the bridge, you would know. The compass was there, you could see where you're going, and of course the coxswain, usually, the coxswain was at the wheel and you talked back and forth, you knew which direction.

CC: But you really didn't . . .

PF: You were just following an azimuth, or compass.

CC: How about after the three days at sea? You came back in, what kind of work did they have you doing after that? Did you get involved in any of the clean up, or . . .

PF: Oh, no. The only work we were doing was resupplying our ship. We had small amount of ammo, small amount of oil, small amount of supplies, which we had to resupply, get our ammo back on, and whatever you want into a Navy yard situation. Took off all the ammo, except for what we had orders to keep on, due to fire, dangers, explosions. And this is a tremendous job to load these shells. And all the things that go back to was fine. And this don't get done with ten men, it's every man on the ship, almost. Of course, you've got your normal duties, got to go on.

But anyway, we were resupplying the ship, getting ready to go back out. And in twenty-four hours we went back out. But as soon as we came in, the first night, completely black out on the island. Any lights were sighted up in the mountains, they were shot out.

CC: Were things pretty tense?

PF: Very tense, yeah. Trusted nobody. Not if they were -- looked suspicious.

CC: So there was a lot of, shall we say, itchy trigger fingers?

PF: That's right. And this itchy trigger fingers occurs all, in any combat situation. To illustrate, one time this -- as I said a while ago -- we were on the way to New Britain, New Guinea, supposed to make an assault there. Our intelligence found out that some way, the Japanese had got a hold of it. Now, this is an armada ready to land; they called it off. Japanese hit us one afternoon, now here's ships three hundred-sixty degrees, as far as you can see. Torpedo planes came in on us. Low level, mast height. Flew completely through this armada, did not hit a ship and got out.

Back to the itchy fingers. Next day, we get the word, "Our planes are coming in. Do not fire."

Some of these ships didn't have too much communication on them. Small, the small ships with just all tanks and ammo and this type of thing. But anyway, the order not to fire. One guy got an itchy trigger finger, opened on these planes, knocked one down, 10,000 on a plane.

CC: Did you see any of that during the attack on Pearl Harbor? Any of mistaking our own aircraft, kind of thing?

PF: No. Because we had very few aircraft in the air, but my primary duties was inside this gun mount, which you couldn't see out too much. The only time you could see out was you opened the hatch -- which you weren't supposed to open the hatch, see.

CC: Basically kept loading, setting fuses . . .

JP: That's right, yeah, yeah.

CC: Okay, let's stop right now. I want to change tapes . . .

END OF VIDEOTAPE 1

VIDEOTAPE 2

PF: Yes, S-I-N-K-I-E-W-I-C-Z [*Leo Sienkiewicz*].

CC: Okay, maybe we can reach him. Okay, why don't we kind of wind this up and maybe -- how do you feel about this? Here you are back, forty-five years later. How do you feel about this incident? Was it one of those things that's always been with you through this last forty-five years?

PF: Oh yeah, it's continued with me, but Pearl Harbor was bad. Terrible. But a beach head is another story. It's the reckoning of the real ante, on a beach head. But (sigh) there are some things that disturb me here, but I'm sure that the nationalities have nothing to do with it. But it's disturbing to go aboard this *ARIZONA* and know that there are men down below.

CC: Do you -- I mean, you have -- it's a dubious distinction to be sure, but to participate in an event that's of that historic nature, has it given you things to think about, in terms of a philosophy of life or how you approach things?

PF: Well, philosophy of life, we are living in one of the greatest countries there is. The opportunities, the freedom and we should -- as the movie explains down there -- never forget it.

CC: And do you think that young people today are -- really understand their history, or . . .

PF: No way they'd understand it. I worked -- I was an assistant register of deeds of a county of about 450 thousand people. And we had a big enough organization that many school groups, individuals -- we even had people from Hawaii come to observe our operation. And on the particular area that I worked, I had pictures of Iwo Jima flag-raising, Pearl Harbor, on a wall. And I would ask these students, high school teen-ager, how much they studied this in history. Some of them say, "I never heard of it." Some of them say, "Oh, a paragraph, one page." This is disturbing.

CC: Why is it disturbing?

PF: That it's not being taught more in our schools. To make them aware of what the country can get into if they're not properly governed. When I first was in the Marine Corps, I'm training with wooden rifles, rubber tanks. This all gets back to your legislation, defense department, congressman saying, "No, I don't want," -- "You can't have appropriations of 450 million to do this." This is terrible. We should never let our country get back to that.

CC: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

#144 PERCY JOHN FULTON: (PART TWO) IDENTIFYING VARIOUS PICTURES

PERCY JOHN FULTON (PF): This is one shot of the Royal Hawaiian with me on the surfboard taken in 1941. And some sailors possibly off of the same ship in uniform, in Navy uniform behind me. (Long pause) Twenty-one years old.

--: Mr. Fulton could you identify yourself on the tape, because this is another tape and if somebody puts this in the machine, they won't know who this is.

PF: P. John Fulton from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on the surfboard.

We had had liberty given to us, probably at one o'clock and this is probably two o'clock in the day. Cannot tell from shadows what time. There are no shadows leading too far away from us.

--: What about the next one?

(INTERVIEW STOPS, RESTARTS)

PF: P. J. Fulton again, taken looking the other way with the Moana Hotel in the background and part of Diamond Head. The two men walking in the background are Marines from the Marine detachment off the USS *ST. LOUIS* I weighed approximately one hundred and fifty pounds there. Fifty to less than what I weigh today. Right on the beach of Waikiki.

This is R. B. Bear from West Virginia, the man in the foreground, the Moana Hotel in the background, Diamond Head coming up behind you, Waikiki Beach. And R. B. Bear was in the Marine detachment aboard the USS *ST. LOUIS*. The two men walking behind him are from the same detachment.

This is another shot of Waikiki Beach taken of P. J. Fulton in 1941, which was known as the public beach then. Of course, they're all beaches, but this was you could drive your cars, if you owned cars, right up headed out to the beach. A portion of the mountain of Diamond Head in the background, taken in 1941.

This is P. J. Fulton, this is a shot of Waikiki with me lying on the surfboard with the Moana Hotel in the background and the man directly at my head was General R. E. LEE, who survived the men, the next two men to my left or your right, was Saunders and JEN-NEL, who were killed on the island of Bougainville. Which we got off the of the ship that we were on and joined the Third Marine Division and made the assault on the island, and Bougainville was the next island after Guadalcanal.

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

. . . and two men in the picture are brothers, by the name of Love, L-O-V-E, from West Virginia, who were in the Marine detachment, aboard the USS *ST. LOUIS.* The man on the left did a little boxing in the Marine detachment aboard the ship. The man on the right was the younger of the two. And both of them survived, so far as I know, the war.

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

This is another shot of Waikiki with Diamond Head in the background and the two men running in the picture are Largy and Bear, who were off the Marine

detachment of the *USS ST. LOUIS*, and were aboard it December 7, 1941. Bear, from West Virginia and Largy from New York.

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

This is P. J. Fulton, this is a shot of a theater we think is Waikiki No. 1, somewhere in Honolulu and if you will note the automobile is a 1940, '41 in it and older. The one moving out of focus there was probably a '39 Chevrolet.

END OF INTERVIEW

#145 RALPH BAXTER: STATIONED AT HICKAM AIR FIELD

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an interview with Ralph Baxter. It's December 2. We're at the Sheraton Waikiki. It's about ten a.m. And Mr. Baxter lives in Fremont, Ohio. My name is Chris Conybeare and Dan Martinez is assisting us with this interview.

Just a little background before we start, where was your hometown? Where were you born and raised?

Ralph Baxter (RB): Belmont, New York. A little town of about 1200 people.

CC: So, small town, USA.

RB: Right. Right.

CC: And what was your name and rank on December 7, 1941.

RB: Ralph E. Baxter, Staff Sergeant, 6983465.

CC: Got the serial number too?

RB: Oh, I'll never forget that.

CC: How did you happen to be stationed in Hawaii at that time?

RB: Well, when I got out of school, I hunted around for a job, you couldn't find a job, so I joined the Army. And I was assigned to the 32nd Quartermaster [*Company*] in Fort Armstrong. Direct assignment. And I transferred -- a year and a half later I transferred from Fort Armstrong to Hickam Field.

CC: So you'd been in the islands a year and a half or so?

RB: Yes.

CC: Approximately.

RB: I'd come over in August of 1940.

CC: What was your job at Hickam?

RB: I was supply sergeant for the 39th Quartermaster [*Company*], Light Maintenance.

CC: And what'd that mean? What kinds of things did a supply sergeant do?

RB: Well, he made sure that all of his men had clothes and equipment, anything they have to have to do their work. You get it from the warehouse and keep them supplied.

CC: And on December 7, where were you and what were you doing when this attack . . .

RB: I was sleeping in bed.

CC: Yeah.

RB: I was laying there in the wooden barracks about a half a mile down from the big barracks, towards the main gate. I was trying to decide whether I wanted to go to the PX for breakfast or the mess hall for breakfast. And consequently, when I heard the bomb, planes -- which we thought were Navy planes, because they pulled dive bomb maneuvers on the barracks all the times. So I look out my window and I can see HAD [*Hawaiian Air Depot*] on fire, so I get up, get dressed -- I had been in the Roosevelt School to a long hair concert the night before and (coughs) -- excuse me. I got dressed in my class A's. Went downstairs and I looked out and I see one of the planes going over with a red circle on it. I said, "We're at war."

So I went back up, took my class A's off, hung 'em on a hanger in the locker, put on my fatigues. Took my gas mask and my helmet and I headed down to the repair shops. And on the way down, I ran into a tech sergeant's wife is coming into the base, trying to get back to the quarters. So I gave her my gas mask and helmet and went on down to the repair shops.

CC: What were the other people doing? I mean, did everybody immediately understand you're under attack or did you meet people that didn't know what was going on? What was it like?

RB: Well, they understood what was going on and what it was, but it didn't sink in. I saw so many people diving underneath barracks. You'd see the planes diving down and the bombs coming, well, you don't know how they're going to hit. So you're trying to find a place to hide. But I found out in a hurry that if a bomb looks like it's coming at you, stay where you're at. If it looks like it's going beyond you, you'd better run like the devil, because it's going to hit right where you're at. That's just the impression that you'll get from them.

CC: What kinds of things did you observe as you were trying to get from the barracks to the next point? Was that a duty station you were supposed to go to?

RB: Well, that's where we worked, our repair shops, where we repaired the vehicles, all the vehicles on the base. And it was very organized, in a way. We got all the trucks out, loaded up all the equipment in the shop and we headed out down Kam[*ehameha*] Highway to the salt flats, and that's where we set up our repair shops. Then I ended up going back hauling KVA oil to all the KVA units, which was electrical, you wanna say, transformers. And I hauled for them for about half a day. And that night I ended up as a runner for the 22nd, 23rd materiel squadrons. And I'll tell you, at night, it was a touchy place to be. If you didn't have to go outdoors, you don't move, you stay in the building.

CC: Lot of folks ready to shoot something.

RB: Oh yeah, they were trigger-happy all over the place. Because you never know, you didn't know what was coming back.

CC: Let's go back to during the attack. Did you observe the planes being hit or that kind of thing happening? They were all in a row, were they? Or how were the planes deployed at the field?

RB: Well, all of the -- all the bombers that we had at Hickam was lined up in a parade formation, right down the mat, side of the mat. And they just wiped them all out. They hit the whole works. And I didn't see any -- actually, I couldn't see any of our planes up there, because there were too many planes -- you know, you don't recognize -- you're too busy trying to keep all aware of the stray things and everything.

And -- what do I want to say here? We had no ammunition, no weapons. I think we had fifty pistols and ten rifles in the supply room. And you go down to get a weapon, the supply sergeant and supply room wanted to make you sign for them. (Chuckles) You threw him out of the room. But all of our ammunition was up in the crater, up in the salt flats, up there in the crater. That's where the ammunition all was stored.

CC: Was it pretty frustrating?

RB: Yes, it was. You stand down there and all you can do is think about throwing rocks at them, and that ain't going to help a bit!

CC: When you first realized you were under attack, how did you feel? I mean, did you think about it in any particular way?

RB: No. You just don't comprehend it. You just think, well, you go on like your normal work, your normal day. It's not -- to my way of thinking, that's all logic. You don't comprehend it because if I'd known -- if you comprehend what's going on, I would have never changed from class A's and hung them up like I would, like I was going out on a pass or going to work. And that's all I did, I just decided that, or thought that we should be at our repair, stations, work stations, and that's where we went.

CC: So is that a part of the function of training, you think?

RB: I imagine, yes. It's part of the army way of doing things.

CC: Did you observe people, you know, being hit or wounded or, I mean . . .

RB: No, because we were far enough away from the big barracks, towards the main gate, that we didn't see what was going on below us, down toward the other part. But afterwards, why, there was quite a mess down there because eight o'clock in the morning, that mess hall was pretty crowded and they dropped a bomb right square in the middle of it.

CC: And, your own personal history, you had been assigned to that big barracks at one time.

RB: I was on the top floor of it for a month or better, when I first come out there.

CC: And when were you transferred?

RB: In November, just about, I'd say, probably three weeks before the attack, we moved out of the big barracks, down across the parade grounds, into the wooden barracks, about a half a mile away. And our wooden barracks, all it had was one machine gun slung through the roof of it.

CC: So you might not be here if you hadn't . . .

RB: If I had been on that top floor of the barracks, I don't think I'd have been here.

CC: Do you -- you say after the attack was over . . . do you remember about what time?

RB: About ten o'clock.

CC: And what was the job then, what was the main task you had to take care of after the attack was over?

RB: Well, mine -- all we did is went out, like I said, I hauled oil for the various KV units, the temporary electrical, but a lot of them were back up in the main barracks and tried to clean up the mess. They went around with blankets and picked up what parts of the bodies they could find and put them in the blanket and tried to sort them out. We had -- well, we had one guy in the outfit who was on detached service to the fire station, which was just below the big barracks, and they got clobbered. And we had one sergeant, I believe, led us out to the salt flats on motorcycle, looking for a place to bivouac. He was going down the road, looked around and he looked back and it was three cars across the road and no place for him to go. He cracked up and he had one leg, one arm, all -- well, he was broken up pretty bad. And he had screws all through him, trying to hold him together. That was a Sergeant Hall. I never did find out whatever happened to him.

CC: Any other people you remember being with that day that you've been in touch with, or have you . . .

RB: That was wounded or hurt? No. There was only two men in our outfit that I know of that got hurt.

CC: What about the next few days after that? Was this feeling that people -- they were going to go back, still prevail. I mean, did . . .

RB: Oh yeah.

CC: . . . pretty uptight.

RB: They were uptight. Like I said, you didn't dare to walk out the door. I went that first night, I sat there in the command post to the 22nd Materiel [*Squadron*]. I thought I'd go get a bite to eat. I opened the door and started to step out and heard, "Halt," from about four different directions.

I said, "No way." I'll stay hungry, I'll go back in the room!

CC: The -- How about the rest of the war? What -- did you spend the rest of the war here in Hawaii, or did you move onto the Pacific theater?

RB: No. I went back to the States in 1943, May of '43. I was sent back to the States and I spent six months in the States. And it was, what you call a rat race back there. I went from Patterson Field at Dayton, Ohio. I was transferred from there down to Kelly Field, Texas. And we were down there, I think about a month. And they asked me if I want to go back overseas, and I said, "Get me out of this rat race!" A week later I was in New York, headed for England.

CC: So you went to Europe?

RB: Oh yeah. I was over in their ports for a year.

CC: Forty-five years ago, this attack happened at Pearl Harbor, and of course it's an event that -- a dubious distinction, I suppose, to be part of such an

historic event. But how do you feel about a forty-fifth -- if you look back forty-five years, has your thinking changed? How do you feel about it today?

RB: No, my thinking hasn't changed any. I think it was a hell of a deal and I can still picture what went on, but I'm just thankful that I got out of it. I think that's what changed my outlook all the way through. I got through that. So if I can get through that, I can get through anything. That was my feeling on the ships going to England. The guys would howl, "Well, the wolf pack is out," which was all the subs.

So what, they hit ya, they're going to hit you. But I'm enjoying today, I'm not going to worry. If you worry about that stuff, well, you aint' going to live long.

And same way in the bombing of England. I used to go down to London on passes and they used to buzz bombs over, and when you hear a buzz bomb coming over, well as long as you could hear it, you're alright. When the motor cut out, look out, 'cause it's coming down. And I'd go to the hotel and it's on the air raid -- or you go into the shelter. Why do I want to go in the shelter for? Hell, if they're going to get me, they're going to get me! I'm not worried about that. I'm enjoying myself!

CC: So, really, the Pearl Harbor attack really has been part of your philosophy of life?

RB: Right. I thought that way all the way through. I live today, tomorrow will take care of itself. And so far, I've been through a few scrapes, but I'm still here!

CC: What do you think about the way we teach history? Do you think the younger generation understands what happened at Pearl Harbor or World War II?

RB: No, I don't, because I've talked to various groups -- when you say something about Pearl Harbor, "What's that?" They don't know, they've never heard of it.

This couple in front of me, the woman with me, she was about three or four years. Until she saw the movie out there at Pearl, she didn't realize what it was all about. She don't realize it. And I think that even your younger ones, they don't know what it is at all. Now, I was surprised -- a senior at the school, one of the schools there at Fremont, contacted me -- I don't know how she got my name -- but she contact me and wanted to know about -- she was writing an essay or a thesis on Pearl Harbor. And she'd been down to the library and I've got, of course, I've got my books and everything else. I gave them all to her and talked to her. But I was surprised because that's the first one I'd ever heard of that, you know, that wanted to know what Pearl Harbor was about. But I don't think that the younger generation really understands; it's not taught enough. They don't understand what happened.

CC: What would you -- okay.

Daniel Martinez (DM): Could you ask him what his feelings are, about Japanese as people?

CC: We're out of tape, okay. We'll put on another tape then.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

BEGIN VIDEOTAPE TWO

CC: Oh no, he'll be changing that. He'll be changing that.

So, when you first realized that you were under attack, you looked out. Did you observe the attacking aircraft?

RB: Yes. We could see 'em diving over the Pearl. And it turned daylight into darkness with the smoke and everything that was going on. And they'd swing down across Pearl and they'd come over across to Hickam and straight to the place. It was pretty frustrating.

CC: What did the planes look like? Do you remember how -- the colors or the markers on the planes?

RB: Well, they was silver with a nice big red circle on each wing, and one side, on the fuselage.

CC: And did you immediately know what that meant?

RB: Yes I did. I hadn't thought about it, but it automatically just sinks in, just like that, you know what's coming up.

CC: Had there been talk about an attack by the Japanese at all, or . . .

RB: No, I don't remember of any explicit talk about it. We were talking -- worried about the war and things -- we were going to fight the Russians before we were going to do anything else. We were afraid of Papa Bear.

CC: And you say you observed the smoke and . . . over at Pearl?

RB: Yes.

CC: What did it look like?

RB: Just like a big oil fire, refinery on fire. Black smoke and, like I say, it turned daylight into darkness. It was pretty black around there.

CC: And you observed that first, before you observed the planes coming back to strafe you, or . . .

RB: Well, no, actually the first thing I saw was the smoke from the Hawaiian Air depot, which was ATD, down at the end of the field, before you went over to Fort Kam[*ehameha*]. It was last -- the building you turned around to get over there. And it was, I'd say, probably about four stories high and -- like a big hangar, where they had all the air depot, air stuff. But that was the main -- that was the first thing I saw. And then when I got out, well, then I saw the planes diving. And the time I got down to the repair shop, where we was underneath the roof and were looking out at stuff, then you could see all the activity over at Pearl. Because there's only a wire fence between Pearl and Hickam Field.

CC: Forty-five years later, you look back, do you feel -- and now Japan is one of our allies. Do you have any feelings about the Japanese today, or how do you look at that whole problem?

RB: Well, the years has mellowed the animosity towards the Japanese and everything. I don't feel that -- well, I never felt too bad about them then. We had Japanese kids working on the base yet, even after the war started. In fact, one of them, I wish I could find him. I think his first name was Tom, but if I'm not mistaken, he was a lieutenant colonel in the Hawaiian National Guard. And they went to Italy and they done one hell of a job over there. In fact, they rescued a bunch of the Americans that was trapped; they went in and got them out. They were a gung-ho outfit.

CC: So it didn't turn into a racial kind of thing for you?

RB: No, not really. You gotta understand that, just like anything else, that you've got the good and the bad. Now the ones here are Japanese-Americans, which is entirely different. You might say an almost entirely different race than what the Japanese are. They were the ancestors of that, but they weren't the type that, "Banzai," and that's it.

CC: So you made a distinction. You were able to make a distinction . . .

RB: Right.

CC: . . . between the American Japanese and the enemy.

RB: I have.

CC: Not everybody is able to do that.

RB: No, because we've got one guy in our chapter that all you guys do is mention buying a Japanese car or something, and, man, he's right up in the air. You can't talk to him! Well, I understand that, I understand. Maybe the Navy feels different than what the Army does. That, I can't say. But I had some good friends that were Japanese on the island, and they proved out that they were Americans, that they weren't the wild and, what you would say, dedicated.

CC: They weren't the enemy.

RB: No, no. But I know a lot of the enemy that was a lot of the Japanese were killed on this island, by the next morning. Because I've seen places downtown where the Filipinos and Japanese, all of them live in the same area. And you were friends with them. Go down the next morning, "Oh, what happened to so-and-so over here, this Japanese fellow."

"Oh, he don't live here no more." They just went in and wiped them out.

CC: So that was another tragedy.

RB: Yeah, it was. Just a minute, if you have time to go over this. These Filipinos and some of these in the island here, they just took on a war of their own. They figured that a Jap here was a Jap there and they killed him. That's all there was to it.

CC: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

#146 EDMUND R. CHAPPELL: SEAMAN ABOARD USS *MARYLAND*

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an interview with Mr. Edmund R. Chappell, who lives at Lake Havasa?

Edmund Chappell (EC): Havasu.

CC: Arizona. And my name is Chris Conybeare, conducting the interview and Mark Tanaka-Sanders is assisting. And it's about 10:30 on December 2, 1986.

Mr. Chappell, what was your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

EC: My name was Edmund R.Chappell, I was a Seaman Second Class aboard the USS *MARYLAND*, battleship BB46.

CC: And how did you happen to be in Hawaii at that particular day. Had the *MARYLAND* been in port for long, or how did you get here?

EC: Yes, we were on maneuvers prior to December 7 and we came into port along with the other ships prior to December 7.

CC: Do you remember when you came into port?

EC: Not exactly, no. It was around the first of December, I believe.

CC: So you had just gotten back into port?

EC: Yes.

CC: Had you been to Hawaii before that?

EC: No.

CC: Where were your -- where were you based, where was the *MARYLAND* based before you came to . . .

EC: Well, when I went aboard the *MARYLAND*, it was in Bremerton, Washington, in dry dock in August of '41. And I was assigned to the Second Division, eventually assigned to mess cooking duty.

CC: That's an important job, I was in that.

EC: Oh, that was a very important job. (Chuckles)

CC: I was in the Navy myself. I always appreciated those folks. So actually that was your first time to Hawaii, was in December of '41.

EC: Right.

CC: Had you had much experience in Hawaii at all? Had you been off the ship at all for . . .

EC: Oh, we'd been ashore, yes, up and down the beaches. And as a seventeen-year old kid, we were not permitted in bars in those days, so naturally we were confined to the beach area.

CC: That was your main recreation?

EC: That was our recreation.

CC: What was -- on December 7, your job was cooking, or . . .

EC: Yes, I was mess cooking then. And if I may define mess cooking in those days it was each mess cook was assigned to twenty men, ten men each table. And you would go up to the galley and get the prepared food and serve these twenty men. And you were responsible for the dishes, the silverware, etc. And if any were broken, then that was deducted from your pay number. So it was very important to us who were making twenty-one dollars a month to keep very good track of our dishes so that none were broken.

CC: And that morning you were -- what time would you get up to start this routine?

EC: As I recall, I think we had to get up probably five o'clock or thereabouts in preparation for the breakfast meal. And we had to go to the galley and bring coffee down prior to the main breakfast which entailed setting up tables and so forth.

CC: When did you first realize you were under attack? How did that realization happen? What happened?

EC: We had just finished breakfast and we were hurrying up to get our dishes and table put away because we were -- I was assigned to a rowboat race that day. I think we were racing against the *OKLAHOMA* and the *CALIFORNIA*, as I recall. And sports in those days was quite, oh how shall I say, quite important to all the crews. And as we were putting our dishes away and the tables, someone aboard topside of the *MARYLAND* hollered that the Army was dropping sandbags, practicing. So of course, we all ran on topside to observe this. And about that time a torpedo plane had apparently dropped a torpedo across the harbor and was pulling out of his dive and as he went over us, he strafed. He was so close that I saw the pilot very vividly and had I had a rock, I could perhaps hit him with it. But as he went over us, he strafed us and I can still recall the deck being gypped up alongside of us and we all made a dive for this hatch to get back down where we came from. And about that time, general quarters sounded.

CC: What did the plane look like? Do you remember what color it was, what markings it had?

EC: It seems to me it was silver, it had the rising sun underneath each wing and, oh, I don't recall. I couldn't describe the plane, that type of plane. But as I remember, it was a torpedo plane.

CC: And did you make it down that hatch?

EC: Oh yes. About fifty of us all together.

CC: What happened next?

EC: Well, general quarters were sounded and my battle station at that time was in the lower handling room of a 16-inch turret, in turret two. And we were there a short while and they decided they did not need us down there and we were a short crew because a lot of them were on liberty. So they brought us up out

of the turret and we were assigned to the five-inch thirty-eight anti-aircraft guns. And I was handling ammunition on one of these five-inch thirty-eight's.

CC: And is that what you did through the -- what, how long did the attack . . .

EC: Oh, for turret -- for both attacks, I was assigned there.

CC: Did you have any success? Did you hit anything?

EC: Not that I recall. We made a lot of noise.

CC: What -- when you first realized this was going on, when you tried to make that dive for that hatch, what kinds of thought were going through your head? What were you thinking?

EC: Well, I probaby thought that this seventeen-year old kid would never get back to Colorado. I thought this was the end.

CC: And . . .

EC: As I've said many times, I was seventeen going on eighty.

CC: That day.

EC: Yes.

CC: Right after the attack, what kinds of things, what happened to the ship? Maybe you should explain what happened. You took a bad hit or something.

EC: Yes, we got hit in the -- we had a bomb in the bow and I think it killed six men up in that area. And as I recall when that bomb exploded, it sort of lifted that whole ship up in the air and just shook it violently, and then dropped it suddenly. And it's an experience that one would never forget!

And I did not see the OKLAHOMA capsize, to our left side, but the word was passed that it had capsized. And I heard the Arizona explode and consequently sank.

CC: But you were inside the gun turret, so you couldn't . . .

EC: No, not at that time. We were not inside the gun turret. We were outside, handling ammunition on the five thirty-eight's.

CC: So you actually could observe some of the things that were going on. Did you see any ships under way, or any of those kinds of things?

EC: No, no. We didn't have time to watch that.

CC: You just had to concentrate on . . .

EC: Right.

CC: . . . passing ammunition.

EC: Mm hm.

CC: After the attack subsided, what kinds of duties did you end up doing?

EC: Well, I went back down to my division. We were all told to go back to our divisions and we would be assigned from there on. And all my dishes were broken all to pieces, and that was my biggest worry at that time. My thought was then, "How the hell am I going to pay for all these dishes on twenty-one dollars a month?" Well, naturally, I didn't have to.

CC: Those are the kinds of things, though, that you find sort of incongru-- you can't quite make the shift from.

EC: Right.

CC: Right.

EC: That was one of my biggest worries. I was not injured and I didn't have that worry, but there were a lot of injuries on the ship and some fatalities.

CC: And you got involved then with some of the salvage operation with the *OKLAHOMA*, is that right?

EC: Yes, the next day -- well, I might back up. That night we were assigned rifles to guard the perimeter of the ship, at arm's length, because we had had word that the Japanese had landed in Diamond Head and were probably going to board the ships. So sometime during the night we were assigned with loaded rifles to surround the ship. And I was assigned on the starboard side, next to the *OKLAHOMA* for, it seemed like an eternity then. And we could here those aboard the *OKLAHOMA* that were entrapped, we could here them tapping on the hull and letting us know that they were there. And there were many survivors who were being pulled out of the water at that time, out of the oil, burning oil. The next morning, I was assigned to a working party to go on the *OKLAHOMA*, on the side to assist the yard workmen in cutting holes in the bottom of it to retrieve some of the wounded survivors from the *OKLAHOMA*.

CC: Did you get -- were you successful?

EC: We were successful and I don't know how many we did retrieve who were not injured and there were some who had been injured severely. And strange coincidence, I had met a fellow off the *OKLAHOMA* which Life magazine had done a story on, some many years ago. A fellow by the name of Bob West. And at that time he lived in West Cavena, California. I looked him up and asked him if he remembered what time he was pulled out of the bottom of the *OKLAHOMA*, and he says, "I remember exactly because they were sounding 'Revelie.'" No, I'm sorry, it was sounding "Taps." (Pauses)

CC: That's alright, go ahead.

EC: Raising the flag, that's right. Okay. I'm kind of vivid here.

CC: Yeah, that's okay. Just relax.

EC: Anyhow, he said, "I remember distinctly because they were sounding this bugle call."

And I said, "Well, I was one of the workmen that helped pull you out of there."

So I've lost contact with him since then and it was quite an occasion.

CC: Weren't there some real problems with rescuing people through the hull because when you'd open up a hole, the water would enter, and things like -- how did that work?

EC: Well, as I recall, when the yard workmen were using acetylene torches to cut through the bottom of the hull, their oxygen was so depleted in the hull, that before we could get the plate out, a lot of them had expired because they were -- lack of oxygen there. As far as water gushing out, I don't recall any water coming out of the holes. Because most of the places we had were watertight on the bottom of the ship.

CC: So you didn't have to use -- instead of acetylene, you had to go to mechanical means, or . . . .

EC: I don't recall what happened. It's been so long ago, that's all I can recall.

CC: How about the next week, what kinds of things did they have you doing with your own ship? I mean, did the ship -- did all hands turn to trying to get her ready for sea again, or what happened?

EC: Yes, they -- well, we were trapped in there. We could not get out because of the *OKLAHOMA* to our side. We had a dock ahead of us, as I recall, and we were next to Ford Island. And to our stern was the *WEST VIRGINIA* and *TENNESSEE*, and behind that was the *ARIZONA*. So we couldn't get out at that point. So they brought aboard the yard workmen and we began patching up our bow and our destination was to go to Bremerton, Washington to get this thing repaired.

CC: Do you remember how long it took to get under way?

EC: I think it took us about a week because we had very rough seas going back. And I think we arrived on New Year's Day of '42.

CC: (Aside) Do you want to stop, change tapes?

--: Yes.

CC: Okay, we gotta change tapes.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

BEGIN VIDEOTAPE TWO

CC: Maybe you could just share that. What kinds of things did you, a seventeen-year old sailor, what kinds of things did you do for recreation, the short time you were in Hawaii, before the attack?

EC: Well, as I said before, sports was quite prevalent then and I was in the boxing team, the rowboat team and that was our main thing, our sports. Competition was very keen and that's about all there was to it. As far as going into bars, we were -- naturally, being seventeen, you were prohibited from going to any of the bars. Thank God. (Chuckles)

CC: Might have gotten into some trouble.

EC: Probably.

CC: So you said that you guys chipped in and rented a place over here, when was that?

EC: I'm sorry?

CC: You say you chipped in with some others and you rented a . . .

EC: Yeah, we rented a little place somewhere on Waikiki Beach for, I think it was twenty-one dollars a month for a period of two or three months while we were here.

CC: Gee, I wish we could get those rates today.

EC: Yeah. (Chuckles) Yeah. Or even own the property.

CC: Yeah. Forty-five years ago this event happened. Has it been a major part of your life all this time and how do you feel about it, if you look back. Do you change the way you think about it as you look back over a longer period of time?

EC: Well, it's an experience I don't think I'd ever want to go through again. It was very frightening. I still do have nightmares and dreams about it sometimes. But I was assigned here.

I might add at that point, your question, I had an occasion to meet Mitsuo Fuchida. He was the captain who led the attack on Pearl several times -- to give you a little history on him, he was considered to be ace pilot in Japan before the war and he was selected to lead the attack, and he survived. And after he got out of the service, he studied -- he transferred from Buddhism to Christianity and he was a Protestant minister in Spokane, Washington and traveled the country quite extensively. And I met him in California, where I was working as a policeman, several times. And he's a very interesting person to talk to.

He, for the information of records, and it's common knowledge, in 1966 he appeared here at our twenty-fifth reunion and wanted to join our association. At that time he was an ordained minister. And naturally he was denied because he did not have all the qualifications to join our Pearl Harbor survivors' association. In lieu of that, he donated to us a bible which -- being national storekeeper -- I have in my custody, on display at all national conventions. And I think this is one of our prized possessions that we have in our artifacts.

He quotes, in the bible, he quotes in the -- oh, what should I say? In the . . .

CC: In the inscription.

EC: In his inscripion, he quotes a chapter of Luke, which pertains to forgiveness. And as he said in his lectures that he gave, that he was doing his job as we were doing our job. And there was no animosity toward him. As a matter of fact, he was a very interesting, delightful person to talk to. He has since deceased in the summer, I think, of '76.

CC: So, it's interesting how a period of time and things like that can bring one's enemies together and you can actually have some respect for each other.

EC: Oh, yes, I'm sure. I was here in '71 at the convention and being storekeeper, I didn't have time to spend much time aboard the *ARIZONA*. But I went back the next day with three or four other survivors, and there was a travel group of Japanese there. And it was amazing, very enlightening. They were younger people and all of them had tears in their eyes regarding this. So I don't think there's any animosity now. Perhaps some survivors hold animosity, but this is not our motto. We do not try to -- if anybody does have animosity towards the Japanese, we try to discourage this sort of thing.

CC: Basically here to celebrate the fact that you survived and to think about those who didn't.

EC: Yes, that's true.

CC: Do you -- what things do you think, maybe, should be emphasize more about the attack on Pearl Harbor or the way we look at history? Do you think there's things that we need to know today that maybe young folks aren't learning?

EC: Well, I'm a retired policeman and I have seen the bad side of a lot of people. And a lot of these people who do get into trouble have never been in the service and don't care what happens to the country. These sort of people who are in this position make you very bitter toward those people. But then again, on the other hand, when you go to a military base and see a graduation services ceremony of the younger groups, it enlightens you quite a bit. So I think it balances out.

CC: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

#147 ERNEST REEPMAKER: SAILOR ABOARD USS *SACRAMENTO*

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an oral history interview with Ernest Reepmaker, conducted on December 2, 1986 at about 11:15 a.m. Mr. Reepmaker lives in Sherman Oaks, California. My name is Chris Conybeare, conducting the interview, and Dan Martinez is assisting.

Why don't we ask you, what was your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

Ernest Reepmaker (ER): I, Ernest J. Reepmaker, and I believe I was a coxswain. I Coxswain is the Third Class Petty Officer on the topside, boatsmate.

CC: And what was the name of your ship?

ER: USS *SACRAMENTO*, PG-19.

CC: And what does that mean? What was the *SACRAMENTO*, what kind of ship?

ER: Sacramento was a -- originally it was a gunboat from the China coast, serving over there when the *PANAY* was over there, but they brought her back and it was a coal burner which they made into an oil burner.

CC: Let's go back a little bit and get a little history. Where were you born and raised? What was your hometown?

ER: I was born in Denver, Colorado and I -- but I was there about four years and went to Indianapolis, Indiana. I was in an orphan's home for about eight years and then I was raised in Indiana until my growing years. Seventeen, I was on my own and then come the war. I went in a year before the -- Pearl Harbor, because Roosevelt called out all the Naval reserves at that time.

CC: And you were assigned to the *SACRAMENTO*?

ER: I was assigned to the *SACRAMENTO*. We even cruised on the *SACRAMENTO* for our two-week cruise before the war, I mean, during the summer cruises.

CC: Where did you report to *SACRAMENTO*?

ER: Michigan City, Indiana.

CC: And how did you get to Hawaii?

ER: Well, it was a nice little trip we took up through the Great Lakes and around what they call Father's Point there, and down to Boston. And we spent six months in overhaul and repair. Boston was quite a town at that time. And went on down to Cuba for a couple weeks, Guantanamo, then on through Panama Canal and then over to Hawaii. And we were in Hawaii, there, at that time six months before the war started as doing patrol duty, up and down the coast.

CC: What was the mood like? Were you expecting trouble?

ER: Oh no. There wasn't any idea of we sailors aboard. I mean, probably there was in the upper clientele or so forth. But we never had any idea. And if you want to know my mood that morning, I'll tell you an hour later.

CC: No, go ahead, what were you . . .

ER: Well . . .

CC: What were you doing then?

ER: Well, I was getting ready to go on liberty, there in my whites, before eight o'clock, when I have a nice day of shore in Honolulu. But so I was standing over there with a bunch of sailors, ready to go on liberty and we saw this motion coming over these planes, making these . . . dropping of bombs and so forth. We had no idea what was going on at the time.

And then all of a sudden, Megel, our executive officer says, "Get down, get under the overhead, get under the overhead,"--as if that could do any good, you know. So we got under. Then, before long, after this was done, or after we got our ammunition, got our ammunition holes open, why, what happened then, he put a bunch of us sailors right out on the dock at that time, just to keep us busy with those thirty-oh-three rifles, behind a shack, cement shack, firing at these planes with these regular strength rifles.

CC: Kind of a futile gesture.

ER: Very much so.

CC: What did the planes look like? Do you remember how they looked?

ER: Scary. (Chuckles) No, I'll tell you, of course, they weren't after our small ship, they were after any other ship, which the *PENNSYLVANIA* was there in dry dock, not too far from us. But of course, until we saw the red suns on the wing tip of the planes, we had no idea what was coming on. And then it came to the realization that what was happening, we were being attacked by Japan.

CC: At that moment, when you realized, "Here I am, a young man," and all of a sudden you're at war, what did you think?

ER: Who said I realized all that at that moment? (Laughs)

CC: What did you realize? What did you think?

ER: Well, you didn't have time to think, you know. Because this was all happening and you were too excited with what was going on in your inner self that you just went ahead and did something to try to prevent or get yourself occupied or prevent anything happening to you.

CC: And so your basic thought was just go ahead and do what you . . .

ER: Right, uh-huh.

CC: . . . what you had to do.

ER: Right.

CC: What kinds of things did you see as the attack progressed? Do you remember seeing any of the ships being hit or any of the . . .

ER: Well, from my vantage point at that time -- of course, as I said, I was out
on the dock, shooting, and then later on, I couldn't see what was happening because I was on the dock. But then, he had some of us go up and help a ship forward, might have been the *MUGFORD*, I don't know which one it was, help fire their five-inch gun, because I was on the gun crew of a four-inch surface gun, which we couldn't use our guns because it was surface guns. Just our thirty caliber's and twenty (pauses) what do you call them, thirty caliber, thirty millimeter and twenty -- fifty caliber guns
are all we could use.

CC: So did you -- during the whole attack, you were -- at one time, you were shooting a rifle on the dock, and then you moved up to try to man the . . .

ER: Try to help these on the gun crew, but we were just probably more in the way than anything else, you know, because they did have their own gun crew, but we were there. And then after this happened, I was in a boat -- because I was a coxswain -- and helping go around picking up survivors and so forth.

CC: What was it like, out in the water? You picking up survivors, what was it like out there?

ER: It was just scary that's all. I mean, you see these, all these ships that have been sunk and so forth, you just couldn't imagine what it was all about. I mean, it's too unthinkable, you know, something that's just too much to -- and picking up these guys that were around in the water, you know, and then taking them back to the dock. It was a . . .

CC: What was their condition, the guys you were picking up?

ER: Oh, most of them were ones that could . . . were all right, you know. The ones we were able to get to. But we weren't that close to the ships at the time, the big ships.

CC: And did you observe the *PENNSYLVANIA* at all during this, the attacks on the *PENNSYLVANIA*?

ER: To tell you the truth, I didn't observe the attacks on the other ships because with the planes coming in and seeing them coming at different times, why, you're more interested in what's going to happen to you, you know. And although, as I say, they weren't . . . you know, after everything was quiet, after the first wave of planes, and then, here they come up again, you know. And you just didn't know what it was all about.

Daniel Martinez (DM): When you picked up the survivors, do you know which ships you picked up survivors from?

ER: No, I didn't.

DM: Your ship was credited with picking up survivors from the *OKLAHOMA* and the *UTAH*.

ER: Oh, there was men . . . Harry Musgrove was also one that . . . he was running a boat.

DM: Right.

ER: Uh-huh.

CC: Now, you do -- there were some folks from the *UTAH* that joined your ship that night, though, right.

ER: But I didn't know about it. There were several survivors, as you say, but we didn't know about those at the time, because, well, everything was all at night, right from then on. There were four hours off and four hours on duty. Why, you couldn't make it eight hours off and say, "Get a little sleep," no, but that was that way for the next month.

CC: Navy's been like that as long as I know.

ER: Yeah, I guess so, huh. (Chuckles) Why, huh. (Laughs)

CC: That's right. Suppose you'd gone on liberty that day and nothing -- the attack hadn't -- what would you have done? What did a young sailor do?

ER: Oh. Yeah, well, occasionally I'd go to church, occasionally. But then, there was a buddy and I, we used to -- Buchanan -- and he got killed during the war. I don't know, I never heard of him again, but he and I were buddies. We always went ashore. We used to go down and have fun on the avenue. One Palm Garden, I think, was the name of the place at one time. And we used to always start out there, you know. And then we'd just buddy around and never got into too much trouble. Used to come back to the ship a little inebriated sometimes, but not too much trouble.

CC: I find that hard to believe, sailors would be inebriated.

ER: Oh. (Laughs) My captain saw me come back with Panama, from Panama, with a bottle in my sock. (Laughs) He was walking down the dock, "Hi, Captain."

CC: What was Honolulu like in those days?

ER: Oh, it was a nice town. We used to take these little cabs in for . . . eight of
us get in for a quarter apiece and go into town and it's much . . . . Of course, we weren't out to do the shopping, you know. We weren't out to shop in Honolulu. We were out to enjoy ourselves and in the clubs and so forth. But of course, you never got as much liberty as you would like to either, you know. (Chuckles)

CC: Yeah. Now, how old were you then?

ER: When the war started, I was twenty-three.

CC: What kinds of things did the ordinary sailors talk about after, during the attack? When it was all over, what kinds of -- were there rumors about the Japanese are landing, or that kind . . . ? What kinds of things were going through -- what was the scuttlebutt?

ER: Well, I'll tell you, I couldn't honestly tell you what we were thinking at the time, I know. Because we were, ourselves, after the attack, our ship was in charge of the port of Hilo for eight months.

CC: Oh, so you were assigned -- you immediately left, or when?

ER: A month later. I think it was in January. We were in charge of the port of Hilo, the *SACRAMENTO* was, uh-huh. And we were over there.

CC: Okay. As you . . .

ER: Yeah. It was a nice duty over there too.

CC: Yeah, I'll bet. As you look back, forty-five years perspective now . . .

ER: Oh boy. (Chuckles)

CC: . . . how do you feel about the whole incident as you look back?

ER: Oh, well as I look back, I can't help but think that it was . . . we knew a lot more than we ever showed at the time and of course from seeing "Tora, Tora, Tora," you got the other side, view, too. And it seems like it could have that much been avoided, to have something like that happen because from what they had before, even that morning, you know, it seems like -- and they didn't take notice of what's going on. It's a shame, terrible.

CC: Has it been something, has it been one of those things that you, as you've gone through life, that it's always something you think about?

ER: Oh yes. Well, until I got . . . I belong to the, joined the Pearl Harbor survivors about fourteen years ago, why, it didn't concern me so much at the time. I mean, it was a memory. Because I came back on leave when I came back, and I made speeches to my sister's company, tell them all about Pearl Harbor and how, you know, you were a, not a star, but someone that had been there and they wanted to know all about it, you know. So I, in her company, I had several hundred people, I was telling them all about what happened that morning. Yeah. But it's something now you look back on, you just think it was something that should have been avoided and you were part of it.

CC: Okay. You have any other . . . ?

DM: Yeah. I was wondering what your feeling is now, forty-five years after the fact, towards Japanese and people that come here, and perhaps the returning of Japanese survivors as well?

ER: Well, I haven't . . . they were doing their part, the same as we were. But the only thing (chuckles) I have is we can't get a stamp, a Pearl Harbor stamp, mainly because they think that the, because of Japanese politics, they won't let us have a Pearl Harbor stamp, maybe, until our fiftieth year, fiftieth anniversary. We're trying to get it for the forty-fifth anniversary. We don't have any -- harbor feelings. The Japanese might have. I had a Japanese pick me up one time going up to Stockton, and it was a Pearl Harbor convention, but I didn't dare tell him that I was going to the Pearl Harbor convention. I mean, that's just one of those things you just didn't feel like it, you know. They might have dropped you off right away.

CC: But you see it basically as they were doing their jobs, and they were soldiers or sailors, you were doing yours and . . .

ER: Yeah, I have no fence of the Japanese at all. I have good friends that are Japanese and it's just something I just -- the only fence I have, they're winning the war now.

CC: Okay, thank you.

ER: Thanks a lot, Chris.

END OF INTERVIEW

#148 C. E. THOMPSON: ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF AT NAVY YARD

Chris Conybeare (CC): Okay, this is an oral history interview with C. E. "Tommy" Thompson. It's conducted December 2, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki, at approximately 11:45 am. Mr. Thompson resides at 2040 . . .

C. E. Thompson (CT): Chilton Drive.

CC: . . . Chilton Drive, Glendale, California. My name is Chris Conybeare, conducting the interview, and assisted by Dan Martinez.

Tommy, what was your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

CT: My name is Claude Earvin Thompson. I go by Tommy Thompson. And I was assistant fire chief in the Navy yard fire department.

CC: And what were you, a noncommissioned officer, or . . . ?

CT: Yeah, noncommissioned officer, what they called us.

CC: Okay. You were assistant fire chief. Now, what exactly was your job when you say assistant fire chief?

CT: Well, we were over thirteen firemen we had in there. And we had a Navy captain that was in charge of our fire depart-- see, we was under the Navy yard. That's why they called us the Navy yard fire department. We was under the fourteenth naval district and they had a [*Rear Admiral*] Furlong with us. He was really in charge of our fire department.

CC: How did you get to Hawaii? How did you get this position here?

CT: Well, I, at first, went in the Marines in 1934, my brother and I, through Paris Island, one of the toughest boot camps in the country. And we went from Paris Island to Quantico, Virginia in the fifth Marines. And they're the only Marine division that wears a fourragere. That's a decoration from World War I. My brother and I both got to wear that. This was in the Fifth Marines at Quantico, Virginia. And we made maneuvers every year down at Culebra, Puerto Rico, every year. And we'd go from there on maneuvers, or we'd go down to Panama. And the last maneuvers we went to New Orleans during the Mardi Gras there, and one of our battleships, the *ARKANSAS*, was the first battleship up the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

And then after our first cruise from '34 to '38, my brother and I, we got out of the service and returned back to Texas and we went in the little small restaurant business there together. And I stayed with him almost a year and I -- he got married, and so I gave him my part of the business then re-enlisted in the Marines in 1939. And that's how come I was over in Pearl Harbor. They sent me right over to Pearl Harbor.

CC: So, in 1939 -- you came in '39.

CT: Yeah, 1939 I came to Pearl Harbor and it was all cane fields around us, all the houses and everything was around that Naval base out there, and that was all cane fields in '39.

CC: A little different in those days.

CT: Yes.

CC: When -- that morning, on December 7, what were you doing? Did you have the duty or were you . . . ?

CT: All right, yes, I was on duty and this Hal Pages. We was the only two firemen up that Sunday morning. And we just got through warming our fire trucks up, oh, about 7:45 when we warmed them up. And after we warmed them up, we got us a chair and went outside, just sitting outside there. And all of a sudden, there we started hearing these -- we heard these planes coming in, two or three minutes, but we never saw them. No, they was coming out of that cloud that covered up the mountains. And then they kept getting louder and louder. And then finally we walked out in the street, then after we stopped in the streets there for a little while, we started seeing them peeling out of the clouds, coming down towards the harbor then. And I saw the first bombs dropped in Pearl Harbor, they was dropping them on all those battleships out there. And I said, "Oh my god, they're dropping flour sacks on our ships out there."

And just about time I said that, here comes some Zee's. I didn't see these Zeroes. They come in from another direction, straight at us, right in the middle of the street. Lucky I didn't get hit there with some of them strafing bullets. So I ran and got on the fire truck and sounded the alarm on the fire truck, and that's something we're not supposed to do. That's the first time it's ever been sounded on a fire truck, because we're supposed to pull the rope and go, "Clang, clang, clang," and they come, the upstairs comes sliding down the fire pole, you know.

CC: Now, when you said -- let me just ask you a question now. You said you thought they were dropping flour sacks. Why would you think something like that?

CT: Well, I thought this was a dummy raid, you know.

CC: So they were doing things like that before this?

CT: Yeah, I thought they was having a dummy raid out there. And then when this plane come over strafing me, I could see the rising sun. They just flew . . . I could've threw a rock and hit the plane, they were so low, just flying right over the buildings.

CC: Do you remember what color the plane was, or . . . ?

CT: Yeah, it was kind of black-looking plane with a rising sun on it. It was a, I guess, a Zero plane, what it was, but I didn't know it was a Zero at that time.

CC: And you could see the pilot in the plane?

CT: Oh yes, yes. Yes. That's how close they were. You could hit him with a rock, if I had a rock.

CC: At that moment, did anything go through your head when you realized this guy was shooting at you?

CT: Just scared the hell out of me, all I know. And my buddy, he's the only one had any common sense, I guess. He took cover. He dove under the grease rack and, boy, you should have seen him, how greasy he was when he came out from

under that grease rack. And I was sounding the alarm on the fire truck and I don't know what made me do that, I just did. But we're supposed to sound the alarm on the, in the office, pull a rope and go, "Clang, clang, clang."

In fact, that's how I got credit for sounding the first alarm at the Navy yard there, because it was, oh, it must have been several weeks after Pearl Harbor, I was called in about it. They said, "Why did you sound the alarm on the fire truck."

And I told them, I said, "Well," I told them that we heard these planes several minutes before we ever saw 'em. And then we walked out in the middle of the street and couldn't see, wonder what was going on, and getting louder and louder and louder. And then we finally seen them coming, peeling out of the cloud cover there, down over the harbor then. And then that was a very short interview, that colonel said, "Well, that's all I wanted hear."

That's all he said. I thought I was going to get the court-martial, or something, you know. We're not supposed to sound the alarm on the fire truck.

CC: What happened next? You sound the alarm and what happened?

CT: Well, we . . . it wasn't about two or three minutes later, we got orders from the Fourteenth Naval District to tell us to take all hands down to try to help save that battleship, *PENNSYLVANIA*, all possible. So we did. We stayed there all day, fighting fires all day long.

CC: What was it like when you arrived on the scene? This was dry dock number one?

CT: Yeah. Dry dock number one. And that fire station is just one block below us on our fire station.

CC: What was it like when you got there?

CT: Oh, gee, that's just . . . there was two destroyers [*CASSIN* & *DOWNES*]that were completely in blaze, all burning. And one thing was in our favor, the smoke was going towards the harbor, otherwise we couldn't have fought the fires there. That was one thing that was in our favor.

CC: And on your way to the dry dock, you . . .

CT: Oh, we was getting strafed on the way down to the fire dock, on the way down to the number one dry dock. And that's when one of the strafing bullets hit the fire bell on the truck. It knocked a little chip out of it.

CC: But other than that you . . .

CT: Yeah, there wasn't -- didn't get a scratch, any of us.

CC: And, okay, so you got to the dry dock, the destroyers were engulfed in flames.

CT: Oh yes.

CC: What was happening on the *PENNSYLVANIA*?

CT: Well, they started firing there, and just after we got there, they started firing at these planes, and it was under fire all the time we was down there, because the whole time, they were shooting these planes all the time, right over our heads.

And not only that, these torpedoes -- only two destroyers going off all the time. Just lucky, they were sunk down so low, every time they'd go off, they'd go up and miss us. That's the only thing that saved us too, from those torpedoes blowing up.

CC: Did they float to dry dock?

CT: Yeah, eventually did, yes. But it wasn't flooded when we was fighting fires there at first.

CC: What were you able to accomplish?

CT: Well, we stayed there until all the fires were out. So that's how we got credit for saving that battleship, Pennsylvania. So we got the credit. I got the citation from the President of the United States, from [*Rear*] Admiral Bloch, and from the Lieutenant General Smith, just coming out of the Marine Corps, I got three citations.

CC: Did you have any chance to see what was going on in the rest of the shipyard while you were fighting this fire?

CT: No, I'm telling you, I wasn't conscious of anything else going on. I tell you, when they come over the second raid, though, that was the scariest part of the whole raid. These planes were coming in from towards Diamond Head. And I read that book, they said those, when they come into their second raid, they were meant for the battleship *PENNSYLVANIA*, but that battleship *NEVADA* was trying to make an escape out of the harbor. It was exactly in line from Diamond Head, the battleship *PENNSYLVANIA*, and the *NEVADA*, got aligned in a real line. That's when they changed their minds and decided they'd try to sink the battleship *NEVADA* to try to plug up the harbor out there. Otherwise, those bombs were meant for the *PENNSYLVANIA*. Boy, and I seen those bombs coming down; they dropped right overhead. Then I just said, "Oh my god, I guess this will be the end for me, you know. So I didn't even look any more.

CC: So you just kept doing your job?

CT: Yeah, we just kept doing our job.

CC: And then it was over.

CT: I think if I had it all to do over again, I'd say, "Let's get the hell out of here!" (Laughs)

CC: That's probably the military training.

CT: Yeah, that's right. You get orders. See, we didn't go down on our own. We were ordered to go down there. So you don't do anything on your own. You're ordered to go down there.

CC: Do you remember anything really strange or-- even in the midst of all this, sometimes some humorous things even happen. Anything like that occur to you while all this was going on?

CT: Oh, no. I think, we were just like dummies down there. We were just sitting down there, squirting water on all the ships until we had all the fires out.

CC: Okay. (To Daniel Martinez) You have any questions?

Daniel Martinez: Tell me, what kind of gear did you have on down there? Did you have your fire hat?

CT: Yeah. I had to wear a fire hat, assistant fire chief. All of us had to wear our fire hats, yeah. The fire chief had his, says fire chief on his, mine "assistant fire chief" and all of our firemen just had "firemen" on their hats.

DM: Did you have the coats on?

CT: And then we wore a badge too, also.

CC: Did you have the coats?

CT: No. We had coats, but we didn't take them down with us.

CC: Gas masks or any of that?

CT: No, no. Just our -- we just had our fireman hats and khaki uniform.

CC: What about after you were successful in saving the *PENNSYLVANIA*, what kind of . . . did they assign you to other duty, or what happened later?

CT: Well, I had an opportunity to go to an officer school after that, but I met another fireman and we turned it down. So they wanted to send us back to Quantico, Virginia at officer school, but we both turned it down.

CC: But I mean actually like later that night, or the next day, what kind of assignments?

CT: Oh, let me tell you now, that night, now, one of those aircraft -- I think it was the *ENTERPRISE* -- was coming in. They were flying their planes into the harbor there and they opened fire upon our own planes there that night.

CC: And you saw that?

CT: I saw that too. And boy, that was scary too. We had our . . . we took our fire trucks out in the navy yard. We didn't keep them in the fire department any more. And we completely surrounded by machine guns and everything, shooting at all them planes. Boy, we was in no man's land.

CC: Did you know they were our planes?

CT: No. No.

CC: You couldn't tell.

CT: No, I couldn't tell.

CC: So as far as you were concerned, it could've been another attack?

CT: That's right, yeah. No, I didn't know they were our planes.

CC: Was that the mood? I mean, people just didn't know . . . did you hear rumors? What did you think was going to happen next?

CT: Well, they had all kinds of rumors there that they were making landing parties there, different parts of the islands around. Just rumors, you know. So, boy, it was really scary around there for weeks after Pearl Harbor because we were expecting to be invaded any time again.

CC: Didn't like to go out at night.

CT: And what was scary, you know, we saw where our fleets all sunk and all of our air force were all knocked out. Hickam Field is right across from us there. And I saw all the planes all burned up over there, they just strafed them. It was all on fire. That's just right over the fence from us there.

CC: And did you spend . . . how did you spend the rest of the war? Did you stay on this duty or what? Did you . . .

CT: See, I went over in '39; you're supposed to put two years overseas and I was about due to come back to the States again. But I stayed about six more months after Pearl Harbor, and then I went in the fire department at Camp Pendleton, at Oceanside. I was in the fire department right under civil service fire department there. And I was in there, in that fire department for about a year or a little more. And then I went from there into commander of the guard duty at Camp Pendleton until I returned back overseas again. I was in the Fourth Marine Division on Maui when the war ended.

CC: Oh, so you were back on Maui?

CT: Yeah, back on Maui. The Fourth Marine Division.

CC: I understand you guys took over Maui.

CT: Yeah, we was on Maui when the war ended, Fourth Marine Division.

CC: When you look back forty-five years ago and you think about it, how do you feel about all of this, forty-five years later? What do you think about?

CT: Well, I'll tell you, it's sure been -- I know when I came back over here for the first convention over here, I told my wife, "The only thing I recognize here in Honolulu was Aloha Tower and Diamond Head. It's all new city built up here." It wasn't that way the last time I seen Honolulu here, you know. It was all the old city then.

CC: How does it . . . did you . . . did this experience create any long-time animosity against the Japanese?

CT: Not at all. I've been over to Japan, see, several years ago. No, I don't have no animosity towards them at all.

CC: Well, they were doing their jobs.

CT: In fact, I love the Japanese people. When we was over there, they were so nice to us over there.

CC: Do you find it . . .

CT: My son sells Bridgestone tires and he won us a trip over to Japan, my wife and I. And there was forty-nine in our group when we went over there, and boy, we really got the royal trip when we was over there. They are really nice people.

CC: So forty-five years can make a lot of changes?

CT: Yes. You know, I went to Hiroshima on the bullet train and I saw Hiroshima, what was wiped out, but that's also a new city built up again.

CC: What about . . . you mentioned, you told me you wanted to tell me something about your brothers, your whole family actually survived it.

CT: Yes. All six brothers all survived.

CC: Okay, you were all in the service?

CT: Yes. All six brothers. See, I had a brother and I in the Marines and the rest of them were in the . . . let's see, one was in the Air Force and the rest were in the Army.

CC: Were they all in the Pacific, or . . . .

CT: No. One brother was in Europe. He went through all the European invasions, clear up to Germany.

CC: Okay. That's all I have (To DM:) Do you have anything else?

Yeah, I want to ask you this. This is something I do want to ask you about here. You have a picture here of one of your buddies from your youth.

CT: Yes. Now . . .

CC: And maybe you can tell me who this picture is and a little bit about it.

CT: All right, let me . . . do you ever go to the *ARIZONA*?

CC: Actually, you want him to hold it, while he's . . . . Okay.

CT: His initials are on the *ARIZONA* plaque there, J. R. Lynch. That's my buddy there if you ever see it, in memory.

CC: And you went to school with him? Or tell us about him.

CT: Oh yeah. We went to country church together from babies on up until we was all grown up, and all through high school, all through school together. We were very close buddies.

CC: And he ended up in the Navy, on the *ARIZONA*?

CT: He was on the Arizona and several of them off the *ARIZONA* were going to some kind of specialty school on the battleship Pennsylvania and he was coming up, oh, during the week there, to my fire department. And Friday was the last day I got to see him alive.

CC: And didn't he . . .

CT: And that picture there was taken Sunday before Pearl Harbor.

CC: Didn't you say that . . .

CT: And he's got my picture with him on the *ARIZONA*.

CC: Didn't you say that he had only just gone back on board, or something like that?

CT: Oh, we went back on the Arizona Saturday, the day before Pearl Harbor. If he'd been on the *PENNSYLVANIA*, I think he'd been alive today. And he had his brother over at Pearl Harbor. He was on that destroyer *WARD*, and that is the ship that sunk one of those midget subs out there. And they was the one that sent the alarm in that they had sunk the sub and there was nothing done about it, you know.

CC: Okay.

DM: Tell me, on this picture, you say this picture was taken the Sunday before the attack, where was it taken?

CT: In Honolulu here.

DM: And who took it?

CT: Gee, I don't know, one of these photo shops here. I don't remember which one.

DM: His picture is still with . . . of you, is with him.

CT: Yes.

CC: Okay, so tell that story. The two of you went into town, or . . .

CT: Yeah. That's on Sunday before. See, like I told you, only one of us sergeants could go on liberty each weekend. One of us had to be there at all time. So I took my liberty a week before Pearl Harbor and my day due was on Pearl Harbor day. That's why I was on duty.

CC: So you and your buddy went into town together.

CT: Yeah, on the Sunday before Pearl Harbor.

CC: Tell me how you got these pictures. What did you do?

CT: Oh, we was . . . we took them at some photo shop. I forgot which one it was. And then we'd been off the Waikiki Beach Theater, out there, seen the show that day. And then we took those pictures after we came out of that show.

CC: And then he took yours and you took his.

CT: Yeah. Yeah, he took my picture with him on the *ARIZONA*.

DM: Do you know what his staging on the *ARIZONA* was, his duty stage? Do you know what he did onboard?

CT: He was a seaman, second class.

CC: Okay. We'll get a picture, let me get a picture of this.

CT: And that's his initials there, if you look on the *ARIZONA*, it's J. R. Lynch, his initials on the plaque. Some of my neighbors been over and they got a picture of it.

DM: So he was, had training on the *PENNSYLVANIA*, and he . . .

(Conversation continues off-microphone)

CC: What do you remember most about Lynch?

CT: Well, we were just real old buddies, you know.

DM: Did he have a sense of humor?

CT: Oh yeah.

DM: Was he a quiet guy, or was he the loud one?

CC: You can tell us . . . when we're looking at the picture, we can get his audio when the camera is rolling on the picture. We can ask him.

DM: That would be a great thing.

__: Does he still have his mike on?

DM: No, he took it off.

CC: Put his mike back on, maybe.

__: Okay, sir, could you put . . .

CT: So you can see, I'm a nervous wreck. I get all nervous talking about this.

DM: If we could get a little background . . .

CT: Yeah, I'm a nervous wreck.

(Conversation off-microphone)

CT: Yeah, I told you, I'm not . . .

(Conversation interrupted)

CC: Tommy, tell me about your friend, Robert Lynch. What kind of guy was he?

CT: Well, he was a real happy guy. He was always laughing, he laughs a lot. Him and his brother both, they just laugh, they were always laughing, it seemed like. Very happy people.

CC: What kinds of things did you do together as kids?

CT: Oh, gee, we rode a horse, each one of us always had a -- well, we was like cowboys, out in the country, riding out there. We did a lot of riding around out in the country on our horses around lots.

CC: And where was this?

CT: In Blanket, little old town out in the country.

CC: Blanket, Texas.

CT: Blanket, Texas. It's on the map, but it's in Brown county, Brownwood.

CC: So the two of you were like real close buddies?

CT: Oh yeah. I told you, we went out there . . . their family and our family went to a country church, they call it Rock Church. We was hard shell Baptists, they called us.

CC: So you went off to the see the world together?

CT: Yeah. No, I went in the Marines 1934 and when I got out . . . and when I re-enlisted in the Marines the second time, that's when he went in the Navy, him and his brother.

CC: And you ended up both being stationed in Hawaii?

CT: And they came right over to Pearl Harbor, both of them.

CC: So you guys would get together for liberty or whatever?

CT: Yeah. I only got to make two liberties with him. That was the second time I went on liberty with him, that picture there.

CC: What kinds of things would you do?

CT: We'd always got out to the show out there at Waikiki and then we'd fool around a little on the beach. We'd go swimming on the beach and things like that.

CC: Yeah. When did you learn that he didn't survive?

CT: Oh, I forgot to tell you this. Now, after we had the fires all secured there on the battleship *PENNSYLVANIA* at number one dry docks there, I immediately went aboard there to inquiry about him. See, I knew he was on that battleship *PENNSYLVANIA*. And the officer on the deck told me, "Gee," -- I told him he was off the *ARIZONA*, my buddy was. He said, "Oh, they went back to the *ARIZONA*, yesterday, Saturday," day before the raid.

And then he pointed, he said, "That's the *ARIZONA*," the smoke there, burning over there.

God, well, I could've died right there and then. It was such a shock to me. And I never did know he was dead for the longest, because I knew if he was still alive, he'd be getting in contact with me. He never did get -- his brother, too, would've come over and see me and wanted to know if I ever found out anything. I said, "No." So, boy, it really was a shock for me, I'll tell you.

CC: Okay, how old was he?

CT: Oh, we was about -- let's see, I was twenty-eight, he was about twenty-six, I think, something like that, about twenty-six.

CC: Okay, that's it.

CT: Okay.

CC: That's the end.

CT: I'm still nervous.

END OF INTERVIEW

#149 VALENTINO ALVARADO: MESS COOK ABOARD THE USS *MARYLAND*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay, you're rolling? Okay. The following interview is of Valentino Alvarado, it was conducted on 12-2-86 at Honolulu, at about 12:45 in the afternoon. Mr. Alvardo lives in Montrose, Colorado. The interview is conducted by Bart Fredo, assisted by Mark Tanaka-Sanders.

First of all, why don't you tell me your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Valentino Alvarado (VA): My name is Valentino Alvarado. Most people call me Val. And I'm from Montrose, Colorado, and that's where I joined the Navy from.

BF: What was your rank and what was your job in the Navy?

VA: Well, you know, I came in as an Apprentice Seaman and when I got out of the Navy after World War II, I was a First Class Parachute Rigger. I came back in and retired as a Chief Petty Officer.

BF: How did you come to be assigned to Hawaii in 1941?

VA: Well, you know, after boot camp in San Diego, there was three of us from my hometown that joined the Navy together and we all wanted to go on the *COLORADO*. You might . . . we were lucky that we didn't get on the *COLORADO* otherwise we were unlucky because the only battleship of the Pacific coast was not near Pearl Harbor. She was over in the States. I was assigned to her sister ship, the *MARYLAND*. And another buddy of mine was assigned to the *TENNESSEE* and one assigned to the *NEW YORK*, in New York City.

BF: What were you doing, early morning, December 7th, '41.

VA: In 1941 I was, at that time, I was a mess cook, I was Seaman Second [*Class*]. And we was only getting twenty-one dollars a month. And being a mess cook, they gave us a lot of tips at payday, so I was a mess cook making more money than the Chief.

BF: Where were you physically that morning, early that morning?

VA: I just got through washing my dishes and had thrown dishwater off the port deck when all the planes were overhead, coming in.

BF: What did you first think?

VA: I thought it was our own planes, you know, on maneuvers, you know. Until they started dropping the bombs and general quarters went. I went to my battle station and right away we couldn't use our sixteen-inch guns so they brought us back up and we saw the *OKLAHOMA* going, being hit, and trying to get the lines off and just saw working parties, you know, just everybody just pitched in and everybody was really working together.

BF: What specifically were you doing when the attack was taking place?

VA: Well, we was helping the men from the *OKLAHOMA*, you know, abandon board, get them out of the water and fighting the fires, you know, that started up while the oil was . . . that's what we did most of the time, just helping, you know. And then getting ammunition to the crews.

BF: What was going through your mind when all of this was happening?

VA: Looks like nothing, I mean, just, we were fighting the Japanese and actually we were happy at the time, you know, because we were going to beat 'em. We were going to . . . we could've been looking for them all this time. But then, after the attack, most of the guys were crying, you know. But during the attack, we were happy we were in the war. I don't know why, but we were.

BF: Just you, or the other men around you?

VA: Well, I know that I . . . we took a boy out of the brig and it was this little colored boy. And he worked harder than I, you know, he was always telling me, "I'm free, I'm free," because he was in the brig, you know. And I remember him very . . . because we, he and I worked in a lot of working parties, you know. Whenever they called for a working party, we all volunteered, you know, real quick. But at the time, we were happy, actually because we weren't _____, it was kind of a strange.

BF: That is a strange reaction.

VA: Because all this time, we had been out at sea looking for the Japanese, you know. And we were going to just blow 'em out of the water, but it didn't happen that way, they blew us out of the water.

BF: How long did it take before you realized the magnitude of what happened? Or what was happening?

VA: Well, you know, it looks like they came then a couple of strikes and they were gone, you know. When we started shooting at every airplane that we saw in the sky for the next two days. But they were only just there maybe an hour or so, or less.

BF: While this was going on, did it seem like a long period of time, or did it seem like a very short period of time?

VA: Well, it seemed like about a half a day, but actually it was just an hour or two, you know, or less than two hours.

BF: Can you think? What was going through your mind? Any specific things besides what you've already told me? Anything else was going through your mind. Were you afraid?

VA: Well, I don't think I was afraid, you know. But we were scared there, at the last, you know. But, no, I wasn't scared. We weren't scared.

BF: Did you shoot at any of the planes? Did you have a gun?

VA: No, I didn't have no gun or nothing, no. They didn't give us no guns, you know. We just helped people that were hurt, get them inside and so forth. I was just a Seaman, I was only eighteen years old, you know, just made eighteen. I guess they didn't trust me with a gun. (Chuckles)

BF: Can you relate to us any particular incidents that happened that stick out in your mind on that day?

VA: I remember that we were all together, I mean everybody was really . . . when they called for a working party before you know you could jerk around, but this time we just all volunteered, everybody volunteered for any working party that was called out, you know. And we wanted to help everybody, you know. And another thing, the biggest thrill I got when we left the harbor, we were the first battleship to leave the harbor and the crew of the *NEVADA*, which got ran aground, we went there. The whole crew came up forward to give us three big cheers, "Yay, *MARYLAND*. Yah, *MARYLAND*." And your heart sank from the bottom down to your throat, you know. It was a great thrill for us to get that. It really made you feel great, kinda like you want to cry.

BF: At what point did the Maryland manage to make it out of the harbor?

VA: Well, we were the first battleship out of the harbor. And we thought we was gonna last the Japanese, but were damaged, so we had to go to Bremerton, Washington up there to get it repaired.

BF: Was it that same day that you left the harbor?

VA: No, no, no. It was, I guess, two or three weeks, I guess.

BF: What was the rest of that day like, December 7, after the planes had left, the attacking planes had left?

VA: Well, you know, they threw everything overboard. They threw our tables, our sea bag with our clothes. Everything was gone. So we didn't have no clothes and place to eat for three or four days, because we just ate sandwiches, you know. And it was kind of, kind of strange. You know, we used to sleep in hammocks, you know, and they threw them over the side. All our clothing and so forth, we never had nothing.

BF: How long did that go on?

VA: Well, I didn't get any clothing for about maybe a week. And just ate out of a . . . they used to bring us sandwiches, you know, and coffee. That's all we had.

BF: When did it finally sink in on what had just happened, the significance, the magnitude of what had happened? How long did it take? Did you realize it that day, or was it later?

VA: I think it was that day, that we were at war, especially that night, you know. We had a watch, you know, and . . .

BF: Duty watch?

VA: . . . yeah, at night. And, well, I mean, when we saw any of the light up in the sky or something, you know, we thought it was a plane, we'd report it and everybody would start shooting at it. And we were at war.

BF: How long did you stay in Hawaii after the attack? You said your ship left within several weeks, you left with it, I assume?

VA: Yeah, right, yeah. And then, we got . . . first of all, I got transferred to the [*USS*] *McCALLA*, the [*DD*-]488 and got her in New York and we came back through the Panama Canal and San Diego, and came right down to Hawaii again.

BF: Let me take you back to Hawaii, though. In the three weeks, two or three weeks that you were in Hawaii, after the attack, what was life like after you'd gotten some new clothes?

VA: Well, I didn't go ashore for . . . you know, at that time, we didn't have no money. And my parents were pretty poor so I sent most of my money home. And I go to town, down Hotel Street and so forth, just to watch the -- I used to go down to the YCA, YMCA and do some boxing. And I did some boxing while I was in the Navy.

BF: Martial law was on then, right?

VA: Yeah, yeah.

BF: How did that affect you?

VA: Well, I never had no car or nothing, I mean, I don't smoke or anything. I think you couldn't smoke outside and you couldn't have your lights on, you know. And I think it was blackout. Everything was dark.

BF: How did martial law affect the civilians? Did you have any way of knowing that?

VA: No, the civilian population, the friends I had, I mean, there, in my boxing team, there was some Japanese people, guys, and they changed their name to Wong and Fong and so forth, and they joined the Army. Right away, yeah. They're really Americans, you know.

BF: Did you have much chance to get to know civilians during your years in Hawaii, or your time in Hawaii?

VA: Yes, I met a boy by the name of Frank Cuterez who lives here. I just went to visit him the other day. And he's kind of my coach of my boxing career.

BF: Can you think of one thing that stands out above everything else, as far as the attack is concerned? One thing that sticks out in your mind.

VA: No, how we mobilized and really helping each other, you know. We used to just like more brothers than before, you know. We were just a big family then, see.

BF: And that sticks out in your mind more than anything else. Can you think of anything else that you recall very vividly from that day?

VA: No, I mean, you know, this is we're having our forty-fifth anniversary this week and this is my first time I've been here since then, for the reunion. And I'm meeting some wonderful guys, you know/

BF: The events of that day, does the day seemed like it happened only yesterday, to use a cliche, or is your memory about the events of that day pretty hazy?

VA: When I see a movie or film, I get emotional, I cry, you know. I can't help it. And I start thinking about it, about what happened. And somebody told me if that if you keep talking about it I won't cry any more, and I haven't, I've been okay.

BF: It's worked?

VA: Yeah.

BF: You were part of one of the most important events in history. How does that play -- has that played a role in your life at all? Has that affected your life in any way, for the rest of your life?

VA: No, no. No, I just . . . well, people forget, you know. People forget that . . . that's why I hope that our organization is that, you know, we're trying to -- we've got a movie here we're going to send to the school kids and so forth to remember Pearl Harbor and keep America alert, you know. We don't want another thing like this to happen again.

(CONVERSATION OFF-MIKE)

BF: I just wanted to thank you.

VA: Yeah, thanks.

BF: Is there anything, before you take that microphone off, is there anything that you can think of that you might want to talk about . . .

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

BF: Is there anything else about the attack that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to tell us?

VA: Well, I -- there was a boy by the name of Billy Miller who was on the Pennsylvania during the attack. I wished I could see him again. (Crying)

BF: Do you know if he survived the war?

VA: I don't know. Yeah. He survived the attack. Good friend of mine.

BF: You used to box together?

VA: Yeah. Fought about three times with him. (Crying)

BF: Did you beat him?

VA: One time. He beat me one time. It was a draw. Yeah.

BF: And you haven't seen him in forty-five years.

VA: Yeah. Long time.

END OF INTERVIEW

#150 GENE HUGGINS: CARPENTER'S MATE ABOARD THE USS *VESTAL*

Bart Fredo (BF): Let's see, the following interview of Gene Huggins was conducted on 12-2-86 in Honolulu at about, oh, one-thirty in the afternoon. Mr. Huggins lives in Hemet, California. The interview was conducted by Bart Fredo and assisted by Dan Martinez of the National Park Service.

Mr. Huggins, let me start off briefly by asking you to give us your full name and where you were from back in 1941.

Gene Huggins (GH): My full name is Albert Eugene Huggins and I was originally from Lomita, California, then I joined the Navy in '39 and we came to Honolulu the first time in 1940.

BF: In 1941, what was your rank and what was your job?

GH: I was a Carpenter's Mate Second Class on board the USS *VESTAL* a repair ship.

BF: And what brought you to Hawaii and how did you . . . . How did you get here?

GH: Well, the Pacific Fleet was transferred from San Pedro to Pearl Harbor and we were a repair ship, so we were stationed here from March of 1940 until the Japs hit December the seventh.

BF: That morning, December seventh, what were you doing?

GH: We had just got a good pinochle game started down at the carpenter's shop and they ordered all hands to quarters and we was bitching, "This is Sunday, what they holding quarters for?"

So we went up on topside and it looked like they was having a swell mock battle going. But then, a plane banked and I saw those two big red dots and I said, "No, this ain't no mock battle."

So me and another carpenter's mate run back to our five-inch guns and tried to get the five-inch guns into action and the five-inch gun had a -- the ammunition box had a padlock on it so we couldn't even open it. So we just stood there and watched them lay seven torpedoes into the *WEST VIRGINIA* and *OKLAHOMA* tied up behind us there until the plane came in and dropped this one torpedo and I followed it, and it was headed right for our fantail, so I followed it until it got about halfway, and I thought, "I better get out of here." So I went up and I was standing about three feet from where open carpenter's shop hatch, when this fourteen-inch armor piercing shell with fins on it went through the open carpenter's shop hatch, went through the ship, the shop, the boilermaker's shop and right on out the bottom of the ship, but never did go off.

And so I knew something had happened, so I run over and I was looking down the carpenter's shop hatch when that torpedo that I had seen coming toward us must have went underneath us and hit the *ARIZONA*. So when . . . about that time, the *ARIZONA* blew up from that torpedo -- at least I figured it was a torpedo -- and it knocked me down and the flames were shooting over on our ship and everything. And I just got up when the explosion, force of it, knocked us -- there was a bunch of us that blew out into the water out there. And the first thing I did was kick my shoes off and head for dry land. That was over at Aiea

over there and the whaleboat came by and picked us up and took us over to Aiea. And they tried to put us down in the building, in the basement of the recreation building over at Aiea. But me and another Carpenter's Mate said if we was going to see what got us, we wanted to see it. So we didn't go down below, we stood out there and watched it then. And that's when the *ARIZONA* finally blew all to pieces, when the . . . that fourteen-inch armor-piercing shell with fins on it must have hit the powder magazine and blew the *ARIZONA* all to pieces.

BF: What did you see when that happened? What did it look like?

GH: It was one heck of a mess! (Chuckles) It just . . . I couldn't imagine that one bomb could do that much, one explosion could do that much damage because it just blew all to pieces, see. And the conning tower, the whole structure and everything just bent and doubled.

BF: When you first saw them, the attacking planes, what was going through your mind? What were you thinking about?

GH: We didn't know. We didn't have the faintest idea what was going on. We thought it was . . . they was always having the mock battle before the war, you know, even though we had the dog fights. And we thought that's what it was until the plane came and I saw those two red dots. And then when we saw that the torpedo plane . . . we watched the torpedo plane, you could come right in, they'd come low, drop the torpedo and you could follow that torpedo right until it hit the *OKLAHOMA* and *WEST VIRGINIA* tied up right in front of us there. And then the planes would bank, and they would come right over us, so if I had a slingshot, you could have hit them with a slingshot because you sat there and you could see the pilot with his goggles and everything. And we didn't have nothing to shoot with and nothing else.

BF: How long was it, from the time the attack started to the time you were blown off the ship into the water?

GH: Well, I didn't have my watch on, but they say that the *ARIZONA* sank in nine minutes, but that wasn't from the start, it wasn't the first explosion, because it had to be for quite a while, because we stood back there and watched them lay those seven torpedoes, and I watched this other one. And it had to be at least fifteen minutes before I got blown over the side.

BF: And how long were you in the water?

GH: I wasn't in the water but about fifteen minutes.

BF: We have to stop there because we're out of tape. We'll put in another tape.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

GH: I watched the Oklahoma roll over and that was before the Arizona had blown up.

BF: Let's bring you back, unless you want to pursue this . . . ?

Daniel Martinez (DM): No, that's . . .

BF: How long do you think you were in the water?

GH: Well, I would say it was about approximately two minutes before the whale boat came by and picked us up and took us over to the -- we called it the Aiea recreation building. It was evidently not at Aiea, but it was across the channel from where the vessel was there.

BF: An attack is still going on while this is happening?

GH: Yeah, right, yeah, yeah. Yeah, they were dropping -- the dive bombers and the high altitude bombers were doing it. And then the whaleboat took us over to the rec[*reation*] building over there and then we stood there and watched the high altitude bombers and the dive bombers come in. And the *NEVADA* got up steam then and she started up the channel. And when she got about halfway up the channel, the first five dive bombers that dove on her missed her completely, and then about the next six dive bombers took her right in the row, and she was bouncing in the water there. And you could see she was crippled pretty badly. So the guy around her, stuck her in the mud up there by the other end of Ford Island up there.

BF: What else was your attention directed to besides the *NEVADA* while you were over at Aiea Rec[*reation*] Center?

GH: Well, I watched the high altitude bombers and you could follow that doggone fourteen-inch armor-piercing shell with fins on it from the time they dropped it right until the time it hit whatever they was aiming at. And the reason that we knew that it was a fourteen-inch armor-piercing shell with fins on it was because we got two of those hits on the *VESTAL*. One of them went through the bottom of the ship, the other one went through the focsle, the mess deck and landed in the metal supply rack in GSK. And it exploded, and we found pieces of it and we could tell from the circumference that it was fourteen-inch and it had rifling on it, so we knew it was fourteen-inch armor-piercing with fins on it. So we kept that thing around the ship for a long time.

BF: Did you feel frustrated you couldn't do anything?

GH: There's no feeling like it, yeah. All we could do was stand back there. If I had an orange, I could've hit the dog-gone planes when they come over. But we just stand back there and look, see.

BF: You must have been angry.

GH: Very frustrating, (chuckles) yeah.

BF: Would anger be a good word to describe, or is frustration a better . . .

GH: Frustration is a better one, yeah.

BF: What was the rest of the day like?

GH: Well, the rest of the day, they put us over at Aiea there and they gave us an Army machine gun to man and said, "Now, don't shoot 'cause we ain't got no ammunition."

So we dug a foxhole over there and then that night we had an Army short-wave radio in the foxhole with us and it came over the short-wave radio that the Japs had landed, gave the color of the uniforms and everything else. And we had

rifles with us that time and so that night when we hollered, "Halt," and nobody answered back, we started shooting. And the next morning we had cats and dogs every so often around there from where we had hit 'em, see.

BF: How long was it before you realized the next day that these reports about landings were false?

GH: Oh, we realized that night about ten o'clock, they had told us then that they weren't really landed, so . . . .

BF: What happened to some of your friends that day?

GH: Well, we don't . . . we were lucky, we only lost seven guys on our ship. And one of the guys was . . . we had a little partition between the carpenter ship and the shipper's shop and he was bent over going through there when that bomb went through the carpenter's shop and the shrapnel took off both cheeks of his fanny and (chuckles) and he wound up in the hospital, but he was all right. He's been going to the ship's reunion, so, yeah.

BF: Were you wounded at all?

GH: Huh?

BF: Were you wounded?

GH: No. I got hit in the, with a piece of flat metal.

BF: Near your ankle?

GH: Yeah, and it bruised my leg. And after I got back on board ship, December 8, and I was in the sick bay for a week because my leg swelled up, but I wasn't wounded.

BF: What was life like for the next few days?

GH: Well, it was a mess. The vessel was flooded up to the carpenter's shop hatch, I mean the carpenter's shop deck. So, but we still slept on our cots down in the carpenter's shop down there. But one of the fellows that had got, he got killed and his body, after so many days, was pretty rancid so we had to find him and get him out of there. But we were lucky, we only lost seven guys on the vessel.

BF: Were you much involved in any of the rescue or repair work?

GH: Yeah, I made the first dive on the vessel to see how bad the hole was in the bottom of the ship there. And then we put a caisson around it and caulked it and then they filled it with cement, and then pumped the water out and they stuck it in dry dock over here.

BF: How big was that hole?

GH: It was about three-foot and the pieces of metal hung down about thirty inches.

BF: A lot of things happened to you that day, and you saw a lot, but is there, are there one or two things that stick out in your mind more than anything else?

GH: No. It was just one heck of a surprise is all.

BF: Nothing that's more vivid than anything else? One memory.

GH: Well, I can say that's the first time in my life I was ever scared was when I got knocked down and the flames was shooting over on our ship. When I got up, that's the only time in my life I can really say I was scared.

BF: The only time?

GH: Yeah. That's the only time I was ever really scared. I've been in a lot of dangerous situations but I was never scared like that. (Chuckles)

Daniel Martinez (DM): Did you have a crewmember, a crewmen that you knew on the *ARIZONA* that was lost aboard that ship?

GH: Yeah, I had went to school with a kid that was on the Arizona, and so December 6 -- see, we pulled alongside the Arizona Friday, December 5. And we were supposed to start Monday to overhaul her. And so Saturday I went over and looked up this kid I used to go to school with, Eddie Tapie was his name and I talked to him and everything, and he didn't get off. His name was on the marble slab up there on the *ARIZONA*.

BF: Any other friends?

GH: No. Just one kid -- other kid that I went to school with, in fact he graduated with me. He had just shipped over, so he had thirty days' leave and he hit San Francisco the day that the Japs hit us here and they turned and put him on a ship and said, "Fly back to Honolulu!" So he didn't even get to go ashore in San Francisco there.

BF: Briefly, what happened to you in the weeks and months following the attack?

GH: Well, after we got the hole fixed in the vessel, the guy says, "Boy, we're going to go back to the States and get an overhaul."

And I says, "Yeah."

"We're going to go for the South."

And I says, "I don't want to go for the South."

So I swapped duties with a guy on shore patrol, in Honolulu here. So I walked the beat on shore patrol from February until March of '43. And then I went down to the submarine base as a diver and a lung instructor and I stayed there until June of '44. So I finally got back to the States in June of '44.

BF: What was martial law like, first few days, first few weeks after the attack?

GH: Well, that's the blackout and you couldn't do nothing, even on shore patrol. We had our barracks was right there in town and we'd walk a beat and then go back to our barracks at night, and everything was blacked out. So that was no fun, none of that blackout was.

BF: Think of any stories, any incidents that happened during your time as a shore patrolman?

GH: Yeah, there was a lot of that. (Laughs)

BF: What kinds of incidents would you mainly deal with?

GH: A lot of drunken sailors. (Chuckles) Yeah. Because at that time, you could only get so many drinks, you was only allowed so many drinks and they'd go get all the drinks they could in one place and then go to the next one, see. And they'd get just drunk and we just -- man, we arrested the guys so that they'd make sure that they got back to ship, was the main reason that we'd arrest them. When they saw, when we saw that they were too drunk to get back to ship when we would arrest them and then, because then the paddy wagon took them back to the ship in the night, in the evening, see. So they all got back.

DM: What were some of the favored bars that people went to during the Honolulu days?

GH: Oh, there was Lau Yee Chai's. Lau Yee Chai's used to be way out on Waikiki there and -- you know, I can't . . . Lau Yee Chai's the only one that I can remember the name of. But there was quite a few of the bars out there. There wasn't any other thing out there, much, at Waikiki. Yeah.

BF: You played a part in a very significant, a very important event in history. Has that affected your life at all?

GH: No, but it brings back some great memories of all the things that we used to do and everything, yeah. Yeah.

BF: Is it something that you think about, you have thought about regularly since the event?

GH: Oh yeah, yeah. That's why I come back over to Honolulu here all the time. I used to go out on the memorial there and give speeches with the Pearl Harbor Survivors organization that is here. And that was always a lot of fun.

BF: Do you relive the day?

GH: No, I don't (laughs) wanna relive on it, but I do remember it, yes. Yeah, yeah.

BF: Stop.

(Conversation off-mike)

BF: (To GH) Now, look at me when you answer him, okay?

DM: I want to know what your feelings are towards the Japanese today as opposed to '41, and do you think it would be possible in the fiftieth anniversary to meet with Japanese survivors?

GH: Well, yeah. I do. Even when I used to give speeches on the *ARIZONA* Memorial out there, they would want to take, have their picture taken with me and everything and I didn't have no qualms about that. The only things is I do no, I have not owned a Japanese automobile to this day (chuckles), so . . .

BF: Because of that?

GH: Yeah, right. (Laughs) I'm prejudiced that I want an American automobile.

DM: How about meeting with survivors?

GH: Yeah, that's -- sure. If I last to the fiftieth (laughs) I would be glad to, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, in fact, at the forty-first over here, you know, they had some of the guys that hit Kaneohe over there and they came over, yeah. No, I don't -- the only thing I object to is that they didn't give us a little warning first. (Chuckles)

END OF INTERVIEW

#152 FLOYD WELCH: ELECTRICIAN'S ABOARD USS *MARYLAND*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. I have to read this little thing. The following interview of Floyd Welch was conducted on December 2, 1986, at Honolulu, at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Welch lives at East Lime, Connecticut. And the interview was conducted by Bart Fredo and we will start.

First of all, Mr. Welch, why don't you tell me your name and your hometown.

Floyd Welch (FW): My name is Floyd Welch. I lived about all my life in East Lime, Connecticut.

BF: In 1941, what branch of the service were you in? What was your rank and what job did you have?

FW: In 1941, I was an Electrician's Mate on the USS *Maryland*.

BF: What was your rank?

FW: I was Third Class Electrician[*'s*] [*Mate*] in 1941.

BF: How long had you been in Hawaii prior to the attack?

FW: The exact time is not . . . .

BF: Several months or several weeks?

FW: I would say possibly a month or so. We used to come out from Long Beach, being our homeport, each year we would come out to Pearl Harbor for maneuvers. We would have gunnery practice and in those days we also had a landing force made up of the ship's company. Approximately half of the ship would be put into the landing force detail, the other half would stay aboard to man the ship. And we had ground maneuvers, I believe, around Hickam Field somewhere. We would take our undress whites and dye 'em a tan color and it was sort of a mess when it was so hot. The sweat and the dye would run all over you, so we were dyed as well as our clothes.

BF: Let . . .

FW: Yes?

BF: Let me direct your attention to December 7. Where were you early that morning?

FW: That being Sunday, I didn't have any urgent work to do. I was in the washroom, actually. I had taken a shower and was scrubbing up some of my clothes when the alarm went off. It was, let's see, the ship's . . . the fire and rescue alarm went off first. And we all were either running or to our fire and rescue stations, or were there when the second alarm for general quarters went off. And that created quite a turmoil. Some of 'em had already been to their fire and rescue stations, trying to get to the general quarters stations. I had never seen quite such a turmoil before.

BF: Lots of confusion.

FW: Lots of confusion. And I would imagine the majority of us were still thinking this was a drill. Even after we got to our general quarters stations, and were well-manned there, we still thought it was a drill.

BF: Your general quarters station, was that above or below deck?

FW: That was below decks, on the third deck. I was, at that time, in the repair unit. And I did not realize that it was the real thing until I heard them announce to cut the lines from the *OKLAHOMA*.

BF: Now, you were aboard the *MARYLAND* which was tied up at Ford Island?

FW: It was tied up at Ford Island alongside the first quays. The *CALIFORNIA* was ahead of us by itself. Then we were inboard against the quays, the first set, and the *OKLAHOMA* was outboard of us.

BF: You were tied together?

FW: We were tied to the quays and the *OKLAHOMA* was tied to us. And then behind us was the *TENNESSEE* and *WEST VIRGINIA*.

BF: When did you first notice, first realize that it was not a drill?

FW: When the word come over the loudspeakers to cut the lines to the *OKLAHOMA*, that kind of shook it home to me. But still, it didn't really hit home until they asked us, our party, to go topside and help with the rescue of the crew members of the *OKLAHOMA.*

BF: When you went topside, what did you see?

FW: It just was like a dream, almost. The dark smoke and the noise and confusion. We went topside, we were faced toward the *CALIFORNIA*, which was in front of us and went topside, we came up on the starboard side, so that immediately, I did not see the *OKLAHOMA*, 'til I went forward on the fo'c'sle. And I could see she was bottom up.

BF: The *OKLAHOMA* had already capsized?

FW: Had already capsized. Yes. And from then on, our work was just to get the men out of the *OKLAHOMA*.

BF: What kind of a job was that?

FW: For me, it was not as hard a job as those over there burning the holes, and so forth. I helped with the electrical power lines for the lights and so forth. And we did still have false alerts that the enemy was -- the planes were coming over at that time, everybody would scramble from the *OKLAHOMA* and topside and we would get under the barbettes or the turrets, or whatever security we could find. But it was evidently after the last raid that we were up there because I don't recall seeing the planes, but they were very jumpy and would sound those alerts quite frequently.

BF: When you were below decks, at the *MARYLAND*, could you hear the explosions?

FW: Yes. We could hear them very readily, but we didn't, just couldn't make ourselves believe that it was the real thing. We couldn't imagine what they could be doing to cause that much noise.

BF: That must have been quite a shock when you came up topside and saw.

FW: It was. It was.

BF: Anything in particular you can remember about helping to rescue the men from the *OKLAHOMA*?

FW: I haven't thought about too recently. I know that they were very careful. They got the blueprints and went over the hull very carefully so that they would not burn through into a fuel void. And I recall the tappings of the men and their looking on the prints, trying to find what compartments to go through safely to, and where those tappings might be coming from.

BF: While you were doing this, were -- even though the attack apparently was now over -- were there still explosions throughout the harbor? Magazines going up and the like?

FW: I don't recall that there were. There may have been. But due to the excitement, I do not recall any noise like that.

BF: There must have been, it must have been quite a scene to look out over the harbor. How much did you see besides the *OKLAHOMA*? What else could you see?

FW: The motor whale boats were the main thing going back and forth looking for the men that were in the water. The smoke, as I say, was so dense that you could not see very much. And we were wrapped up in the work that we were doing and didn't pay much attention to anything else.

BF: Were you afraid for yourself? Did you fear you were going to die?

FW: That is odd. Not the least bit. I was just almost like a robot, you might say, doing my job and fear didn't enter my mind at all. And I don't think it did to anyone else's. I don't recall anyone even mentioning being afraid.

BF: How would you best describe how you felt? Was it anger, frustration?

FW: No. As I say, just do my job, get those men that needed the help, help them. That was the main thing.

BF: How many would you say the men from the *MARYLAND* saved from the *OKLAHOMA*?

FW: I don't know, really. I . . .

BF: You saw some actually gotten out of the hull, after they . . .

FW: Oh yes. But the number, I never bothered to . . . it was just if there was any tappings there, we wanted to find them, no matter how long or how hard it took. If we were in their position, we certainly would have wanted the same.

BF: What was it like the rest of the day? What were you doing?

FW: I believe the rest of the day we were working on the *OKLAHOMA*.

BF: Trying to get these men from the . . .

FW: Trying to get the men out. Later, I guess, the next day, I do recall that . . . of course, we had gotten a hit forward. I guess two or three forward. It was flooded forward. But we realized we were stuck there. We were pressed against the quays by the *OKLAHOMA*. And how to get out. We . . . in . . . not -- I don't remember how many days, but it seemed things just passed and there were no days, it seemed. We worked night and day and it was all one. I believe we blasted the quay to relieve the pressure, as I recall now. I'm not sure. And we went from there over to the docks. They put a temporary patch on us with concrete and filled the void with concrete, I believe, and put that temporary patch on and in short order, we were on our way back to Bremerton for repairs.

BF: How long after the attack did you and the *MARYLAND* leave?

FW: It was only two or three weeks, I believe. We were over at one of the piers in the Navy yard, all welding everything, I recall. It was darkened ship; the welding had to be covered with tarps so that there was no light. It worked out fine.

END OF TAPE ONE

TAPE TWO

BF: Okay, I'd like to put in another tape on this one. That wasn't twenty minutes.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

FW: Word got by, was passed over the loudspeakers that the *NEVADA* had got underway. Well now, that made things a little better. We seemed to . . . if this was as they said, the real thing, and the *NEVADA* was getting under way, that made things pretty nice. So the first thing we wanted to see was what the *NEVADA* looked like. We had heard she ran aground and so when we did get under way for Bremerton, we, those of us that had the opportunity, were topside to see her.

BF: This was several weeks after the attack?

FW: That was several weeks after the attack.

BF: What about those days immediately following the attack? What did you do? What were those days like?

FW: At the docks at the Navy yard, we were just cleaning up and trying to get shipshape and ready to get under way.

BF: Must have been very busy.

FW: It was very busy. This was new to us, this dock and ship was sort of new, especially in port. We had, of course, practiced docking ship under way many a time, but in port, no lights and in the Navy yard, the . . . they were working just as much at night as they were in the daytime. And not seeing any whites around the Navy yard, it was sort of different.

BF: Did you spend all of your time, then, on the ship, working or . . .

FW: Oh yes.

BF: . . . sleeping?

FW: Yes. I never left the ship, except to go, maybe, for parts over to the shops, or something like that, on an errand.

BF: When did the magnitude of what happened really sink in? The whole attack, when did the important, the significance of that really sink in to you and your shipmates?

FW: I think possibly after the first day, it really sank in. The first day, you were more, or while it was going on, you were just doing your job and not thinking, but later on it did sink in.

Now, to go back just a little bit we did get word too, before we came topside, that there were miniature subs around in the harbor. All of this still really didn't make it the real thing. We just couldn't believe that that was the real thing, even though these words were being passed down to us.

BF: This is when you were below deck?

FW: When we were below deck.

BF: But once you went topside, you must have . . .

FW: It was the real thing.

BF: What stands out more than anything else? Is there one thing that stands out more than anything else about that day? Most viv-- most vivid in your mind.

FW: I think it's just the loss of the men. Those that lost their lives.

BF: Did you lose a lot of friends?

FW: On the ship, we didn't lose so many, no. I don't recall it was many. But we had a lot of friends on other ships. Now, I was movie operator and we would go to the different movie exchange ships for our film. And that way, I got to meet quite a few from the other ships too. So even though -- I mean, what we lost on our ship that day was severe, one life is severe. But we also knew a lot of 'em from the other ships.

BF: Do you have any feelings of animosity towards the Japanese as a result of what you went through?

FW: I don't believe so. They were told what to do. They were carrying out their orders. Those that were in charge may be a little different. But they were doing as we would do. All through the war, we carried our orders out and they carried their orders out. It's those that give the orders where they originate the orders.

BF: You played a small part in a very big event, one of the most important in history, certainly in this century. Has that affected your life in any way, the fact that you were then?

FW: I'm proud of it. I think that's all. I was proud to be a part of it.

BF: Do you think about it a lot?

FW: It comes to mind quite frequently.

BF: And what goes through your mind when it does?

FW: Well, the . . . I enjoyed the work. I would be willing today to go back and do it. They called for volunteers for some of the, putting these new battle-- older battleships back into commission at our last *MARYLAND* reunion. There were quite a few of us that said we would be happy to go back if we could have a few of our old buddies with us. And the only thing is those of us that had the experience are shut out. I believe they won't take 'em after age sixty and most of us have reached sixty-five.

BF: When you see an old movie or something in a book, does it throw you back in time sometimes?

FW: Sometimes it really does. I can just picture, feel and almost smell the work. Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW

#153 DON MCCARTHY: FIREMAN ABOARD THE USS *MEDUSA*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. I have to read this little thing. The following interview of Don McCarthy was conducted on December 2, 1986, at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel in Honolulu, at about three-forty in the afternoon. Mr. McCarthy lives now in Maple Heights, Ohio. The interviewer was Bart Fredo, that's me, and I was assisted by Dan Martinez of the National Park Service.

First of all, let me get you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Don McCarthy (DM): Okay. Well, my name is Don McCarthy and I enlisted in the Navy in New York City on January 15, 1941.

BF: What was your rank and rate in the Navy?

DM: At the time? On December 7, I was Fireman Third [*Class*]. I had been from a Seaman, Seaman Second [*Class*], then I went to Fireman Third [*Class*], which was in the Black Gang, and I was striking for an Electrician's Mate. So on that particular day, I was still a Fireman Third [*Class*].

BF: When did you first come to Hawaii in the Navy?

DM: In August 1941. I went aboard the *MEDUSA*, the USS *MEDUSA*, she was tied up in San Pedro at the time.

BF: What kind of ship is the *MEDUSA*, was the *MEDUSA*?

DM: Well, *MEDUSA* was -- her letters were AR-1, which makes here auxiliary repair ship. And actually in the catalog, we were slated or typed as repair ship, we could repair anything from a watch to a battleship. Now, you brought the watch up, that's what it was, see. So we could repair a watch or a battleship. So she primarily was a battleship repair.

BF: And the *MEDUSA* was in Pearl Harbor at the time?

DM: Yeah, she was stationed at Pearl Harbor.

BF: Now, I understand that the ship was not near Battleship Row.

DM: Not at that particular time. See, normally, what we'd do is if we had to repair a battleship, we were what you might consider a floating dry dock, or floating Navy yard. In other words, we could do everything but hull work, because we didn't have a dry dock, but we could do everything aboard our ship that had to be repaired. So if we got a bunch of work orders for, say, to *CALIFORNIA*, or one of the other battleships, we'd pull alongside them and we'd tie up alongside them. But it just happened on December 7, we didn't have any work on any of the battleships, so we were anchored off at Pearl City, just off Pearl City.

BF: Early that morning, what were you doing?

DM: Well, like I told Danny earlier today, I says, you know, normally on Sunday, that was what they call holiday routine on a Sunday. And usually you slept in, you didn't have to get up and do any work. You didn't have to turn to. So that morning, for some reason, I got up. I went down and had breakfast, come back, and I went to the head, took care of my little duties there, I might

say, and I was standing in the shop and talking to a chief. Just at the time I was talking to the chief and I happened to look out through our portholes, one of the portholes on the ship, and I heard this explosion. And I looked out and I saw a lot of smoke. And the remark I made to the chief I was talking to, I says, "Oh, one of them darn aviators,--" used a little different language at the time, "he done crashed into one of the fuel dumps over there." I said, "Now I'll be called away for fire and rescue."

Well, about that time the alarm went off and the Boatswain Mate stuck his head down the hatch and hollered, "General quarters!"

And I says, "Boy, even the boatswain -- get a little excitement around here in the mornings like this, and everybody gets all fouled up. Even the boatswain mate doesn't know what's going on!"

And he said, "This is general quarters." And then he says, "This is no bleep." He made a few obscene remarks about it. And then, of course, now we knew it was general quarters.

Now I went to my general quarters station at the time, which is up on the fo'c'sle, and I was on surface kind of action, it was a five-inch surface gun and I was a sightsetter on it. Well, I got up to my general quarters station and all these planes were starting to fly in and out, you know. And I'd look up and I didn't know who they were. And one of the other fellows says, "Oh, look at that big, flaming bleep again." He said, "They're Japanese."

And about this time, they were dive bombing. They were dropping bombs. And I was, stood up there on the fo'c'sle and I could see these planes dropping these bombs, and they were just going, "psst." And it didn't dawn on me what was going on. I thought, you know, this is something new to me. And actually, what they were doing, they missed us seven times. Seven bomb misses around the *MEDUSA*. Of course, at this time now, everything is going on all around. And just across Ford Island, of course, their torpedoes were being dropped over there. And I wasn't too far from the *UTAH*, and I saw her get hit, started rolling over. But like I said, I was setting sights on this gun.

At about this time, just aft our counter, there was a periscope. It was one of these little two-man submarines, and its counting tower was out of the water. So I had the trainer train the gun around, and we just sat zero-zero. And then I told him, I says, "Load in a slug."

And one of the loaders back there says, "We ain't go no bullets."

Well, the magazine locked up, of course, and our ready lockers were locked and we had nothing to put in the gun. And now when I look back at it, now, it was a good thing we didn't, because we'd a been throwing five-inch shells out there, and they'd have been bouncing off the water, ricochet, and then wind up in the Navy yard. We'd have probably done more damage than good. But anyhow, but that little two-man sub, and we had an aircraft gun back on our boat deck that depressed and was able to put a shell through our counting tower. And, I don't know, if you look in the history books, everybody took credit for that submarine. About that time, the *MONAGHAN* come on down to drop depth charges on her.

BF: Did any of the attacking planes ever hit the *MEDUSA*?

DM: No, not with a bomb they didn't, but they, on our weld deck, what we called the weld deck, we had a big movie screen. Oh, it was a mammoth, big thing. And it must have made an awful good target, because they come down, they cut that to ribbons with machine gun fire. And our searchlight, back on the boat deck, was riddle with bullets. But we were very fortunate, there was nobody hurt. One man got the back of his hand cut with shrapnel, but I don't know, it was just luck.

In fact, the *MEDUSA* was a lucky ship, I'll tell you why. In November, we were out there and we were tied up at a quay at Ford Island, just like a battleship was, except we were on the other side. When we went out on maneuvers and come back in, the Utah get in before us, and she took our berth. Now, we were a little bit provoked about the *UTAH* being tied up where we were. But, of course, you know what happened to the *UTAH*, don't you? So, just as I say we were a lucky ship, we weren't there, or we might have took the brunt of that attack on the *UTAH*.

BF: During the attack, what was going through your mind?

DM: Now, first, when they started . . . when I said I saw them dropping these bombs, see. Of course, they hit the water and didn't make too much noise. And, of course, with no shells in my -- for the five-inch gun I was at, I decided I'd go hand the ammunition for the three-inch guns, 'cause we had a three-inch anti-aircraft gun. So I went over to the magazine hoist and they were shooting these boxes of three-inch shells up. Well, normally, it's a two-man operation, but I guess adrenaline must have flowed and everybody was just grabbing one by itself. And I started one with my head down and then I heard an awful big explosion. And I thought maybe one of these bombs had finally hit the -- and at first, I dropped on the deck and had this box of ammunition. And the thing that ran through my mind right then was, "We got our bottom blowed off." And I had my head down like this and when I raise it up like this, the bow just loomed up there, just as big. I thought, "Oh."

And what it was, actually, was a thirty-inch anti-aircraft gun fired their first shot and those things are noisy. And that's what it was. I thought we had an explosion but it was actually the thirty-inch anti-aircraft. And from then on . . . and then, first, these planes are coming in strafing. And that's fascinating. I don't know if you've ever been in front of another plane that was shooting bullets at you, but they have tracers and about every fifth is a tracer, see. And you just get fascinated, and you get stunned. You get mesmerized, that's it. And then when it dawned what they're doing, then of course, I dropped -- I always tell everybody I was looking for a rivet head to hide behind. You look for anything to hide behind in a case like that.

And I don't know, things just got kind of hairy after that.

BF: How so?

DM: Well, I don't -- it wasn't hairy, you just kept moving, just automatically. You train, you know, all this time, with general quarters drill and stuff like that, and it seemed like automatically you start doing things. And your mind really doesn't even function.

BF: Much confusion?

DM: I wouldn't say it was confusion, now. It was just that when you drill so often, then it becomes kind of natural. And then you start moving unconsciously.

BF: Did this three-inch gun crew hit anything that it shot at?

DM: We were credit -- we had two anti-aircraft guns, two three-inch anti-aircraft guns, and we had two thirty-caliber machine guns on our bridge. And according to the records, we shot down two airplanes and got one submarine. So that's not bad for a repair ship.

BF: Did you see any of these hits?

DM: Oh, yeah. I saw one plane, well, not that we hit, but come across Ford Island and it looks like its wheels are on fire, and she was heading off Ford Island towards the locks out there. And it looked like he turned and dove right into the *CURTIS*. I saw it hit the *CURTIS*. That was one.

BF: What kind of a ship was the *CURTIS*?

DM: The *CURTIS* was a seaplane tender. And another plane was coming down on our port side and she was just roaring right down through there. And all of a sudden it got quiet. And a quick look like that, and all I saw was just pieces of plane coming down and the engine and the pilot went right over into the bank over there.

BF: Were these -- were these planes low enough so that you could see the pilots?

DM: Oh yeah. Oh yes. In fact, they were low enough, if we had something to throw at 'em, we could've. Yeah, they were real low. In fact, you could see the guys', you could see the pilots real good. These dive bombers come right down on top of you, especially when they're strafing.

BF: What was the scene like in the harbor when you looked around, when you had a minute to look around? What did it look like?

DM: Well, I don't recall looking around, tell you the truth. I did remember seeing the *UTAH* roll over.

BF: That was a target ship, old battleship that had been converted to . . .

DM: Yeah. They took into our berth. And of course, that submarine I was talking about. I remember seeing that thing. And the story of coming down and dropping deck charge and then heading out. And the plane that crashed into the *CURTIS*. Those are things that stuck in my mind. But . . .

BF: Were you aware of what was happening along Battleship Row and the other side of Ford Island?

DM: Not really, not really at that time. But if I remember, I told you, I looked out a port hole and saw this black smoke, I think that was the first hit over there, on of those torpedo ships.

BF: So you knew pretty soon that this was an attack?

DM: Oh yeah. Then we knew we were in trouble somewhere.

BF: You never confused it with a drill?

DM: Oh, no, no, no. It wasn't a drill. No, no. We knew it wasn't a drill within two or three minutes, as I say.

BF: After the attack was over that day, what was the rest of that day like? What did you do?

DM: Well, I -- it seemed like we stayed in general quarters and I remember being up around the fo'c'sle and somebody come tap me on the back and says, "Hey, would you care for a sandwich?"

And I said, "Thank you." It was Spam sandwich, of all things. Good tasting sandwich at the time. And that was two-thirty in the afternoon. Now, what happened between the morning and two-thirty, I don't know. Really. I have no recollection.

BF: 'Cause that . . . that time go by very quickly, then?

DM: It did, it did.

BF: You weren't conscious of time.

DM: Nuh-uh. No, it just seemed like you were busy all the time doing something. I don't know what I was doing, but I must have been busy.

BF: Were you ever afraid?

DM: Not really. Not until that evening. I don't think I was afraid until after that. And then, of course, we went into general quarters at night again, because there's some planes, some planes come in. And of course, they called general quarters and everybody got excited again and it turned out they were our own planes. They were off the *ENTERPRISE*, they'd come in that night.

BF: What were the next few days like? Oh, stop, I'll ask you with that when we change tapes.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

BF: Let's go back to this midget submarine that you saw. Besides your ship, who else was firing at it?

DM: Well, I really couldn't tell you who else was firing. It seems like later on, I've heard that everybody had taken credit for it. But what stuck out in my mind, of course, I did see it come up. And as I say, I was setting sights on his five-inch gun and we had it trained around her and, of course, nobody said anything about firing at it, but we were trained right on it. And I think if we did have some shells, we could have put one through the counting tower. And then, of course, our anti-aircraft gun on the boat deck depressed, and she did fire at it and put a shell through the counting tower. But at about this time, the USS *MONAGHAN*, which is a destroyer that was on ready duty. She was on the way and she was coming down or starboard side. And I watched her come in. She rammed this submarine, and you could see it roll. And then she dropped depth

charges, and then she went across the lock and I thought she run, she run aground across the lock, and put out a fire on a barge that was over there.

BF: This is the *MONAGHAN* now?

DM: The *MONAGHAN*, yeah.

BF: What about the sub . . .

DM: Well . . .

BF: . . . after it was rammed?

DM: After she rammed, of course, the *MONAGHAN* dropped depth charges and then I didn't see no more of it. She didn't come back up again, so we presumed it was hit. And I said, the *MONAGHAN* run across, run aground and there was a barge over there that was on fire, and she put that fire out, and then she backed off, and then she steamed off through the channel and went to sea.

BF: Can you recall any other incidents that stick out in your mind? Things like that?

DM: Well, now, that is the one that I can remember really, because I'm not sure whether another destroyer come down and dropped depth charges or not, after that.

BF: What about the next few days, the next few weeks? What was life like for you?

DM: Well, I think it was two or three days, it might have been about three days later when I finally was able to take a shower. You know, you were just -- as I said before, we kinda numbed you. You just sit around and waiting for something to happen. You didn't know what was going to happen. So I do recall that when I finally did get to go, I was wearing -- I'm only wearing sandals now, but that day I had on socks and I had on a pair of moccasins. And I didn't realize until I went to take off my sock that I must have got hit with a piece shrapnel, because my sock was stuck to my foot. Of course, it was all healed up by this time. But it took about three days before I was able to get a shower. And you slept with your clothes on and we went into general quarters every time somebody dropped a hammer, I think they got excited and went to general quarters.

And the thing -- funny things happened too, you know. Right after -- when I had a chance to look around, we had two more electrician's Mate who ... Well, one fellow, his name was TOO, and the other guys name was Spindell. Well, TOO was a tall fellow and Spindell was a short fellow. And their general quarters station was on our after searchlight. And an after searchlight was a 24-inch searchlight, with a little platform around it. And they were up on this platform, and see, when the planes come in to strafe us, say they come in from the starboard side, they'd run around the port side. Well, when TOO was telling the stories about it afterwards, he says, "You know, we'd be on the starboard side when you're on our port side, Ducky was in front of me." This was Spindell.

And he said, "We go from the port side to the starboard side, Ducky was in front of me again." He says, "How'd you get in front of me? The platform was only this wide!"

And we didn't know how he done it. We found out, we went to general quarters and Ducky was a very fast fellow. He was going up to general quarters, he walked right up and down his back, no problem at all. Funniest thing you ever saw, the guy walking. He was just that fast, walked over the guy's back, and away he went. And that's what he must have been doing to Roger TOO, all the time, kept walking over his back. But you know, when you look back at it now, you had some humorous parts of it too.

BF: When was the first time you had a chance to leave the ship and go ashore?

DM: I think it might have been about two weeks later that we had liberty and went over on the beach. And everybody was real nice to us then. Before, you know, before this happened, of course, servicemen on the beach there in Honolulu, well, eh, just servicemen.

BF: You mean, when you say the beach, you mean downtown Honolulu, the Waikiki?

DM: Yeah, anyplace. On the shore, you might say. And, but then, after that, of course, people were really nice, in fact, they were getting close to Christmas time, you know. And I got invited to five different homes for Christmas. And I couldn't make any of them because there wasn't any liberty on Christmas. They thought there was going to be another attack at that time. They weren't sure what was happening. So never did.

BF: Were you affected at all by martial law, which was declared immediately after?

DM: Well, our liberty was cut down, from about twelve o'clock to four o'clock. We had about four hours liberty every fourth day, and that's about when it was.

BF: Is there any one thing about the attack that sticks out in your mind more vividly than anything else?

DM: I don't know how you'd . . .

BF: Something you remember more often than anything else?

DM: No. Well, I remember, you know, the first time I heard that noise and the remarks I made to that chief. That I can always remember. I can even remember the guy, chief's name, too. His name was Asher. (Chuckles)

BF: What happened to him?

DM: I don't know. To tell you the truth, I don't know what ever happened to Chief Asher.

BF: What happened to you?

DM: Oh, I stayed aboard the Medusa. In April of '42, they sent me back to San Diego to go to sound and motion picture school. I become a movie operator. And I was back here . . . it was a five-week course. But I wasn't very smart, it took me three months to get through a five-week course. But I went back to the Medusa again and I stayed aboard her. In the meantime, I went from fireman -- I told you I was a Fireman -- I made Electrician[*'s*] Mate Third [*Class*], Electrician[*'s*] Mate Second [*Class*]. And when I left the *MEDUSA* in 1944, I was First Class Electrician[*'s*] Mate. And we took the *MEDUSA* down to New Hebrides

from there and we done our work down there. And then I come back in 1944, January 1944. They sent me back to V-12 school, which is officer candidate school. And I stayed in officer school for -- well, actually until the war ended, in '45, I was forty-five. Then they abolished the school, and being I was regular Navy, I couldn't out when everybody else was getting out. I had to finish my enlistment which I had another, about another year to go. And they sent me to a tender, the USS *DIXIE*. And we wound up in Bikini, for the A-bomb testing, 1946. And that's where I finished up my regular Navy career.

BF: Do you have any feelings of, for lack of a better word, animosity towards the Japanese, as a result of what you went through?

DM: At this time?

BF: Then and now. During the war and now.

DM: Of course, during the war, they were the enemy. But after the war, no, I don't think so. Until recently. The reason I'm telling you that is I worked for Chrysler corporation, automobile industry. And of course, you know, the Japanese are putting us . . . so we have a little animosity towards the Japanese because of the cars they're putting out.

BF: But not because of the attack?

DM: No, not because of the attack. No, no. I don't have any animosity to them neither, as far as that goes. But I could always say that I don't like the Japanese because they're putting out small cars. (Chuckles)

BF: You played a part in a very big event. What effect did it have on your life, being here that day?

DM: Well, I . . . you know, actually, I've had people say to me, you know, I'd say, tell 'em I was at Pearl. Oh, I've had many people say, a hero, a hero. I don't feel like a hero. It just happened that I was in, might you say, the right place at the right time? Or the wrong place at the wrong time? I don't know. And I think I've been pretty fortunate in my life, that was one event. And there was a lot of things went on through my life, since then, where the good lord was taking care of me. And I've been very fortunate.

BF: When you see a movie or maybe read a book, are you often transported back in time to that day?

DM: Well, when I read a book about Pearl Harbor, I try to find out how many fallacies there are.

BF: You mean errors?

DM: Mm hm.

BF: Do you find a lot?

DM: I guess there are some, you know. The movie that come out, "Tora, Tora, Tora." Great, beautiful photography, but a lot of it wasn't right. But then, I don't know, really, because I was on the one ship and I was just in one small place. I only know what went around me. What went on, on the other side of island. In fact, actually, when we went on liberty, I had to go around Ford Island on liberty launches, and I wouldn't even look over at the battleships. I

didn't. And of course, there was a lot of debris in the water at the time, and there was still bodies being taken out.

BF: It almost sounds as if this was not the harrowing experience for you that it was for a lot of other people.

DM: It wasn't really. Well, I was twenty-one years and I still consider myself a kid. And I was enjoying myself. I was in the Navy, that was one thing. There was three things I wanted to do when I was a little kid, was join the Navy, get a tattoo, and go to China. Two out of three ain't bad, I've never been to China. I might get back someday, but. No, actually, I was in the Navy and it was just, I don't know, just another day's affair, as far as I was concerned, I guess. It really didn't bother me that much. Of course, I didn't like the idea of them shooting real bullets at me. And if I could help it, I wouldn't give them the opportunity again. And I was lucky, I didn't give them much opportunity.

Daniel Martinez: Would you like to . . .

BF: Let me . . . do it through me and then he'll look at me.

DaM: Okay, ask him about meeting . . . the fiftieth anniversary is planned . . . .

BF: Oh right, I got you. Okay.

In another five years, there's going to be a fiftieth anniversary and we can assume that a lot of Japanese survivors of the war, and maybe even of the attack will be here. How would you feel about meeting with them?

DM: I think it would be interesting. I think I'd like to see some. In fact, there's an awful lot of Japanese tourists here right now. And I look at 'em to see who'd be the right age. I just wonder maybe if they are some of the ones that were there.

BF: What goes through your mind when you see them?

DM: I don't know. I'd just like to know what they look like. See if they'd aged like we have. Of course, I don't think I've aged because I look at this face every morning in the mirror and it hasn't changed. But if I look at one of my pictures from 1941, I guess I did grow a little older.

BF: Five years from now, you meet some survivors, Japanese survivors of the attack, what are you going to say?

DM: Well, it all depends what time of the day it is. I can say "Ohayo," if it's before noon, I guess.

BF: Which means, of course, "good morning" in Japanese.

DM: That's about all. No, I think it would be kind of interesting, if I could converse with them, I'd like to see what they -- you know, like I told you before, I have no animosity towards them. And actually, they were just doing the same thing that we were doing. They were patriots for their country, we were patriots for ours. But it would be very interesting. I understand sometime when, oh, sometime back, was it Fushido who led the attack?

BF: Fuchida.

DM: Fuchida. And he got religion, of course. He was in the States. I mean, I understand he tried to join the . . .

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

BF: You probably have to move from there . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#154 WILLIAM LEFABVRE: PRINTER ABOARD THE USS *WEST VIRGINIA*

(Conversation off-microphone.)

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay, I'm going to read this slate. The following interview of William Lefabvre was conducted on December 2, 1986 in Honolulu, at about six o'clock in the evening. Mr. Lefabvre lives in Goffstown, New Hampshire. And the interview is done by Bart Fredo, and also present was Mark Tanaka-Sanders of the National Park Service.

Mr. Lefabvre, let me start off by asking you to tell us your name and where you were from, back in 1941.

William Lefabvre (WL): My name is William Lefabvre. I'm from Goffstown, New Hampshire.

BF: What service were you in and what was your rank and job?

WL: I was in the U.S. Navy, and I was a printer, actually Seaman First Class.

BF: When did you come to Hawaii?

WL: When? I came in to Hawaii in, it was late 1940. And I was in Hawaii for less than a year before the attack.

BF: Which -- what was your assignment? Which ship were you aboard?

WL: I was aboard the USS *WEST VIRGINIA*.

BF: Let me take you back to that day, early that morning. What were you doing, early?

WL: Early that morning, we were getting ready to go to church, and I was in a print shop, which was down, I would say, even with the armor belt, on the starboard side, which was inboard, according to the attack, which I was very fortunate that it was. And we were waiting for coffee, as I said. And we heard this thump then the ship started to list immediately, and general quarters went. And almost simultaneously, "Abandon ship," went. Being that, naturally, just a seaman, we didn't know really what was going on. And it was real, I wouldn't say exciting, it was . . . we just didn't know what was going on.

BF: When did you find that, find out that something was going on?

WL: Well, when we got up to topside, but before I got up to topside, a Third Class Printer said to all of us in there, "Torpedoes, get the hell out of here!"

And that is still, in my mind, I never have forgot that. But I haven't seen that Third Class Printer. I'd really love to find out how he knew they were torpedoes, 'cause the rest of us were really in the fog until we got up to topside and saw all the things that were going on.

BF: Do you remember his name?

WL: Joe Rickowski, third class.

BF: Ever see him again?

WL: No.

BF: Last time that you saw him was that day?

WL: That was the last time that I had seen Joe.

BF: When you got topside, what did you see?

WL: An awful mess. That's one way to put it, the only way that I could put it. And a sad thing to see, to see your whole battle line just setting there all full of smoke. And, oh, everybody firing, that had a gun, possibly was firing. And it was very, very scary and the next thing, you know, I knew, I was very, very shocked, like everybody else must have been. And the next thing I knew, I felt my feet being cold. And evidently, the blast from the Arizona must have just swept me right off the ship, into the bay.

BF: Did you see the . . .

WL: And that's where I landed.

BF: Did you see the *ARIZONA* go up?

WL: Oh yes, we saw her go up. As a matter of fact, we were trying to lock down our deck, because the ship was listed and we could hardly manage to walk, so we were sliding down. And don't ask me why, we went towards the water. That's something that will . . . I mean, normally, you'd think you'd go towards the ship that was inboard so that you have a little protection. But, I mean, you know, when your things are going like that, you just do what your mind tells you to do and we went towards the water.

BF: Were you conscious of torpedoes or bombs hitting your ship, the West Virginia?

WL: No. No.

BF: Just that initial?

WL: Just that initial thump, the first initial thump. And then, like I say, he was a third class printer was the one that said torpedo. He was the one that gave us an indication there was something like that going on, but we didn't believe it until we got up to topside. That's why I'm still wondering where he got that information, how he could even analyze anything like that.

BF: The *WEST VIRGINIA* was outboard of the *TENNESSEE*?

WL: Outboard of the *TENNESSEE*.

BF: And the *ARIZONA* was next to . . .

WL: I think it was the *NEVADA*, which was inboard of her and she was aft of the *NEVADA*.

BF: Tell us what you, what else you saw when you went above deck.

WL: Well, besides our cog, you looked up and you could see just the shiny parts of the Japs' bombs coming in. And, oh, there was many of 'em. And we had very little planes in the air at all. As a matter of fact, I guess they did a

very good job of wiping out the ones that had a chance to get out. And the ones that did get up, I mean, you couldn't recognize 'em because they were out, so far we outnumbered that you just couldn't tell one from the other.

BF: Could you see -- these Japanese planes -- could you actually see the pilots? Were they that low?

WL: Yes. They were very low, especially the torpedo planes, still coming at the other end of the bay. You could see them, they were very low. You could hit 'em with an apple. They were that low.

BF: Did you see any of these attacking planes hit by gunfire?

WL: Yes.

BF: Can you tell us about that?

WL: Well, I don't know the ships. Like I say, when you're all worked up like that, and when I did get blown into the water, I went to the motor launch that was out there and I picked up the swab, and I was pulling fellows in.

BF: A mop?

WL: That's right. That's what it was, a Navy mop, a swab.

BF: These are fellows from your ship, the *WEST VIRGINIA*.

WL: Anybody, we didn't care who they were. They were in the drink just like we were and so I was trying to pull them in.

BF: What other ships were these men from?

WL: The battleship group. All the battleship group.

BF: You were telling us about the airplanes, did you see any of the attacking planes hit?

WL: Yes, I saw one that was hit over near the fuel tanks, got hit by one of the battleship guns got it. I believe it was a five-inch hit it, and you saw that, it just descended really.

BF: And . . .

WL: The pilot, I didn't see the pilot at all on that one.

BF: Any others, did you see any other planes hit?

WL: Well, like I say, the way that the bombers were coming in at that time, by the time that we got up there.

BF: So you were in the water and then you were picked up by a launch and then you started rescuing other sailors in the water.

WL: The first class boatswain mate, which was formally my petty officer, with division PO, in the First Division, named Pruitt, told me. He says, "Lefabvre, get underneath the seat." He says, "Don't you know what those spots are in the water?"

Well I says, you know, "What are they?"

He says, "That's machine guns."

I asked him, "What are you going to do, let those guys die?"

He says, "You're gonna let them get hit?"

So we just kept on pulling them in, and even he got up and started to help me pull them in.

BF: Were you ever afraid during, while this was going on?

WL: There's no word for it. You're so scared, you're numb. That's the only way to put it.

BF: And yet still . . .

WL: You're scared, but you're, you do what you know you have to do.

BF: You're still functioning?

WL: Oh yes. Yes. As a matter of fact, maybe I had done things that I can't even tell you about, because, I mean, you just function like that from your training.

BF: Did you have -- when all of this was going on -- did you have any opportunity to look around the harbor and see what the scene was?

WL: When we got over to the sub base. See, when we filled the motor launch, we headed towards the sub base because that was, supposedly, as far as we were concerned, was an inlet, or we could try to help do something.

(END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE)

(VIDEOTAPE TWO)

BF: . . . this was going on -- did you have an opportunity to look around the harbor to see what the scene was like?

WL: Yes. When we got over to the sub base, we turned around and saw, that's when I say it was, that's when we realized that things were as bad as they were. It almost made us cry, actually. And we saw one of the last torpedo planes making its run and one of the battleships, I believe it was a five-inch anti-aircraft gun, get it. And it just ended really. And we didn't see the pilot on that plane at all. But we did see some pilots coming down from some of the other planes that were shot down, that we didn't even seen get shot down. But we could tell they were Japs by the way they had their, they still had those airplane helmets that they wore, you know, and you could tell that they were not ours.

BF: Did you get back to the *WEST VIRGINIA* after you got blown off the ship?

WL: No. No, we went right over to the sub base because we could see that there was no way to get over there anyway. Because we had that motor launch there, but by that time, I don't know what happened to it. Maybe they went out

to get some more and one of the printers said, "Let's go over and see if we can get re-assigned."

So we just went up the road by the fuel tanks and headed towards the sub base.

BF: Let me take you back again about when you were just coming topside, aboard the *WEST VIRGINIA*. Where did you come topside?

WL: From the print shop, which was located over on the starboard side, which was towards the *TENNESSEE*, that we were tied up at. And they didn't even . . . normally, when a ship like that is having a problem like that, they cut the housing. But they didn't, which was a good thing.

BF: So you were still tied to the *TENNESSEE*?

WL: Yes, we were still tied to the *TENNESSEE*?

BF: Why was that a good thing?

WL: Well, we, maybe, would have rolled right over like, I believe, the *OKLAHOMA*, could've completely turned over. And with those housings still on, they kept us from capsizing completely. We just settled right on our side.

BF: So where, what could you see? When you came topside, the *ARIZONA* was behind you and to the right.

WL: Right.

BF: What could you see there?

WL: Well, it didn't even look like the *ARIZONA*. She was already, she was already half-down by the time we got up there. And then she was still exploding. And by the time we reached the shoreline, she was just about as far down as she was going.

BF: How long were you topside before you were into, blown into the water?

WL: Almost made it to water level, sliding down, grabbing a hold of this and that.

BF: So you weren't on deck very long?

WL: No, not very long. I would say it was a matter of just seconds.

BF: Did you lose a lot of friends that day?

WL: No, because, maybe, on the deck force, but I mean as far as the friends, if you mean in the print shop, no. But as far as friends, oh yes, we lost some. But I didn't know them by name, or anything, because, see, they were below decks. Oh yes, we lost, I would say . . .

(TAPE STOPS, RESTARTS)

BF: What was the rest of the day like?

WL: The rest of the day? Well, the rest of the day was real hard to take, because there was a lot on our mind. We were trying to get reorganized and I don't mean just the sailors, I mean Marines, soldiers and everybody on that island was trying to get reorganized and naturally, figuring that there might be a possible invasion, so there was a lot of barbed wiring and stuff like that going on. And by the way, by the time our, we got halfway up to the sub base, somebody said to me, "Hey, don't you know enough to wear any clothes?"

And I didn't realize it until at that moment that I was naked except for two shirt sleeves. That's all I had, two cuffs. The only cuffs from my dungaree shirt. That's all I had for clothing.

BF: Where did you lose it?

WL: Must have been from the concussion, which I didn't, like I say, I don't, didn't even realize I was blown into the ship, off the ship until I landed in the water. And we were all very dark from the fuel. But we just weren't concentrating on clothes and stuff like that, we were trying to get to a place where we could help or do something.

BF: During the attack, what was, what was going through your mind? What were you thinking about?

WL: Well, it was hard to believe. Really, it was trying to figure out if that third class printer was right or if he was wrong. And after we got up to topside we realized that it was true. But then, being only a seaman, you just don't know what you can do, but you know you gotta do something and you gotta do it quick. And that's what we tried to do, that was in our mind. Try to get to a place where we could help and, you know, do all we could to either repel an invasion or do something.

BF: Was there a lot of confusion?

WL: Very, very much so. Yes. But it didn't take long before they were really organized and knew what they were doing. It was just that first hour or two that was real bad, as far as confusion.

BF: What's the one thing about that day that sticks in your mind the most?

WL: Wondering if we'd ever get back and be able to, without that battle line -- because, see, we were all, it was always put in our mind that that was our first line of defense. And to see them sitting there and not able to do anything, it made you wonder if we're ever going to get back. That was in our mind. Not only mine, but I mean a lot of the minds. We were wondering if we were ever going to get back.

BF: How long was it after the attack that you eventually left Hawaii?

WL: Left what?

BF: Hawaii, Hawaii.

WL: Very shortly because I was transferred three days later onto the USS *SAN FRANCISCO*.

BF: It's a cruiser.

WL: Which was a very . . . yeah, heavy cruiser, CA-38, which was a very active ship during the war.

BF: What were those three days like, before you left?

WL: Well, mostly trying to get cleaned up. That oil was very hard to get out of our pores and we had taken many showers. And we had to sleep on the piazzas out there in the sub base there.

BF: What is that?

WL: Well, it was . . . we had cots, they issued us cots and one uniform of, I would say, dungarees again. Because we were getting ready, you know, any boat crew we could help, that's what we were doing. And then they took us in a field and lined up all the seaman, all the third class petty officers and like that. And then we were reassigned to the ships that could get under way.

BF: All your belongings . . . ?

WL: Were gone.

BF: Never got . . .

WL: Had to be reissued. And I had the most sexiest blankets when I got aboard the *SAN FRANCISCO*. They went into the wrong stock place and they got these natural blankets. They had these nice silk edges and everything. That's what we had . . .

BF: Aboard the *SAN FRANCISCO*.

WL: . . . and so when the captain had his first captain's inspection after we were aboard, he says, "What the hell is this?" He thought it was at a show, I guess. But that's all we had. They made a mistake and they weren't about to make a change because they wanted to get us out as fast as we could.

BF: Briefly, what did you do for the rest of the war?

WL: I became a gunner's mate and I was on the five-inch anti-aircraft crew for the *SAN FRANCISCO*, and I stayed with her until she went through the canal and I helped put her under, as far as preserving her in Philadelphia. Then I got transferred up to south Boston and preserved some aircraft carriers. Then I was discharged and recalled for the Korean War.

BF: As a result of what you went through that day, and for lack of a better word, do you have any animosity towards Japan or the Japanese?

WL: I was asked that many times, and deep down in my heart, yes, I still feel as though that, I don't know, it takes still a little while before I'd really forgive them all the way. But you gotta learn to live with 'em because the bible says you must. I have softened quite a bit, I will say.

BF: In seeing movies, reading books, are you often sort of transported back in time to that day and relive it again?

WL: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, it was a long time. I even used to dream, wake up in the middle of the night about it, thinking about it.

BF: Dream?

WL: Dreaming of it.

BF: As it happened.

WL: Yes.

BF: The same way it happened, or did it happen differently in your dreams?

WL: Oh, still the same way.

BF: What's happening? Tell us.

WL: Well, I mean, I felt the thumps and everything. And action, of course, aboard the "*FRISCO*", and stuff like that. Yeah, you get to feel the same, same instances that happen, same activities. But not all the way, you only get very short spurts of it.

BF: In 1991 will be the fiftieth anniversary of the attack. If you're here then, if you come back to Hawaii and some survivor, Japanese survivors of the war, or of the attack are here, would you like to see and talk with them?

WL: Oh, I'd even talk with them now, as a matter of fact. Like I said, I have softened quite a bit since then, but I mean, deep down in my heart, I still feel just a little resentment of it, that's all.

BF: How long did it take for you to soften up?

WL: Oh, a long time. A long time after the war. Because of some of the things that I'd seen on the islands, or with the "*FRISCO*", when they let us go ashore and saw some of the things that we had seen. It was unbelievable to even tell that I saw. That's one reason why I say you just can't forgive that easy.

BF: I've asked you this question, now let me ask it another way. When someone says "Pearl Harbor" to you, or "December 7," what's the first picture that flashes into your mind?

WL: The *WEST VIRGINIA*, and the *ARIZONA.* That's the first things that hit my mind. I see the, you know, the pictures that everybody sees, the *WEST VIRGINIA* laying on its side and the *ARIZONA* just about disappeared. And all the smoke. (Chiming in background) And that's all you see. You don't even see the rest of the ships because naturally I was attached to the wavy side, and I just . . . that's the first picture that comes to my mind.

BF: Excuse me, what's that? Oh, was it you?

(TAPING STOPS, THEN CONTINUES)

BF: When you hear the words "Pearl Harbor, December 7," what do you see in your mind?

WL: The *WEST VIRGINIA* laying on its side. The *ARIZONA*, what was left of it. And all that smoke and that's about all that I see because, naturally, being attached to the *WEST VIRGINIA*, it just sunk in that deep. That's what I see when people mention Pearl Harbor.

BF: You played a part in a very, very big event, a major event in this century. Has that effected your life in any way?

WL: No, not really. As a matter of fact, when I was getting ready to make this trip, the wife was talking to one of my neighbors and she told 'em we were going on our trip. "Where you going?"

"To Honolulu."

"What are you going to do down there?"

"Well, my husband's a Pearl Harbor survivor?"

And the neighbor said, "You mean we have a celebrity on this street and we didn't even know about it?"

So I mean, no, I don't -- it hasn't really changed my life because I don't really talk about it.

BF: Because you'd rather not?

WL: That's right. It's gone and, like you say, you try to, you know, we all got to try to get along again now, so you just try to get it out of your mind. It's hard, but you try to wipe it out if you can.

(TAPING STOPS, RESUMES)

BF: Were you wounded?

WL: The only thing I got out of this war, of the Pearl Harbor attack and the whole World War II, was a sprained ankle and I have to wear hearing aids, from the concussion from the five-inch guns, because I was a mount captain and the foam, foams kept on slapping against my ears. And I had to have pus wiped out and cleaned out every once in a while. And that's why I have to wear a hearing aid.

BF: The concussion, this was throughout the war, not on December 7?

WL: Right, yeah. That's throughout the war. Mostly . . .

(TAPING STOPS, RESUMES)

WL: When we were going over to the sub base, to show you, even at that early stage of the war -- you gotta say it was a war, because we were already into it -- they had Marines that were protecting our fuel tanks, even at that time. Well, when we got over there, walking up the road, there was a Marine sentry and he had his rifle, and he was at a post there. And we . . . one of those chaps that we saw coming down in this -- I didn't want to say this, but I will tell you -- he was coming down on his parachute and he was just outside of the fencing. And he made an attempt to run and he jumped on the fence and was going to try to go over, for what reason, I don't know. But the Marine didn't ask him. He fixed his bayonet, put a clip in his rifle and he took the bayonet and rammed it clear up his rump and fired at the same time and just flipped him on the side, and just went about his sentry duty, as though nothing had happened. That's how U.S. Marines, they don't take nothing from nobody.

BF: Did you see that?

WL: Yeah, I saw that happen.

BF: How did you feel when you saw that?

WL: Great. I felt as though, when I saw that round ball, I knew that plane falling down and I saw that round ball, I knew what it was and I knew we were at war, because look at how we saw our whole battle line there. So I felt real proud of that Marine, I'll tell you. Real proud of him.

BF: You were all very angry.

WL: Right. At that point, yes. Everybody on that road was cheering and everything else. We forgot our own sorrows. We felt that good about it. Even though it was one, at least it was one we got. We felt that, you know, it gave us that much of a punch to get us started again.

BF: I'm sure you can think of something else, another story, something else that happened that day, a vignette, a scene.

WL: Not that particular day because the only thing, like I say, we were just trying to get re-clothed and that took up most of our time there, trying to get re-clothed.

BF: How about another day then? Something happen that . . .

WL: Oh, that night, that night, naturally, our planes did get in the air, they were in the air, as a matter of fact, even during the day. When they were coming back, I mean, it was -- nobody took any chances at all, and we were even firing at our own planes. I mean, because we, you know, being that the insignias of both Japan and the United States, at that time were so close, you couldn't make them out.

BF: It was a circle and a star for U.S.

WL: I mean they were real close, right. See we had the star with the red circle and they had the red circle, so, I mean, that's, you just fire if you saw that red, red circle without even considering, you just fire at it. And a lot of times it was our own. And naturally, they talk to you and try to tell you who they were. You know, "Knock it off, boys, we're friends." And that's the problem we had a for a while. That's why we changed it to the white star. We were knocking off our own boys by mistake.

BF: Do you have anything, not necessarily with you now, but at home, something from that day?

WL: Yes. As a Gunner's Mate, when the war ended, for the . . . a souvenir that I received was a Jap rifle with the bayonet and all, and a case that fit over the bayonet. I've got that as a souvenir and it was authorized by the gunnery officer, which was the commanding officer of our, the ship, *SAN FRANCISCO.* And I got the permit to have it.

BF: But you don't have anything from the *WEST VIRGINIA*.

WL: No, everything was lost on the *WEST VIRGINIA*, everything.

BF: Including the shirt cuffs?

WL: Well, no, those, I should've kept those, but I don't know where those went. They were in a sub base somewhere. No, I should've kept those as a souvenir, but you don't think about it at that time. I oughta have them bronzed.

(TAPING STOPS, RESUMES)

WL: . . . in my heart, I hope that we have, and because I've worked with a lot of gallant men and I've lost a lot of friends, especially from the "*FRISCO*", because of the action that we had seen. And I believe that teamwork and believing in each other was one thing that got us through this whole thing, and I don't mean just the "*FRISCO*", I mean the whole United States. And if we keep on that trend of life, I hope that this thing will never happen again.

BF: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

160 VERDUN NICHOLAS: STOREKEEPER ON USS *NAVAJO*

Verdun Nicholas (VN): Oh, I've seen it really change.

Chris Conybeare (CC): Yeah

VN: Can't believe it.

CC: Okay, let me -- we have a little official thing I gotta read here.

Okay, this is an oral history interview with Mr. Verdun Nicholas. It was conducted December 3, 1986, at eleven AM, at the Sheraton Waikiki. Mr. Nicholas lives at West Valley City, Utah. And my name is Chris Conybeare, conducting the interview. And we're not being assisted at this point, due to shortage of park service personnel.

Tell you how we'll start this, what was your name and rank? (BN coughs.) Name and rank on December 7, 1941.

VN: Verdun, Verdun Nicholas. I was Storekeeper Second Class.

CC: And on what ship?

VN: I was on the USS *NAVAJO*.

CC: What kind of ship was the *NAVAJO*?

VN: That was a million-dollar, sea-going tugboat.

CC: What were you doing that morning?

VN: Oh, that morning we were coming in with the barge and we had a hundred barrels of high octane gasoline, oh, and we had generators, five deep sea divers aboard, and our job, mainly, is to go out to the firing line, bring in the crippled ship to the harbor for repairs, or to repair it at sea, if possible. But usually when we're there at sea, we're like a sitting duck. So we try to bring 'em in to the harbors.

CC: And you said bringing it in, where were you coming from?

VN: Well, we were coming from the United States, or from mainland. And we had arrived in the area, [*on*] December the sixth. And I remember when our generator went out, for the movie. And so we didn't have any movies that night. And when we went back to my fantail and listened to the radio, and I remember very distinctly, they said it'll be peace or war with Japan, December the seventh.

CC: Oh, they were referring to the negotiations in Washington?

VN: Right, right.

CC: Now, when did you first realize that there was an attack going on? Do you remember where you were and what you saw?

VN: Yes. We were about, oh, entering the parallel of Hickam, well, we were right about the Aloha Tower, and then we were coming over into Hickam, because we were trying to get rid of the barge that had the gasoline. And the USS *WARD* came to us and said, "Man your battle stations. This is the real thing."

And that's when we . . . so we didn't even have time for breakfast. We were just trying to get cleared of that and we put ammunition all over the table and put in the portholes, secured and went to our gun stations, and that was . . . and then we started finally realizing that -- well, first we thought they were in maneuvers. And . . .

CC: What did you see? Did you see planes yourself?

VN: Yes. We saw planes. There were planes flying, the smoke from the ships. And we realized naturally then when one airplane was coming down, just nose diving, and he didn't come out of it. He was just streaming with black smoke. And that's when we realized this is the real thing.

CC: Did . . . ? Yeah. (Woman interrupts.)

Our microphone is very sensitive, so . . .

VN: Oh, I'm sorry.

CC: No, no problem.

VN: We manned our three-inch gun, the fifty-caliber and thirty-caliber machine guns. And then we stood by the depth charges and we assisted the USS *WARD* and a little later on the day, there was the USS *ST. LOUIS* with us. And we were searching for possible three midget submarines in that area, outside the entrance. And then, we dropped depth charges all around in there. We understood that the USS *WARD* got one of 'em. And we tried to get inside and the thing was blocked and that is the, what you call . . .

CC: Called the net?

VN: Net, yes. Well, when they did let us in there, and we had to get over by the sub base, there was two-man midget subs that entered in there. They got in.

CC: Do you remember what you did with that barge, with all that?

VN: Yes, we took it over to the fuel station, parallel of Hickam Field.

CC: So, during the attack, you still towed that fuel?

VN: Yeah. We were trying to get it there before all of this took place, you know. Then . . . because, naturally, we had to let go our cargo. And I remember, when we were by that station, I found this Coke bottle we had on board ship. And I hurled it -- wrote a note and put it inside and threw it over the side, hoping that maybe someone would know that I was okay, you know, to get word to my wife. We --- later that night, there was a plane that came over and he didn't identify himself. Of course, everyone was trigger-happy and we were shooting, you know, the things all over the place. But about 21:05, or 21:10, something like that, there was a plane that came in and didn't identify, and so we gave 'em all the works; every ship around in there just gave 'em the works. And he finally was knocked out, landed over in the sugar cane in Pearl City. The pilot, I believe, he bailed out, and was safe. But they kept that hush-hush for a long time.

CC: One of our own planes?

VN: You bet, yeah.

CC: Did . . . after the attack, you say everybody was kind of trigger-happy. Did you have any special duties after the attack? Did you assist with the clean up, or what was the type of duty?

VN: Yes, we were over to the *CALIFORNIA* and that was the late night of December the seventh, when we did all of this attack on that plane. And trying to get the water out of the *CALIFORNIA*. But our pumps didn't work, something there, so the skipper says, "Get away from here for all the good you're doing." So he says, "Go down to the USS *ARIZONA*."

Well, we went down to the *ARIZONA* and alongside, we're pumping salt water into it, four hours on, four hours off. Well, we did this, it was approximately three days before the fire was strictly out of the ARIZONA.

We had a man aboard our ship, by the name Ziegler. He was the chief quartermaster. He volunteered to go aboard the *ARIZONA* while it was still afire. And he cut the lines and then he jumped back. He could've gone between the *ARIZONA* and our ship, but he made it back and they made him ensign for that, because we got away about two hundred and fifty yards and then the bow of the *ARIZONA* blew up. Reason, I think, there was a paint locker and then, I'm not sure, about ammo up there. But anyway, the whole bow just blew right up. So we were, say, give him credit for being saved there by this man heroically going over to the *ARIZONA*, getting us away.

CC: What did you think about all of this? I mean, were you scared, or did you have time to be scared? What was going through your head?

VN: Well, at first, when the skipper on the USS *WARD* said, "This is the real thing," and it made you choke up to, right, you know, your throat, and wondered, "How come? How can they do this?" We thought we were pretty good allies, you know, to Japan and I was over in China for three years. And when I was there in 1935, they told us to keep everything secretly, but they were trying to find out information from us then. And so, it did kind of realize that, hey, we're in war with, you know, Germany and so forth that now we're with Japan, that this is something we just . . . it really angered inside and . . . to think that this had happened. We figured that when they were bottling us up there or did all of this to the ship, the fleet, then that they were continuing onto San Francisco and they would take care in that area there. But we . . .

CC: So, the night after the attacks, there were a lot of rumors and things going around, I mean . . .

VN: Oh yeah, said that they . . . we felt like that they were going to come back. In fact, the fifteenth of December, we thought surely they were coming back because they had an air attack and I remember going ashore and we had to carry gas masks. And if we didn't carry the gas mask with us, it would give us a . . . some were court-martialed, you know, for it. We had the attack, I was at the YMCA and we went into the shelter there until it was over.

CC: So you thought it was going to happen again?

VN: Oh yes. We thought they were coming right in on us again. I think that the turning point, though, was at Midway. And Midway, about the --- oh, it was in June of '42. And I think we had a turning point then. But . . .

CC: As you look back on this, forty-five years later, do you have any thoughts about it? Is it something you'll never, you know, that you've never forgotten or do you think about it all the time?

VN: Yes, I have thought of it often because I lost two shipmates on the USS *ARIZONA*. And in fact, one of them was going ashore, or going over to the ship and he -- to meet a buddy over there -- and he didn't get with him. And I guess we didn't ever find him again.

CC: So you mean somebody from your ship went over to the *ARIZONA* that day?

VN: Yeah, that's what went, right, uh-huh. Right. And we never did get in touch with him again.

CC: What do you think it means? Is there anything that we should learn from all this?

VN: Well, yes, that remember Pearl Harbor and to keep America safe. I think that's our main slogan.

CC: Okay, thank you.

VN: And it was something that I'm just hoping that my, well, all of our children or any of that will never have this happen again to us.

CC: Okay, thank you.

VN: Thank you.

CC: I enjoyed talking with you. Yeah, next time, I don't think it'll be quite the same, you know.

VN: No, no.

END OF INTERVIEW

#161 LOREN BAILEY: USS *OGLALA*

Chris Conybeare (CC): This is an oral history interview with Mr. Loren Bailey. It's December 3, 1986, we're at the Sheraton Waikiki. Mr. Bailey lives in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. And my name is Chris Conybeare conducting the interview. I'm being assisted by Mark Tanaka-Sanders.

So, why don't we start out with can you give me your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

Loren Bailey (LB): My name is Loren Bailey. My rank, December 7, '41 was Seaman First Class, ship fitter striker.

CC: And what was your ship?

LB: USS *OGLALA*.

CC: What kind of ship was it?

LB: It was a minelayer. It was the flagship of the mine laying fleet.

CC: And where was the ship that morning?

LB: We were tied outboard of the cruiser USS *HELENA*, at the ten-ten docks at Pearl Harbor.

CC: How did you end up getting to Hawaii? Where was your hometown and just a little history and how you ended up out.

LB: Well, I was actually raised in Chicago and my folks moved to Wisconsin when I was a sophomore in high school. When I graduated from high school, the Navy kind of intrigued me, so I joined the Navy the day I graduated. And I came out to Hawaii on the transport [*USS CHAUMONT (AP-5)*]. And I was transferred to the USS *OGLALA*, I believe it was October 14, 1940.

CC: So you'd been here a little over a year?

LB: Little over a year.

CC: What kinds of things did you do onboard ship? What was your job?

LB: Well, when I reported aboard, I was a seaman second class and I did mostly deck force work. Painting, chipping, cleaning, stood watches. And they posted a job for a ship fitter striker, to learn a trade. And I applied for that just before December 7, 1941.

CC: All right, that Sunday morning, where were you and when did you first realize that the war had started?

LB: Well, I'd been over to Honolulu the night before and I used to buy records. I always liked jazz, big name bands. And that particular morning, I just finished breakfast. And we usually got up on Sunday morning, regardless of how late we stayed out at night, because the officers gave us all the fresh eggs and fresh milk you could drink on Sunday morning. And as I stepped out of the mess hall, I heard them playing my Duke Ellington records with a scratchy needle. And I started to complain. And just then I heard 'em say, "Away the fire and rescue squad," because someone had spotted a fire over at Ford Island.

So I was going to my fire and rescue station, which happened to be a fire ax. About halfway to my rescue station, they sounded general quarters, which is a different battle station. It was the mine track. And as I started down the starboard side of the ship, I noticed three airplanes. I paid no attention to 'em because there was all so much activity. I thought it was just planes off an aircraft carrier. I saw the red insignia and it never dawned on me. One of 'em turned, I saw a splash, and it dropped a torpedo. Now, the torpedo did not touch the *OGLALA*, my ship. It went under our keel and slammed into the USS *HELENA*.

Our plates dropped out on the bottom of our ship from the concussion. When that torpedo hit, it knocked me down. I got up, I think I was dazed a few minutes. I don't really recall. And all hell was breaking loose because by that time, they were starting to work on the battleships. There was some return fire from our ships. As we started to list -- they start chopping the ropes away that was holding the hauser, as they called 'em, from the *HELENA*. So I crossed the gangplank, went onto the *HELENA*. There was a man on the deck force there directing us what to do, because we had a surplus of men by that time. So the one-point-one -- I believe they were called pom-poms in those days -- they were forty millimeters -- passed the ammunition. And that's what I did during the entire attack.

CC: Did you have a chance to observe what was going on elsewhere in the harbor that morning? Did you see any other ships take hits, or . . .

LB: Oh yes.

CC: . . . what kinds of things did you see?

LB: I saw a lot of smoke. The problem with the *HELENA* was we were close to a naval building, a Navy yard building there. And these planes would come right over the top of the building, they'd be right on top of you, but there's a lot of smoke. And of course, I don't believe -- after that torpedo hit, I don't believe the cruiser HELENA had electricity. So they're trying to use these guns by manual operation. And these airplanes, at that time, were too fast for us. It would be like trying to compare a jet airplane today with a propeller-driven airplane.

I did not see the *ARIZONA* blow up, but I saw it burning profusely. I did see a lot of explosions near Ford Island. I observed them. And the battleship NEVADA got under way. And I was told the story wrong for many years. I thought that the battleship *NEVADA* was pounded aground by dive bombers. But I understand in later years, she was directed to ground herself intensely so she wouldn't block the channel.

CC: Let me ask you this, all this is going on and here you are, having a nice Sunday morning with plenty of fresh milk and listening, worrying about your record albums. And all of a sudden, you're in the war. What was going through your head? I mean, how did you feel?

LB: Well, many people have asked me that question. I can't actually say I was scared. I was probably more surprised and amazed. We couldn't comprehend the thing, it probably soaked in like two or three days later. And I even heard officers over at Bloch Arena, where I was transferred after the ship was sunk, and they couldn't believe there was a two-man submarine came in the harbor. They couldn't believe the extensive damage that could be done by this aircraft.

Then it started to soak in, but of course, at that time we were gung-ho to go back to sea. I got transferred to a destroyer and I was glad to get back to sea. I was glad to get out of Pearl Harbor.

CC: What was it like right after the raid? What kinds of things did they have you doing? Did you get involved in salvage? Did you try to salvage your ship, or what?

LB: The --- no. We did not try to salvage our ship. I was put on a motor launch, and we were picking up wounded and we were picking up bodies that were floating on the water, oil slicks on the battleships. We was hauling 'em back to the docks. We covered 'em up with canvas and they were, I recall, they were taking jewelry and trying to get identification, fingerprinting 'em and that sort of thing. Later on, that afternoon, quite late that afternoon, they set up sandbags and some machine guns. And I manned those for, I believe, a day and a half. And then, of course, they called the names out after they found out who the survivors were, and they transferred us over to Bloch Arena, that's where I got reassigned.

CC: Okay, you want to stop here and change tapes? Okay, we gotta change tapes.

LB: Okay.

CC: This is great, for a guy who says you're not an extempora-- . . .

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

CC: Yeah. Actually the one thing I wanted to ask you is, if there hadn't been an attack that morning, what would you have done on a Sunday morning?

LB: Oh, usually the Sunday morning, at that time, of course, I had just become a ship fitter striker, but we'd sweep down and just light duty and just lay around, write letters mostly, read and relax. Sunday was a day of relaxation.

CC: And you were just looking for some time off and . . .

LB: Sure, time off to relax. Sometime we'd go ashore, but I stayed ashore the previous evening, so I'd have probably just layed around, wrote a few letters, listened to records, did some reading. That's about it. Because Monday morning, the normal routine started all over again.

CC: You were worried about them scratching your record. Did you ever see that record again?

LB: No, I never saw the record again. The only thing, I believe, that was ever salvaged from the minelayer *OGLALA* was one musician's saxophone. I believe he got that back. And we've often wondered what happened to everything that was in all those lockers, like my class ring, the few souvenirs we picked up or the things that salt water wouldn't destroy. I never did find out what happened to it.

CC: All right, so after you lost your ship and how long did it take to get reassigned or what was it like here in Honolulu after the attack and before you got reassigned? What was the mood and what was going on?

LB: Probably the most amazing thing -- I'd never seen a blackout. Absolutely no lights were permitted at all. Now, I did not leave the base. I could not go to Honolulu. Everything was restricted. There was a lot of military police. We had a lot of shore patrol. And of course, I stayed right down there at the base. Everything was very, very restricted. You couldn't just move around at random. No liberty, nothing. Then I -- then it started to soak in, that this is war. Now we have to live with this.

CC: And you didn't have a ship, where did they have you housed then?

LB: Well, I was sleeping in between those sandbags and some of us were sleeping in the building right there at the Naval yard. It was a machine shop. They had cots and bunks in there. I got reassigned, I believe, it was a day and a half later.

CC: And what ship did you end up with?

LB: I went on the USS *TUCKER*, a destroyer, which was present at Pearl Harbor at the time.

CC: And, well, you shared something with me, what happened to you on the destroyer?

LB: Well, the nicest thing, we went right back to the States. We went back to San Francisco on the USS *TUCKER*. They did a little work. They put a couple of twenty millimeter machine guns on it and restored everything, restocked. We headed out to South Pacific in a convoy. We went to New Zealand. We went to Australia. After we left Australia, we picked up a troop ship, the [*PRESIDENT*] *COOLIDGE*. It was off Espiritu Santo Island, in the New Hebrides. For many years, we thought we were sunk by a Jap torpedo. We actually ran into one of our own mines. Our minelayers had gotten there that morning, early. The word didn't get out. We was going up Segond Channel. We hit the mine. We was in about fifty-two fathoms of water. The ship sank very slow. I believe we had five casualties in the engine room.

Two weeks before that, I had broken my ankle and I had a cast on my leg. So they gave us the orders, strip ship. So we threw everything over the side that was loose, and the ship probably took an hour and a half to sink. When they gave the word, "Abandon ship," I cut the cast off my leg, I just jumped over the side.

Now, we were in the sight of land. A sea-going tug picked us up. They took us over to the main island, where the Seabees were building Quonset huts and an air base. I stayed there about, oh, I'd say five weeks. I went back to the States on the baby flattop USS *LONG ISLAND*, and I was assigned to brand new destroyer, the USS *CARMICK* (DD-493). Now, had I got there a week earlier, I could have got a destroyer after my namesake, the USS *BAILEY* (DD-492). This is from Seattle, Washington. And of course, that ship was transferred to the East coast.

CC: So you got out of the Pacific?

LB: I got out of the Pacific for about three years.

CC: Now, how did -- okay, you lost -- you had two ships, say, go under you in less than a year. How did that make you feel?

LB: I was beginning to wonder if the war would ever end. There's a gentleman with a book called Iron Bottom Bay. And he put a remark in there, he says, "Loren Bailey was wondering if this damn war would ever end. How the hell could he be so unlucky to lose two ships in nine months?"

CC: What about after this is all over? You have forty-five years later, you're looking back, you have very vivid memories, obviously. Very good at recalling these things. How do you feel about it all? Do you think about the attack on Pearl Harbor in any special way?

LB: Well, yes, I do, in a certain way. The man who probably described it was John Toland, in his book, Infamy. The last three or four pages he tries to explain the Japanese side and he tries to explain our side. He doesn't condone the fact that it was right to bomb Pearl Harbor, but if you kind of read in between the lines or study the thing out, there might have been some justification because force is force and war is war. I've always made the remark to my children and a lot of people, "I can probably forgive, but I can't forget." Now, what tempers all of this is I feel that the Japanese payed a lot more dearer price than we did, because long before the atom bomb, I mean, we did destroy their fleet. We did destroy those islands. We did take thousands of lives. So all in all, as the old saying goes, you know, "War is hell." But, like I say, I can't forget, but I can forgive and I can justify the situation. And of course, I don't know politics that well, and there's a lot of politics involved, I felt.

CC: Right and obviously there were people on the other side probably just doing their job.

LB: Yeah, it's that. Yeah, those Nuremberg war, those war crimes at Nuremberg, Germany. Now, I think every officer to the man, and some of them were hung, they said, "We're just doing our job. We were following orders." And that's about all we ever did in the Navy. There's always somebody above you, I guess, unless you was the full admiral. And even they got criticized. So you were doing your job. You never asked any questions.

CC: And you really didn't have time to think a lot of it through either, did you?

LB: No. No. Never did. Probably the only thing we'd ever concentrate on and where I'd ever worry, my biggest worry -- of course, I hated aircraft. I always feared aircraft. Storms at sea. We went through a couple typhoons and believe me, they make you pray.

CC: The . . . this is the forty-fifth anniversary and obviously people are already talking about the prospect of the fiftieth. How would you like to sit down with some folks that fought on the other side and see how they thought about it? Have you ever thought about doing that, or have you had a chance to do that?

LB: Yes. A friend of mine has an interview with some of the pilots that actually bombed Pearl Harbor. Now, I also did some research and this is trivia, I ask a lot of others who the first prisoner of World War II was. And my friend, Bob Hudson, who wrote a book, Sunrise, Sunset on Pearl Harbor, had me do some research. He contacted this officer Sakamaki who was a survivor on this two-man submarine, and I went back to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and actually took a picture of the barracks they interned him in. And we had contact with him, we

wrote him a letter. We have correspondence with him, and we understand now he's the retired vice president of Toyota Motors.

He, at first, he wrote us a letter, quite sarcastic and quite critical about the lack of discipline Americans have. Then we found him to be more and more interesting. And I would like to talk to that man, I really would, because I read his book and the fact that I took those pictures and then Bob has had contact with him. I would like to sit down with an interpreter, I would imagine, and talk to him. I really would.

CC: What kinds of things would you think you might find out?

LB: Well, I'd like to know what his feeling was when he tried to enter Pearl Harbor with the type of fleet we had there at that time and he hit this coral reef, and then he backed off, and he tried again, and he tried again. And then of course, I believe it was phosgene gas that finally knocked him out. This guy just never said quit. He was the . . . had to be the most persistent man I've ever seen in my life.

CC: And the war was over for him pretty quick, though.

LB: The war was over for him pretty quick. An interesting thing I found about Camp McCoy, at Camp McCoy, there was one officer that wrote a little document on him, and they used him to temper the disposition of all the other prisoners of war that were Japanese. And he was into the -- I don't know how authentic this is -- but he said there was a lot of threats of suicide from these Japanese because they didn't want to go back, it was a save face thing. It was very, very interesting. I could never get a hold of that document. He let me read it, that was the end of it.

CC: Well, do you have anything else you wanted. I think this has been great. I've enjoyed this. I hope to see you at the fiftieth.

LB: I hope you're right. I'll come if I can.

CC: Thank you.

LB: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

#162 WILL BRADY: USS *HELENA*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. I have to read this. It says, the following interview of Will Brady was conducted on December 3, 1986, at the Sheraton Waikiki at about one o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Brady lives in Sacramento, California. The interviewer is Bart Fredo and also with me is Dan Martinez of the National Park Service.

So, Mr. Brady, let me start off with a real hard one. Give me your name and what was your hometown back in 1941?

Will Brady (WB): My name is Will Brady. My hometown was Montgomery, Louisiana.

BF: What service were you in and what was your rank?

WB: I was in the Navy and I was a Seaman First Class, or just made top, I believe, then.

BF: What was your job?

WB: My job was controlling a fair amount of duties that the bosun mate gave me to take care of. Basically, I was a deck hand and in charge of the deck crew.

BF: What ship were you on?

WB: I was on the USS *HELENA*.

BF: That's a heavy cruiser?

WB: That's a light cruiser.

BF: Light cruiser.

WB: Sail fifty.

BF: When did you arrive in Hawaii?

WB: Oh, I don't remember the exact date, but it was in 1940, probably around November. I'm not sure.

BF: So you were here a while before the attack?

WB: Yeah.

BF: Let's turn our attention to the day of the attack. Early that morning, before the attack started, what were you doing?

WB: I had just [come] topside, because I was the duty P.O. to give out liberty cards . . .

BF: P.O. is petty officer.

WB: . . . petty officer, to give out the liberty cards. And I was on the starboard side, I believe it was, and I heard all this commotion going on just as I was getting ready to give out some cards.

BF: What kind of commotion?

WB: Well, such as explosions and engines.

BF: Did you see anything?

WB: Oh, at that particular moment, I had just heard 'em. When I looked up, I believe I was facing Ford Island, and I seen the explosions going on and the first I thought -- I was thinking was that our planes must have goofed up and they were unloading some bombs by mistake. And of course, within a couple seconds I realized -- seeing that red circle -- I realized it was the Japs that was bombing Pearl Harbor. And, well, I guess it took me a couple of seconds or maybe minutes before I realized that we was at war. And by then, GQ had sounded, which is general quarters. And people was started heading for their battle stations, and so did I.

BF: Where was your battle station?

WB: Mine was up in radar control, forward control, which handled the five-inch guns up forward.

BF: So you were above deck?

WB: Yeah, I was above deck. And by the time that the -- I guess, before I even got there -- I remember climbing up the ladders heading up there -- the ship was hit. And, well, from then on, things happened so fast it was hard to remember exactly what went on, you know, at the particular moment.

BF: What was it hit by, a torpedo or a bomb?

WB: It was hit by torpedoes and by then, the planes was in there and they started strafing us with machine gun and, you know, just a mess all over. Then you hear people hollering, they got hit and people was burnt and stuff like that.

BF: Did you see people get hit?

WB: Yeah, I seen a couple guys get killed there and of course, well, we had so much excitement going on, and I was trying to get to my station all at the same time. And I remember this one plane come in and strafing us, and I don't know whether he was trying to shoot me or what, but he was shaking his fist at me. I can still see him up there, shaking his fist. I don't know whether he's shaking at me or shaking at the whole ship or what. And about that time, somebody shot him down. I don't know if it was our ship or one of the other ships next to us. And I know how good it made me feel to see him go down that day.

BF: Was there a lot of confusion?

WB: Well, I don't know whether you call it confusion or where it was just so much going on that people were just kind of got mixed up what was what, because all the ammunition was locked up and the guns, turrets, was locked and people had to take a lot of things on themselves because there was still a lot of people off on liberty that hadn't come back. And I guess it was a little bit of confusion.

BF: After you took that torpedo hit and the planes were strafing the ship, what happened next?

WB: We --- I went onto my station that way and my station is in radar control, which is, you know, and it swings around, picks up the control on the various objects it's going on. My job was down in the inside there, which I couldn't see outside, and they was setting the gun control, you know, destination and what not. And that was my job. So I didn't actually see too much that was going on until I (trails off).

BF: How long were you up on deck, outside so you could see, before you went inside?

WB: Oh, probably five or ten minutes, at the very most. I don't know if it was that long, maybe it was a lot less time.

BF: So you went inside and you're working in this enclosed area. What happens then?

WB: Well, you just hear a lot of stuff going on and of course, you were concentrating so much on just what your job was, well, you kind of blanked out everything else, trying to do the very best you can. And of course, I had a set of earphones on where I could talk to the people down in the guns and I could get a little information on what they was saying and hearing what was going on. But more than anything else, I was trying to make sure that I did my job the best that I could. And . . .

BF: Had the ship been hit subsequent to that first initial torpedo hit?

WB: Well, yes, I think the dive bombers had come in and was strafing us at that time, about the same time that the torpedoes hit. And I hadn't got to my station yet when the torpedoes was dropped.

BF: What kind of condition was the ship in, as time goes by?

WB: It's . . . was it the torpedo hit that you're talking about, what condition? The best I can recall, I believe we had two engine rooms knocked out and I know a lot of my friends got burnt from the explosion and the -- 'cause all the hatches was open and I guess the flame come up through there because I went down below -- I was up by then. And I know a lot of our guys that had already gotten burnt was taken to the hospital.

BF: Was there concern that the ship was going to go down?

WB: Well, to me, I didn't think it was, but some of the guys, I suppose, just coming up from topside, the ship had listed quite badly to the starboard, I believe. And so it was some people went off the ship, but then they seen it wasn't and somebody said, "Hey come on back," and everybody started coming back in the station and we started in action. So probably it was only two or three minutes at the very most, if it was that long, before we really started in.

BF: What was going through your mind this whole time?

WB: Well, it's kind of hard to say exactly what because you get so, I guess, excited, built up, 'til you was thinking mainly of how we'd all stop this. We know we was in war, and we wanted to find out -- at least I did -- I wanted to know what's the best way to put an end to this. And why was it happening, you know. I guess that's the things that was in mind, 'cause at the moment I wasn't scared, I guess I was too excited to be scared and I really didn't get scared

until they quit shooting, and then I realized, what the heck, I coulda got killed here! So basically, like I say, I wasn't scared until that happened.

BF: How long were you on the ship that day?

--: Stop.

BF: Okay. I'll pick it up with that.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

WB: I hadn't been on liberty for probably a couple of -- well, let's see, we was out at, on patrol, best I can recall, before then. Then we come in on a weekend, so it was probably was about three weeks before I had been on liberty before.

BF: Let's go back. Let me take you back a little bit. You were working on radar at that time, and that's relatively new technology. Tell us a little bit about the radar aboard the *HELENA*.

WB: Well, I don't know too much about the radar myself, because, like I say, I was trained to do a particular job. I do know that the radar was new and it would pick up objects, ships, or planes, or whatnot and then you had a screen would come back on, show you these little blips and whatnot. And well, that's about all I can tell you because I really didn't know anything about it, other than what it was doing.

BF: Did it seem to work okay that day?

WB: Yeah, it appeared to be working okay. Best I know, anyway. It wasn't the best or the latest, but what can I say for the attack. And I think it was sometime in January, we come back to the States and they refit us with new radar, new guns, and all of that.

BF: The *HELENA* was tied up at a dock and outboard of the ship was the *OGLALA*?

WB: Yes.

BF: Which was a . . . ?

WB: It was a repair ship.

BF: What happened to that ship?

WB: I know they raised her back up. I understood she went bottom up and they raised her up and pulled her back out.

BF: Away from you?

WB: Away from us.

BF: That torpedo that hit you, it must have gone underneath the *OGLALA*.

WB: It did. It went underneath and exploded in our engine rooms, two of our engine rooms.

BF: Were you ever concerned that your ship was going to go down?

WB: No, not really because I felt that she was a ship that was going to take more than a couple torpedoes to put her down.

BF: What happened the rest of the day, after the attack was over?

WB: We stayed at general quarters for, at least on call, all that day and all that night, and probably the next day. I remember I was up there for a long, long time, and just had enough time, maybe, to grab a sandwich or a cup of coffee. And of course, everybody was excited, talking about what went on and what they know about it. And of course, we was tied up to a dock. We had already heard there was some Japanese that was over there, loose, that might come aboard the ship and, you know, all this kind of stuff you hear. And of course, everybody was concerned about that. And we heard about the submarines coming in. So, you know, like most things, you get a lot of rumors and you really didn't know exactly what was going on.

BF: Did you see, during the course of the day, particularly during the attack, any acts of heroism? People doing things, extraordinary things?

WB: Well, I think everybody, more or less, did. One guy in particular, he was in the five-inch guns and 'cause we was (mumbles), there was no -- you had to have gloves, you know, to catch the hot shells that come out. He didn't have any cases, that why I was kind of thinking about it. As they kicked back, and he didn't have the gloves, I don't know what happened to 'em. I guess they misplaced it. He was catching them in his bare arms, these hot cases, and dumped 'em out. And that was one of the things that struck me more than anybody else, a guy would do that. Of course, his arm was all burnt from that.

BF: Remember his name?

WB: He was an Irishman, a red-headed Irishman. I think his name was Keaty, Keating?

BF: Keating?

WB: Keating, or some name like that.

BF: Did you ever see him again after that day?

WB: No, I don't know what happened to him. I've asked about him, but I just kind of lost track of him.

BF: What were the next few days like? Next few days, next few weeks.

WB: Well, until we went back to the States, we was pretty well-confined right aboard ship and there was always something to do, you know. We was on alert the whole time. I remember, I believe it was that night, after the attack, some American planes come in for replacements. I know we was firing on them before we found out they was American planes.

BF: As you know, martial law was declared soon after the attack. I take it because you spent most of your time aboard ship that you weren't really affected by martial law very much.

WB: No, it didn't affect us, or me, personally.

BF: Did you get an opportunity to go ashore at all?

WB: I did, probably right before we pulled out to come back to the States, I had a chance to go over and I remember seeing these dry docks were -- bombs had hit 'em and they bottom side up. And of course, I'd seen the ships out there, stuff like that. But I remember going ashore, I forget just why I went.

BF: The first time you had a chance to look over at Battleship Row, along Ford Island, and see the destruction, what was your reaction?

WB: I suppose that's one time I felt, oh boy, this is it, you know. I mean, how can we fight this war with nothing to fight left? It was real depressing. And knowing that a lot of people was killed, it really got next to a person that way.

BF: Did you lose a lot of friends that day?

WB: I lost several friends, yes. I wouldn't say a lot, but several. I known a lot of guys that did get killed or my close friends, probably about four that was lost.

BF: Some people who lived through that day still have bad feelings about Japan, the Japanese. How do you feel?

WB: I feel that in a way, well, you know, you don't forget. But I'm a forgiving person and I sort of forgive, but I haven't forgot. I don't know if that makes sense or not, but I kind of got mixed feelings, so to speak, on it. I still remember it and sometime I got to think about why. You know, if something comes up.

BF: Would you . . .

END OF TAPE ONE

TAPE TWO

BF: Would you like to meet Japanese survivors of the war, or the attack?

WB: I have some friends that's Japanese and, of course, they happened to fight on our side too, couple of them that I know.

BF: But how about meeting Japanese nationals who participated in the war or in the attack? How would you feel about meeting or talking with them?

WB: Well, I don't know. I got mixed feelings on it whether I would enjoy it or not. I'm not sure. I wouldn't mind it, but I mean, if I'd want to or not, I'm not sure right now.

BF: When someone says the words, or you read the words, "Pearl Harbor," or "December 7," what do you think of? What comes to mind?

WB: Well, the first thing, I can still have a mental picture of what went on, what I'm seeing, and it always flashes right in front of me, I can still see those battleships and those dry dock ships that got blown up and see some people that are sitting on the dock, some aboard our ship. See all these holes in the

sides of the ship, on the superstructure, from the strafing of the guns. And I did have some pretty bad dreams about it for a long time, but then they finally went away. But I still can see the whole picture of it when someone brings that to my mind.

BF: Some of the survivors don't really like talking about it. How do you feel?

WB: It took me quite a while before I was able to talk about it. I just wanted to block it out of my mind. And in fact, I did. It was years before I was even able to discuss it. In fact, my wife's been on me quite a few times, "Well, why don't you talk about it?" Well, I just don't feel like talking about it, I guess.

BF: What did you do for the rest of the war?

WB: Well, I stayed aboard the USS *HELENA* until she was sunk at Kula Gulf. Then I was picked up and we went back to Guadalcanal and my, I guess, I was there about thirty days before I caught a ship back to San Francisco. I'll never forget coming back on this empty tanker and it was real rough weather and every time a wave would hit up the side of the ship, it sounded like a torpedo coming through. And of course, all of us was quite jumpy and it was quite exciting coming back. And then when we got in San Francisco, they, I guess, they had the whole city of San Francisco out to greet us, I remember that. And then I was put on, I was sent up to Seattle. And I put a ship in commission; it was a minesweeper. And then I got sick and so the ship went on out to sea, and they assigned me to another one that I put in commission. And I stayed with her until after the war, and we went back down to the South Pacific and all the way to Japan.

BF: What kind of a ship was that?

WB: It's a minesweeper. The CLIMAX. I mean, it was a ship, CLIMAX [*AM-161*]. (Chuckles)

BF: Why do you say that?

WB: Well, I was the only guy aboard ship that ever had any experience, you know, out at sea, as far as a man of war ship. Everybody else was duty type. 'Cause, that's what they are, duty ships, mine sweeping. So they had no conception of really what it was all about. And I kind of didn't like that, I wanted to get back in the thick of the battle, but they wouldn't let me. They wanted to keep me on that.

BF: Just -- sound like Mr. Roberts.

WB: I suppose that's about the way it was. I really hated that and I was on that from July '43 to, I got out in 1946, in February.

BF: You played a role, a part, in a very important event in history, the attack on Pearl Harbor. Has that fact affected your life in any way?

WB: Well, it made me think more what we should do to preserve the American way of life. That's one reason I belong to the Pearl Harbor Survivors, the PSHA. And I (phone rings) do try to, you know, stay up with that, because I feel we should get out and let -- especially these younger people -- know what went on.

Daniel Martinez: I have a question.

BF: Sure. Someone unplug the phone?

DM: Yeah. The question would revolve around he mentioned that when they pulled out of Battleship Row, this morning, and several of the survivors had, when the ships pulled out, their men stood, stood on the deck and looked at the *ARIZONA*. That's the only time he saw a lot of the men break down and cry.

BF: Okay.

DM: (Trails off.)

BF: Okay, let me ask that. Are we still rolling? Okay.

At some point that day, did you and some of your shipmates have an opportunity to look over at Battleship Row and see what happened, specifically to the *ARIZONA*? Was there any reaction when that happened?

WB: I don't remember offhand why I looked at it specifically or not. I did see the whole Battleship Row and it did make you really, you know, feel bad. 'Cause, you know, a lot of people was, what they went through and we heard all these stories what happened. And yes, it was people with tears in their eyes. I don't recall whether I did or not -- I probably did, with the rest. All I know is some sobering minutes there that everybody was real quiet then. They didn't have much to say.

BF: Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you'd like to share with us, something you can tell us?

WB: No. The only thing I can say, I got scared at that time, I was scared until it was all over with. About the only thing I got to say.

END OF INTERVIEW

#163 HAROLD DONOHUE: NAVIGATION RADIOMAN OF FLYING PBY'S

Bart Fredo (BF): Seeing your bio, I was going to ask you what part of Texas were you from with that accent.

Harold Donohue (HD): Brooklyn. (Chuckles)

BF: Okay. I'm going to read this just so we log the tape. The following interview of Harold Donohue was conducted on December 3, 1986, in Honolulu, at about 1:50 in the afternoon. Mr. Donohue now lives in Woodland Hills, California. The interviewer was Bart Fredo and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders of the National Park Service.

Mr. Donohue, let me start off by asking you to tell us your name and where you hailed from back in 1941.

HD: Okay. My name is Hal Donohue. I was living in Brooklyn, New York when I enlisted in the Navy, in 1941.

BF: What was your rank and your job description?

HD: On December 7, I was the navigation Radioman Third Class, flying as a crew member of the Flying PBY's on Ford Island.

BF: Now, I understand the week before the attack, you were flying out of Wake Island. What were you doing?

HD: We were, what they call, sector searching. We were patrolling all around the island and one day the boat . . .

BF: Around Wake Island?

HD: Around Wake Island. And one day, they come out --- we were radioman up on --- mechanic were on the planes at all times. And they come out with the boat and they loaded 500 pound bombs on our plane. And the next days after that, we took off, patrolling all around the island, looking for something.

BF: Did you ever patrol in the Hawaiian Islands?

HD: Yes. Yes, I was there for months before the thing happened. And they sent us out to Midway and Wake about two months before the December 7.

BF: When did you get back to . . .

HD: We were routed back -- we arrived back at Pearl on December 5, at night. And they told us to take the rest of the weekend off and come back Monday morning.

BF: Your planes were, what, at Ford Island?

HD: Ford Island, yes.

BF: So, let's go to the morning of December 7. Where were you?

HD: At the time, I was by the Aloha Tower in Waikiki.

BF: Downtown Honolulu.

HD: Downtown, right, in downtown. And it come over the radio that the Japanese were attacking, so we hopped a taxicab and head back toward the base. And we were strafed by Japanese planes as we were coming down.

BF: In the taxi?

HD: In the taxi.

BF: May I ask you to back up a minute? What were you doing at Aloha Tower?

HD: Well, we were just walking around the neighborhood there. We were trying to get breakfast.

BF: You and your buddies?

HD: Me and my buddy, right. Another buddy of mine, yes.

BF: Had you been on liberty overnight?

HD: Yes. From Friday night until Monday morning we were off.

BF: So you were having a good time that Saturday night?

HD: Right, yes.

BF: Anyway, so you took the taxi to Pearl . . .

HD: Right.

BF: . . . and you got strafed?

HD: Yes.

BF: Tell us about that.

HD: Well, we just -- the planes just come down strafing the road, all the cars coming up the road. And they hit some cars, you know, right in front of us, but we didn't get hit. When we got down to the main gate, they took so many Navy protocol, and they assigned them the different duties. They assigned me and my buddy to the USS *CASSIN* and *DOWNES* to put out the fires, help fight the fires.

BF: What kind of ship was that?

HD: That's two destroyers.

BF: Tell us about them.

HD: And they were tied up right in front of the *PENNSYLVANIA*, which was not hit, as I understand it.

BF: What was your reaction when you suddenly came upon this scene at Pearl Harbor?

HD: I don't know. It's just bewilderment, it happened so fast. You couldn't believe it that you just, you know, we just got right into it and that was it. Then I guess the first wave went out and short time later, the second wave come

in. And every time they come down, I guess we scattered, and took, hid somewhere. And then . . .

BF: What kind of hits did you take?

HD: Well, I mean, they were strafing and bombing all around there.

BF: Did they hit the ships you were working . . .

HD: No, they were already sunk, and they just didn't -- they were in dry dock and they were on fire. But they didn't hit our ship, not while I was there.

BF: Where did you see them hitting?

HD: The USS *NEVADA* made a run, trying to get out the channel. And I saw that get hit a couple times. And I saw them run it up on the beach, so that to keep it from sinking in the channel.

BF: What else? See any other ships hit? Did you see the *ARIZONA* hit?

HD: No, no.

BF: Or the *OKLAHOMA*, or any other battleship?

HD: I don't recall seeing any of that. I mean, there was so much going on all at once.

BF: Did you see, that morning, see people doing unusual things? Acts of heroism or things incongruous to the situation?

HD: I don't recall any of that. I mean, we're just doing all kinds of wild things, I mean.

BF: Confusion? Would that be a good way of describing the scene, confusion?

HD: Yes. That's right.

BF: Were you afraid for your safety?

HD: Well, yeah, sure. I think you'd be crazy if you weren't, I mean. But, no, I can't think of any.

BF: Can you think of what was going through your mind while you were working out there?

HD: Just praying, I guess, that's about it. That's about all I can remember. It's a long time ago.

BF: Oh sure. The first time you had a chance to look out to Battleship Row and to see the devastation, the smoke just cleared and you could really see what happened, do you recall what your reaction was?

HD: I can --- my recollection now is patrolling afterwards and taking off down the channel and seeing the battleships upside down, the propellers in the air and all the wrecks all over the place, and all the debris in the channel we were flying through. But that's about all I can remember.

BF: You would patrol in . . .

HD: Take off from Pearl Harbor and take off and patrol around the island.

BF: Take off in your PBY?

HD: Right.

BF: So I assume that at least some of your planes made it through the attack all right.

HD: Right, there was a few of them made it through.

BF: Were most of -- were destroyed or damaged?

HD: I think most of them were destroyed. There's a lot of pictures of PBY's that [were] damaged on the, in the papers and things.

BF: When did you -- yes? When did you start patrol . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes)

BF: Was there anything more about the taxi ride that . . . no?

HD: Just hopped in the taxi and got out, was strafed, that's all.

BF: Okay. Let me take you back to when you and your buddy were fighting the fires on those two ships in dry dock. Tell us a little bit about the work you were doing.

HD: Well, like I say, we were assigned to that *CASSIN* and *DOWNES* and we take fire hoses and try to, you know, fight the fire. And then somebody would yell, "The planes are coming," or something and we just scatter and dive under something around there. And then as soon as they went, you get back on the hoses again. But that's about all I remember that.

BF: When these planes came in and strafed you, were they strafing you or your general area?

HD: Just the general area. I mean, just the, I guess, anti-personnel strafing.

BF: Did you see anybody get hit?

HD: No. No. No, but we saw them coming, we just, you know, gotta dive, get under something.

BF: What happened the rest of that day, to you? What did you do the rest of that day?

HD: Well, as soon as I could, my buddy and I, we were both from over there at Ford Island. We took the whaleboat over, it was ashore (trails off). And then we were sent out with a squadron and I remember we put up a sandbag -- I don't know what you'd call it -- we had to mount the machine guns on it. And we just stayed down there most of the day. I do recall that night, there were some planes coming in and somebody gave the word or somebody started firing and the sky just lit up like, you know, with all the tracer bullets.

BF: These are U.S. planes coming in?

HD: It turned out it was the planes from the, I think, the *ENTERPRISE*, coming in.

BF: Did you take part in any of the firing?

HD: Yes, I was on machine gun at that time. I was feeding 'em, helping feed the cartridges into the gun. Somebody else was firing it.

BF: And when you first started doing that, you were pretty sure what you . . .

HD: Oh yeah.

BF: . . . were shooting at was an attacking plane.

HD: Right, right. That's what we -- everybody thought was the, you know, they were coming back because rumors were flying all over that day. They were coming in Kaneohe, they were coming in here and what.

BF: Did you hit anything?

HD: I don't know. Who knows.

BF: Did you see anything get hit by someone else?

HD: I can't recall. They said there were a couple planes went down, but I can't recall seeing them.

BF: Talking about planes going down, did you see any of the attacking planes during the two _____?

HD: I saw them on Ford Island, you know, when they . . . there was one plane we --- that was a Japanese plane was down and in fact, I got a piece of souvenir of the rising sun from it, but . . .

BF: Did you see any Japanese planes get hit in the air?

HD: No, no.

BF: So the rest of that day, then, you were at your squadron on . . .

HD: Right.

BF: . . . on Ford Island.

HD: Ford Island.

BF: What happened in the next few days?

HD: Well, I guess, there was a few planes and I remember going out on patrol and just patrolling around the island, looking, you know, out there patrolling. And then, I don't know if you want me to go on because we patrolled and then we left, went to Australia, out to Pacific.

BF: While you were patrolling, did you ever see anything?

HD: No, never saw anything.

BF: Nothing suspicious?

HD: No, didn't see anything.

BF: So you patrolled for a few days and then you eventually left the island and flew down to Australia, you say?

HD: Yeah, we, in early January, we got our orders and we were sent out to -- well, we took off, we didn't know where we were going, but before we took off, everyone in the squadron was advised to take out the maximum life insurance you could afford. And to write two copies of a will and give one will to the officer on the squadron there, send another one home. We didn't know where we were going. So we loaded all our gear on the planes and we took off from Pearl. When we got in the air, the patrol plane commander showed us a copy of the orders. We were to proceed to the Philippine Islands to reinforce the Asiatic fleet with PBY's.

BF: So that's where you went.

HD: We never got there because the Japs got into the Philippines. We got as far as Surabaya in the Dutch East Indies. So we flew patrol out of the Dutch East Indies, up around Borneo, Makassar Straits, the island Makassar, into 'Nam.

One day, we went up, we were ordered up to see if there was a Japanese fleet off the coast of Borneo, and we were ordered up to see if they were putting troops ashore or if they were coming down the coast of Borneo. We saw them, they were putting troops ashore and just about then, Japanese fighter got on our tail, but there was huge cumulus clouds, so we ducked into the clouds and avoided 'em. We eventually landed over in Makassar, the island of Makassar. We got a radio message that night that there was another Japanese fleet up the other side of Makassar, and they wanted us to go up and see the same thing. So we flew up there, saw a Japanese fleet putting troops ashore, and we just high-tailed it out of there and went back to Surabaya.

BF: What did the rest of the war hold in store for you? You spend it all in PBY's?

HD: No. No, I -- we eventually worked our way down to Australia. Then they put us on the USS FLYING LADY, old aircraft carrier. They took us down to Fremantle, Perth, Australia. They loaded up the *LANGLEY* with P-40's, the Flying Tiger planes. And they shipped 'em up north to fight, but they never got up there, the Japanese ships got 'em. I understand we sank the *LANGLEY* ourselves, rather than let it fall into Japanese hands.

BF: Were you aboard the ship when it went down?

HD: No. They took us off at Fremantle and they sent . . . we went up to the Royal Australian Air Force, Airdrome in -- it was outside of Perth, Australia. We flew with the Royal Australian Air Force for a while. And then we come down to Perth and started our own little base in Perth, Australia, patrolling out of there. Then they sent us up on two planes, they sent us up to Corregidor to evacuate MacArthur's generals and some nurses. And I would --- out of that we started at Mindanao, refueling, we went to take off together, either coral or rocks ripped the bottom out of our plane, so we had to take the generals and the

nurses off the plane, and what happened to them, I never found out. But we had to make a makeshift repair on our plane, tied a blanket around the bottom of it and ropes, then we bailed and the pilot just gave it the gun and we just kept bailing and took off.

BF: Let me ask you to summarize the rest of the war briefly. What did you do after that?

HD: Well, spent some eighteen months in Australia, patrolling. Then they sent me back to pilot's training in the States. And that was it, I stayed in the States.

BF: And the war ended?

HD: The war ended.

BF: Is there any one thing that's vivid in your mind regarding the attack on Pearl Harbor? Something that stands out more than anything else, that taxi ride, or . . . ?

HD: The taxi ride, yeah, that and fighting the fires and to be in the Navy, in the Navy yard section. But they were doing across the way, you know, right across on Ford Island, where the battleships were. But that's what stands out, I mean, fighting those fires and seeing those ships upside down later on.

BF: Were you affected at all by the martial law that was declared? Did you have a chance to go on shore leave after that?

HD: Just a couple times. I think we had to be back by five or six o'clock in the evening, I think, you had to be back ready to go across the . . .

BF: Remember what you did, those times you went ashore, where you went?

HD: Waikiki Beach. (Chuckles.) Most of the time, it was.

BF: Swimming, drinking?

HD: Swimming, yeah, drinking. Typical Navy things.

BF: Some people who went through the attack, survived the attack, as you did, still have some bad feelings about Japan and about Japanese, even to this day. How do you feel?

HD: I guess I don't . . . it happened . . . I mean, I'm sure a lot of them didn't want to be there and they had their orders and I just forget about it and let the good lord straighten it out.

BF: Do you ever dream about what happened?

HD: No.

BF: You played a part, maybe a small part, but you played a part nonetheless in a very major historical event. Has that affected your life in any way?

HD: No, I guess it's one of the highlights in my life. I mean, it's . . . it played a big part in my life, to be in the Navy. I never really looked back on

it. I enjoyed a lot of it. Later on in life, you mean? No, I'm sure it was to my advantage. I learned an awful lot.

BF: Do you think about it much, about the attack?

HD: No. No.

BF: Are you reminded of it a lot? For example, if you hear the words, "Pearl Harbor," or "December 7," . . .

HD: Doesn't bother me. I mean, it's like . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#164 CHARLES SIMPSON: TARGET REPAIRMAN AT BISHOP'S POINT

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. Let me slate this, I'll say the following interview with Charles Simpson was conducted on December 3, 1986, at the Sheraton Waikiki at about two-thirty in the afternoon. Mr. Simpson lives in Vallejo, California.

Charles Simpson (CS): Right.

BF: And the interview is being conducted by Bart Fredo and also in the room is Dan Martinez of the National Park Service.

Mr. Simpson, let me ask you to tell us your name and your hometown back in 1941.

CS: My name is Charles W. Simpson. I enlisted in the Navy and ran from Ramsey, New Jersey, my hometown, in 1938.

BF: What was your rank and your job in 1941?

CS: I was a Seaman First [*Class*].

BF: Any specific job classification?

CS: Target repair work.

BF: Tire repair?

CS: Target repair work.

BF: What were you doing early in the morning, December 7?

CS: I had just -- we had brunch that morning, Sunday morning, and I had just finished breakfast.

BF: Where was that?

CS: In the barracks. We, our mess hall is attached to our barracks at (hesitates, snaps fingers) . . .

BF: I can't help you. (Chuckles)

CS: . . . [*Bishop*] Point. And I just finished breakfast and lay down on my bunk with my clothes on.

BF: Let's, let's -- let me stop you there. Now, tell us about where is [*Bishop*] Point?

CS: [*Bishop Point*] at the entrance to Pearl Harbor. It's on the Hickam Field side of the channel. And our barracks is right behind the huge hangars at Hickam Field. They were across the street from where our barracks was.

BF: So you had breakfast early that morning?

CS: Yes. And just settled down for a little catnap.

BF: What happened?

CS: We heard -- I heard an explosion and couple of my other shipmates, we heard an explosion, sounded like Ford Island. Well, we've heard explosions there before, not as loud as that and then they stopped, there was more, you know, started to -- we could hear more and louder. And they started getting louder. We ran out of the barracks and we ended up between the barracks and the warehouse where I worked and we looked around, we saw smoke, black smoke rising up. And one of the fellows said, "Maybe they're having a sham battle. Maybe the Army and Navy are having a sham battle," 'cause we didn't see any planes right off the bat.

But it wasn't shortly after that, a low-flying plane came over. And we looked up to it and a couple of us started to wave at it. And we saw the red suns on the end of the wings. And we said, "Those aren't friendly!" We took off for the barracks.

And we went into -- and we ran into the barracks to go into the armory and the officer of the deck was excited and everything because the explosions were getting louder and then vibrating our barracks. And so one of the fellows kicked the door in on the armory, and then we grabbed rifles and everything. And I got a hold of a rifle with a bolt when it was open and looked for ammo. I didn't see any ammo, so we ran down to the waterfront. And . . .

BF: With no ammunition?

CS: I didn't have some. Some of the other fellows had. And I checked the bolt on my 30R6 and it didn't fit, it didn't work. Darn thing didn't work.

BF: So you couldn't have used it if you had to?

CS: I couldn't have used it. No. But I went down there because I thought everyone else was going down there. So we're down there -- and that's when I saw the -- shortly after that I saw the one destroyer coming out the base, firing it's guns.

BF: What was it firing at?

CS: Anti-aircraft.

BF: You could see the planes in the sky?

CS: I didn't see so many planes.

BF: Could you see any?

CS: Yeah, I saw one shot down.

BF: You did? Tell us about that.

CS: I saw one jet plane down with half a wing missing, one of its -- half the wing was missing and it was going like this, coming down to the . . .

BF: Swirling down?

CS: Swirling down to the water, right.

BF: And it crashed in the water?

CS: It crashed into the water.

BF: Did you see the pilot at all? Did he bail out?

CS: No, he was too far away from us. We were like -- we weren't that close to him.

BF: Did you see any planes do any attacking at all?

CS: Oh, yes. After, shortly after that, the planes came in, were coming into bombing the Hickam Field barracks. Well, we heard it was loud and clear. And then some of our shipmates were coming down to the waterfront and was giving us, telling us what they saw. Like some guy said, "They're painting white lines on the street. Somebody is marking the water line or something on the street for the Japs to bomb!" And just guys talking, I guess.

And I still couldn't get my gun to work so I crept back up through the, under the target. We had the targets on the land and we had 'em up on blocks.

BF: These were floating targets that you now had on land?

CS: Yeah, high speed targets, tow targets. And I crept back up to go back to the armory to see if I could get a better bolt and get some ammo for my rifle. And when I got up to there and went in and I couldn't find another bolt, but I found some ammo. And so I went -- and those cloth things that you put 'em around your shoulder and carry it and so I wrapped it around and said, "Well, I can't fire, I'll at least have some ammo on me."

So I went back out of the barracks then and just about that time, the commanding officer of the base came aboard with some of his family. And he had on a white uniform top, but he had civilian pants on. And he was --- him and then --- they got underneath the sled right in the front of the barracks and just about that time, a big hunk of something came down and hit the ground, right by the barracks and it made a hole in the barracks. And the commanding officer got a hold of a stick and he ran over and I thought it was very foolish. He ran over, stuck the stick in a hole. He said, "I don't want nobody around," (chuckles). What if that thing blew up? (Laughing)

BF: What was it?

CS: Piece of shrapnel.

BF: From what?

CS: We don't know. It was from the . . . I guess it came from the hangars, when they were bombing the hangars, which were across the street from us.

BF: Did any of the strafing or any of the bombs fall anywhere near you?

CS: No. That's the . . . we had -- nobody, they didn't bomb us at all, didn't strafe us with machine gun fire or nothing.

BF: How long was it before you had an opportunity to go further into the harbor and see the destruction?

CS: I didn't go into the harbor. What happened, we stayed all night down there at the base . . .

BF: At Bishop Point.

CS: . . . at the waterfront. We were told that we were landing troops. We would stay on the water, on the sea wall there. And the next morning, we were given orders to take our target rafts and they were going to put 'em around the sunken ships down there. And we were -- they were welding strips of steel to hang down the sides so, you know, because they thought there were two-man submarines in the harbor. And I was helping 'em do the welding and all that and I didn't have any protective glasses on and I got my eyes burnt. And that was the end of that tour. I didn't get to go down with the rafts or anything.

BF: Were you permanently injured?

CS: Well, my eye, I couldn't see for a while, but I got my sight back. So I get -- they gave me different kind of duty. They gave me -- the funniest thing -- they gave me chauffeur's duty.

BF: What's that?

CS: Driving a bus. Oh, the ROSE-CRANT bus that they used to have here, years ago.

BF: When did you get an opportunity to see the destruction in the harbor?

CS: When I got my job for chauffeuring down to the navy yard.

BF: How many days after the attack?

CS: Oh, about two days. Day after, day or two after it.

BF: What was your reaction when you saw the destruction?

CS: Oh, I was astonished. What I seen and what I heard were stories that were flying all over. I heard about the OGLALA and how it -- somebody said it was hit by fifty-caliber's and rolled over and the guys walked right onto the ten-ten here. Stuff like that was being told.

BF: You eventually saw Battleship Row on Ford Island?

CS: Oh yes, how bad it was. Well, we knew about that because . . .

BF: You had heard?

CS: Yes, oh yes.

BF: But when you first saw it, what was your reaction?

CS: Well, pretty peed off.

BF: You were mad?

CS: Oh yes, yes. I was mad, yeah. Well, we all were mad. Very mad about it.

BF: Were you surprised at the extent of the destruction? You had heard stories, of course, but did you know it was that bad? Had you been prepared?

CS: Well, I didn't see -- we hardly see any ships come out, so we knew it had to be that bad. And the stories we heard, the oil was catching fire and the ships, the oil from the ships and everything and pretty good deal about the dry dock blew up. We knew about that. That was brought up. They said, "What a big explosion that was." I mean, a floating dry dock blew up.

BF: Because of where you were, you didn't see anybody get hit or any . . .

CS: No.

BF: . . . of the ships . . .

CS: No.

BF: . . . being attacked.

CS: That's true.

BF: Because you were out towards the entrance of the harbor.

CS: Right and there was buildings and a lot of stuff in front of us, right.

BF: What is your most vivid memory of that day?

CS: Well . . .

BF: What's the first thing you think of when someone says, "Pearl Harbor?"

CS: Well, the first thing I think of, I was there but yet I didn't get to do very much of anything. Of course I didn't actually get any tools for war. I wasn't prepared for it! (Chuckles)

BF: They also serve, we stand and wait.

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: Yes. We'll continue the interview . . .

CS: Okay. Right.

END OF VIDEOTAPE ONE

VIDEOTAPE TWO

Daniel Martinez: I'd like to find out how target repair is, what the targets were used for.

BF: All right, okay. I'll ask it, okay. What were those targets used for, that you worked on?

CS: The targets were used generally. We had high-speed targets that the old four-pipers used to tow out and then the destroyer divisions would fire in competition. They had competition on firing on the screens, on the targets. And the gun officers on the ships, they get pretty close to scraps sometimes when they brought the targets in because the projectiles that they fired at the targets when they hit the screen had paint on it. And it had different colors, so different ships, they knew what ships hit the target. And we used to spread

the screen out on the ground and they checked the holes and all that. And that was one deal we had out there.

Another deal we had was we had long-range targets. They were --- some of 'em had cement bottoms to 'em. They drew about as much water as a battleship. Yeah. But we put 'em out and anchor 'em. And the big ships would fire at 'em, the heavy cruisers and the battle wagons would shoot at those.

BF: How long were you in Hawaii after the attack before you left?

CS: In 1942, I left the islands in 1942.

BF: When in '42, do you remember?

CS: No. I went back to new construction of submarines when I left Honolulu.

BF: While you were here, after the attack, as you know, martial law was in effect then.

CS: That's right.

BF: How did that affect your life?

CS: Very much.

BF: Tell us about it.

CS: Well, we were land-based sailors, so when the ships were out, we were liberty-bound. The town was ours. But when the ships were in, like December 7, we stayed aboard. And December the seventh, the lights went out, that ended our overnight liberties and, well, it was tough. It was a different world to me altogether because it was, well, the sun went down, head for the barracks. (Chuckles)

BF: In the weeks, in the months after the attack, did you have an opportunity to go ashore . . .

CS: Oh yes, yes.

BF: . . . on liberty?

CS: Oh yeah. During the day hours only.

BF: Tell us about that.

CS: Well. . .

BF: What did you do? What did you do? Where would you go?

CS: Well, I don't know if you want to hear where some of the places I've been to.

BF: Sure.

CS: You do? Well, we'd go over -- well, I used to -- a couple of us guys would go down and we checked the houses down on [*River*] Street, because the girls, the new girls from the States would be coming in and we checked them to

see if the new girls were there. We used to go there when the ships were out because there wasn't too much traffic going on there. And we sit down, we talked to 'em, we asked them questions. We wanted to know how they get in this business and, you know, a little inquisitive. And the price was right too. (Laughs)

BF: What else did you do besides that?

CS: Well, I used to just come out here to Waikiki, go swimming sometimes and have a few brews and, oh, I had a car. I bought a car off a sailor who was being transferred back to the States. It was an old Model T. And I picked up a Hawaiian girl, the first Hawaiian girl I picked up since I was out here. And you had to have a car to do it in them days. And I don't . . . well. I didn't . . . well, knew her for a while but then our friendship fell away.

BF: Because of martial law you'd have to . . .

CS: I'd go back . . .

BF: . . . be back on base . . .

CS: . . . at night.

BF: . . . at night.

CS: Yes. Yes.

BF: So that sort of . . .

CS: That put a pinch to that. Yes. Yeah.

BF: Do you know how the martial law affected the civilians? You knew this one Hawaiian girl, did she talk about how it affected her?

CS: No. No, she never. No.

BF: Did you have much contact with civilians at all during your . . .

CS: No, no, I didn't. No, the funniest thing was, like I was telling you, they made me a chauffeur, because when I burnt my eyes on the welding, and I couldn't see at night. And I had to pick the officers up after the movies, out at . . . and drive them to their quarters. And then we had the little squares in our headlights and I couldn't see and I was running off the road.

BF: Did it strike you as a little strange that they assigned you to be a driver when you couldn't see that well?

CS: Well, they didn't know that and I didn't 'til I found out myself. (Laughing) And scared the heck out of myself. So one of the officers took over and he drove. He said, "Where did we get this driver?" (Laughing)

BF: What -- just very briefly, we don't want to spend a lot of time on this -- briefly, what did you do for the rest of the war?

CS: Oh, the rest of the war, I came back to the States with new construction for submarines. And Treasure Island, they changed my orders to amphibious, because amphibious was brand new. So I went back east and caught a . . . no, it

was an old ship. Anyway, we went to Sicily. I made the Sicily invasion, I was in on that. And then we came back and made the Okinawa and Marshall Island invasion.

BF: So you were on, like, an LSD or an LST, or something like that.

CS: No, it wasn't, no, it was an APA, amphibious personnel.

BF: You made it through the war okay, no scratches?

CS: No, I didn't. Nothing, not even high blood pressure. I didn't get that until after I retired from the Navy. I stayed in for twenty, twenty-two and a half years.

BF: Some people who went through the attack on Pearl Harbor have some bad feelings about Japan, about the Japanese, and they hold them to this day. How do you feel?

CS: I don't feel anything. No, I don't feel that way. It was a deal that happened and they paid the price. I went ashore in Tokyo after the war and it was all over with. Oh, by the way, I remember, we had, what do you call, hunting license that some guy printed up right out here somewhere. Maybe it was down in downtown by the YMCA, and I bought one of them and signed it, used to carry it. You know, it was just a piece of paper. I still have it in my scrapbook.

BF: What did it say?

CS: A hunting license, Japanese hunting license.

BF: So there was obviously a lot of anti-Japanese . . .

CS: Oh yes.

BF: . . . feeling then.

CS: Oh, very much so. Oh yes. Yes.

BF: But over the years, as far as you're concerned . . .

CS: Well, I was in that last invasion we made, right before President Roosevelt died and then they dropped the big bombs, and that's the last of that war. And then, later on, I was in the Korean War and I didn't see much of anything.

BF: Do you think much about Pearl Harbor? Have you over the last . . .

CS: Oh, I enjoy coming over here and it does bring back memories. And I'm trying to find old buddies, old shipmates of mine, and they're hard to pick out. This fellow, Hardwick, we just got in touch with him. There's another fellow that lives in, outside of Palm Springs, he lives out in the desert there. And we're trying to talk him into joining our outfit and come out here.

BF: As devastating as the attack on Pearl Harbor was, for you, it wasn't that harrowing an experience because of where you were.

CS: I was on a base, yes. I realize that. I didn't go through ship sinking underneath me or anything like that. I went through the whole war with no ship sinking under my feet. I was very . . . I was -- we used to make smoke when the Jap suicide planes came in on some of our --- landing we made on the islands and we used to make smoke. And no plane ever came headed for a ship that I was on. I said someone up there is taking care of me, afterwards.

BF: Stop it for a minute, I'll talk to Dan. You had . . .

--: (Conversation off-mike)

BF: How would you feel about, if at one of these reunions you had an opportunity to meet Japanese survivors of the attack?

CS: I think that's a good idea. I saw some of that in Germany, on TV I seen it, where our soldiers have met German soldiers over there and I thought that was a good idea. Because, what the heck, that's water under the bridge as far as I'm concerned. And they were fighting, they weren't doing it on their own, they were told to do it. You know, that's a good idea. I like that.

BF: Would you . . . what would you say? What would be one of the first things you'd say?

CS: Well, if I finally meet the pilot . . .

BF: Japanese pilot.

CS: Yeah, pilot off one of those flat tops, I'd ask him where he strafed the bombs. Did he bomb out at Hickam Field? There's one, that first plane that flew over the top of us, we, a couple guys, we had to wave, and he played his gun, his, "dit-dit-dit," out of his guns.

BF: Not at you?

CS: No, he was flying across us.

BF: And sort of . . .

CS: And he looked down, seen us down there.

BF: And he acknowledged the waving by firing his guns?

CS: I guess he did. I guess he did, yeah. He fired it, "dit-dit," give 'em, you know, just a short blast. (Laughs) We took off. He might come back. (Laughing) That's why we . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#165 RALPH GOOLD: USS *VESTAL*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. Let me slate this. The following interview is with Ralph Goold, and it was conducted on December 3, 1986, in Honolulu. And it is about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Goold now lives in Pleasanton, California. The interview is being conducted by Bart Fredo and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders of the National Park Service.

Mr. Goold, let me start off by asking you to tell us your name and your hometown back in 1941.

Ralph Goold (RG): My name is Ralph Goold and I came from Burley, Idaho.

BF: What branch of the service were you in and what was your rank?

RG: Well, I didn't have a rank. I had enlisted, I had enlisted as an enlisted man and December 7 of '41, I was an Electrician's Mate First Class.

BF: In the Navy?

RG: In the Navy.

BF: Where were you stationed?

RG: Pearl Harbor.

BF: Aboard?

RG: The USS *VESTAL*.

BF: And that's, what, a repair ship?

RG: The *VESTAL* was the repair ship for all of the battleships and the heavy cruisers in the Pacific fleet at that time.

BF: And the *VESTAL* was tied up right next to the *ARIZONA*?

RG: Yes, we were moored alongside of it.

BF: Early that morning, before the attack started, what were you doing?

RG: Well, we'd had breakfast and as usual, why, we always, the kids gather out on the different parts of the ship and we happened to be out on the weld deck, which is about two-thirds from the stern of the ship, forward, and just to the back of where the mess halls are on that particular ship. And we were all looking out toward the submarine base, or out towards Aiea landing, which is a recreation landing, recreation place for all of the Navy people -- have the new handball stuff like that. Then all of a sudden, we seen these planes come in. And we were just plain astounded, we couldn't believe, we'd never seen anything like it.

BF: Who did you think it was? An air . . .

RG: Well, we thought it was a stupid bunch of pilots having an odd day on Sunday. We couldn't figure out what it was for a few minutes. We found out awful shortly.

BF: What was the first indication? What was the first indication you had something was out of the ordinary?

RG: Okay, the first indication was when we seen the torpedoes go. We seen the Japanese planes come in, and the torpedoes, they dropped 'em all. There was four torpedo planes coming, you know, in the Battleship Row, and they coming in fours. And they . . .

BF: They're coming right at you?

RG: Oh yeah. They were coming right at us. And we seen the torpedoes let go. They were probably, I would say, the torpedoes was let go within somewhere between a quarter and a half a mile ashore. Then they just stayed water level and come right on in. And that first, the torpedoes was set awful low and they went underneath us, into the *ARIZONA*.

BF: Right under the vessel?

RG: Under the vessel, yes. We didn't draw as much water as the *ARIZONA*.

BF: How many of them hit the *ARIZONA*?

RG: I don't know. I don't know because -- the reason I don't know is that I disappeared after the first four was dropped, because I went to my battle station at that time.

BF: Was below deck?

RG: Yes. All I know is that when that first four planes come in, they started shooting with their, I guess, with their twenty millimeters, or something like that, and we were standing on a steel deck. And the bullets landed all over the place.

BF: Anybody hit on your ship?

RG: Yes, there were . . . I don't really know who they are at this time. It's been so many years. I know I have fifteen to twenty splinters of steel in my legs, but I never got a direct hit.

BF: Did you see anybody get hit there?

RG: No, I did not see anybody get hit with bullets, no. Not direct, no. We all got away from that area.

BF: When the torpedo or torpedoes first hit the *ARIZONA*, describe that, what happened?

RG: It's kind of a tough situation to explain that. You see, what happened, the torpedo planes come in first, then the dive bombers come in behind that, and the dive bombers had those 1,500 pound bombs, so it was hard for us to actually say which one done what to the ship, whether it was the bombs or the torpedoes.

BF: The first explosion, though, what effect did it have on you and your ship?

RG: The first explosion, that's kind of a tough question to answer. If you'd asked me what I'd done, I could probably lead you into it.

BF: What'd you do?

RG: Okay, what I'd done, my condition, condition two, was one of the conditions for battle, prior to going into actual combat. And a condition two, me being in the repair department, I went down into the electric shop and I turned the main blower off and I started to dog the big hatch down, this -- it was about a six-foot hatch, that watertight compartment.

BF: To close it?

RG: Close it and dog it down and I got all the dogs down but one. And that's when we got hit and the *ARIZONA* got hit at the same time. Torpedoes and bombs, I don't know what went into the *ARIZONA*, but we took two 1,500 pound direct hits. One exploded on the other side of the bulkhead, directly from where I was standing, but we had a thick wall in the GSK, or general stores -- that's where we keep all the supplies -- and it brought that bulkhead out to me at the same time the *ARIZONA* blew up. When the *ARIZONA* blew up, it burned all of my hair off -- I was down three decks -- burned all my hair off. My mustache got burnt off.

BF: Heat came right through the hull of the ship?

RG: Heat came right on down. Heat come right on down, because there was a large cargo hatch at the top, you know, at the upper deck. And that explosion was so severe that it came down there and that's when I took off and went back up. I said, "Well, I got everything done but this, I'm going back up to my battle station." And when I went up to my battle station, there was only one guy there and the bomb that had exploded down below had went right through where my battle station was and there was no one there but one guy and he was dead. And about that time was when the executive officer gave orders to abandon ship. The reason he gave the orders was simply when the *ARIZONA* blew up, it blew everybody in the topside on the *VESTAL* and the *ARIZONA*, it blew 'em overboard.

BF: How many men was that, would you estimate? Rough estimate.

RG: Oh, I suppose, minimum of seventy-five, including the captain, [*Commander*] Cassin Young.

BF: Captain of the *VESTAL*?

RG: Yes. He was the captain, yes.

BF: What happened next?

RG: Okay. The funny part of it, our executive officer, his name was Young also. And Young, the executive officer, had to give orders to abandon ship. But what happened, the captain swam back underneath the burning oil, because the oil was on fire all the way around the battleship, all of Battleship Row. And he got back aboard, although he was severely burned and he reversed the order.

BF: Why?

RG: Because he felt he could save the ship. And he reversed the order and there was a bunch of kids that was with me -- the ones that we were talking about before -- the ones that couldn't swim in this burning oil. I could not swim in burning oil, so I chose, I'm just not going to die and go and burn up, just not clear. But the miracle of all of it was when we -- I don't know exact,

I can't state for sure, but the only thing we could figure out, we were far below decks in the last, latter part of the ship. The forward part of the ship below decks were on fire, and evidently that explosion from the *ARIZONA*, the only way we could figure, it put our fires out.

BF: The concussion . . .

RG: Yes.

BF: . . . put the fires out aboard your ship?

RG: Yes, aboard the *VESTAL*. Yes. But anyway, the captain come back and he reversed the order. And so, what he done, we grabbed -- he told a group of us that was there to grab some fire axes because the *ARIZONA* was going down faster than we were.

BF: And you were tied to the *ARIZONA.*

RG: About four or five, six foot away from us.

BF: With lines?

RG: Yes, with a big three-inch lines. You know, moored in between, you know. And the *ARIZONA* was going down straight and we were going down, we were going down straight also, but the problem was the *ARIZONA* was going down twice as, three times as fast as we were. And our whole bottom was open in the rear, in the stern of the ship. So we were going down astern, but the *ARIZONA* was going straight down and pulling us at an angle. And so we had to chop the lines between us and the *ARIZONA*. So we chopped the line and a lot of us down there got knocked in the head, you know, and when them lines, when they snapped with those thousands of tons of steel, from that ship, when they snapped, and like a . . . well, I don't have to tell you what would happen with the power there is of a gosh-darned battleship when you have another ship alongside of it, when you cut those lines.

So we cut the lines, we got the lines cut and then when that was done, we seen a lot of kids was free in the middle part of that *ARIZONA*. So the four, five of us there -- I don't remember who they are at this time, it's been so many years -- well, we threw lines over at the *ARIZONA* and they tied 'em on the gun tubs and they all started overhanding, and we pulled 'em off and we got 'em off the *ARIZONA.* We must have saved probably twenty or thirty kids off of there.

BF: They went hand over hand . . .

RG: Hand over hand, yes.

BF: . . . over the water, over the burning water?

RG: That's right, that's right. Yeah. And we pulled 'em off of the *ARIZONA*. In fact, I talked to one guy yesterday on the plane, or today, on the plane, was one of the guys we helped off. (Laughs) He was one of the guys who came across.

But then the other thing that really saved us, you see, the day before, we had transferred the Chief [*Boatswain's*] Mate and he had taken command of one of the Navy tugs and he got under way and he seen we were in trouble. And he shot

us a line over that burning oil, and some of us kids, we grabbed the line and pulled the thing over and got a piece of cable on us and he pulled us out, away from there. And the captain that sent all the people back to the engine room, and we had seventy pounds of steam up on those reciprocating engines, the old type of engine we had on that old ship. We got it under way, we got her under way and . . .

(Taping stops, then restarts)

(Conversation off-mike)

BF: While all of this was going on, did you really have a chance to think about what was happening?

RG: Well, we knew what was happening. There's one thing I forgot to mention was when that first plane that was, that came in, well, the second -- you know, there was four of 'em -- and the second row, the one that come in that went over our ship, I seen the Japanese insignia and there was no question about it. But we had already a little bit warned that morning. You see, one of our lookouts, I mean, our quartermaster had the watch that morning, reported to our officer on deck that there was two Japanese sea planes overhead, with the Japanese insignia on them. And nobody paid any attention to 'em. So we were half prepared, the kids there, because we was very well acquainted with all of those young fellows and . . . but we were sort of prepared, we was sort of expecting something. We didn't know what.

BF: When these planes came in, could you see the pilots very plainly?

RG: The pilot, the first pilot that the pilot came directly over us, I -- as I've always mentioned to everybody -- believe it or not, I actually believe if the canopy had been pulled back, I could see the smile on his face, and -- as I always say, coming from the state of Idaho -- if I had a spud, I could hit him right between the eyes with it. I mean, I think today, I could still identify the guy with that smile on his face. He was so close.

BF: That really must be burned in your memory.

RG: That's burned in my memory all these years, that smile on that guy's face. I don't think I'll ever forget it. Especially when those machine gun bullets started landing around you at the same time (chuckles).

BF: How did you react? What was going through your mind when you realized the magnitude of what was happening?

RG: You just don't. When something happens like that, you just don't have time to -- you just don't, you just seem to go with what comes naturally. That's about all I can say. You didn't have time to get scared. You knew it was war because you'd expecting it for such a long time.

BF: When this tug was towing you away from the *ARIZONA*, did you have a chance then to look around?

RG: That's when I really had the opportunity to look around, because, you know, we'd got the line pulled up there and we'd chopped the lines between us and the *ARIZONA*. We got away out there. And that's when we started watching. And that's when I seen the high levels come in later.

BF: These are dive bombers?

RG: The high level Japanese bombers, yes. And when they came in, the thing that has always stuck in my mind is I remember seeing as high as seven and eight and nine and ten bombs in one cluster coming down and practically everyone of 'em missed a ship going in the water alongside the Battleship Row.

BF: Exploding?

RG: No. Very seldom. I didn't see any of 'em explode that came down that hit the -- if they hit a ship, they'd explode, but I never paid no attention to that. All I was watching, sitting up there watching them come, just hoped we didn't get a cluster of 'em 'cause we couldn't get out of the way. You could see the bombs coming, they just go right in the water, without exploding and many of them did not explode. They're still sitting there today, I guess.

BF: So as you were being pulled away from the *ARIZONA*, did you pass the other battleships along Battleship Row, or did you go in the other direction?

RG: No, we had to go in the opposite direction. You see, if we'd have passed the other battleships, we would have to go up to Ford Island, where we were consequently heading out toward the submarine base and the recreational landing out there.

BF: Did you see many men get hit through the course of the morning?

RG: No. I didn't really see many men get hit. I guess the thing we all got to remember is that mostly when you get torpedoes, your death rate, all your main deaths is going to be below decks, in the engine rooms, in the fire rooms and the ammunition handling rooms and such places as that.

BF: Did you see any of the attacking planes get hit?

RG: I had never seen one plane get hit, no. Not that morning, I did not see a one get hit. I seen it, a couple of 'em smoking a little bit, but I did not see 'em exactly get hit, no.

BF: So you were pulled away from the *ARIZONA* by the tug and then you were forced aground.

RG: Yes.

BF: What happened then?

RG: Well, we jammed her into the ground and there was nothing we could do. We didn't know how intense it was going to be, we had no idea what to do so we were so close to land, they give us a -- we took one of the motor launches and we all went ashore, a lot of us went ashore where the recreation landing and the Army was setting up pill boxes with the filling sandbags and a good lot of us from the ship was over there filling sandbags and helping the Army set up these gun tubs over there. In fact, it even got to the point, just to show it, I mean, I was over there so long, working, we was all trying to do something, that they had even sent a missing in action back to my folks, which I didn't even know about until about ten years ago. (Chuckles.) I missed a roll call.

BF: While you were being towed over there, did you have an opportunity to look up and see the rest of the attack, or had it completed by then?

RG: Well, the main part of the attack was about all over when we got, when we jammed it into the beach, because we could only go about two or three miles an hour and we just barely creeping along.

BF: So you didn't really see . . .

RG: When I seen it all was during the process of going from where we were alongside the *ARIZONA*, going over to the beach.

BF: Describe what you saw during that process, during that part.

RG: Mainly what we saw was you just looked back and you see everything on fire on the Battleship Row. You could see the *NEVADA* hit up ahead of us. You could see the *WEST VIRGINIA* and the *CALIFORNIA*, and the *TENNESSEE*, and the *ARIZONA*, you could see 'em all. You seen the *OKLAHOMA* tip over, the *ARIZONA* going down, and all you could do is just thank god that you got out of there.

BF: Tell us about watching the *OKLAHOMA* roll over.

RG: Yeah, you could just set there and it just seemed to go sideways and gradually roll over.

BF: And men were trying to walk the . . .

RG: Yeah, you could see them.

BF: . . . the hull?

RG: You could see the men walking in there and a lot trapped inside. I know we sent our crews over with all the cutting torches and everything to try to get 'em out of the bottom part of the ship, which they did save a lot, but the trouble then, I remember, we sent the fellows over there, but they started, what they were doing is using all of the oxygen up inside of those compartments. So they had to finally go with cutting, you know, just chipping guns to chip the, you know, cut it some way other than the cutting torches 'cause it was using all the oxygen, killing the kids and so on.

BF: Please describe for us the *ARIZONA* going down.

RG: Just a mass of fire, that's about all you could say. It was a mass of fire and everything just practically blowed to pieces. You know, when you really look at that thing, you see that Long Lance torpedo the Japanese had was one of the most powerful torpedoes that was ever built, probably five or six times the power that any of our torpedoes ever had. And with the double bottoms opened and the blisters opened -- I don't know whether you know what a blister -- see, on the outside of a battleship, you had eighteen inches of solid steel going down over the critical parts of the ship, such as the fire room, the engine room, where the powder magazines are. So what they felt if . . . evidently, the Navy felt after they put those armor plates on there, they felt if they put these blisters it was watertight compartments that went out and went down over the outside of this fourteen or twelve-inch armor, whatever it was. And that was supposed to explode the torpedoes and explode 'em outside so that it didn't go into the hull. But the Japanese, evidently, knew exactly the depth of those and they come in underneath the armor plate.

So with all those torpedoes going in there and going and exploding, I think probably in that magazine, that forward magazine, I'm sure a torpedo had to go that or else get one of those 1,500 pound bombs in it and blow that and just set everything on fire. There was only one or two spots on the *ARIZONA* that wasn't on fire, then all that oil -- our oil tanks was broke, the *OKLAHOMA*'s was broke, the *ARIZONA*'s was broke and that was all on fire, all the way around us.

BF: Is there one thing that you saw that stands out in your mind more than anything else?

RG: Yes, I think there's one thing that probably has lived with me all my life. And I think it probably done me more good as a serviceman to see it happen, is when Cassin Young, our captain, came back aboard and made the decision that he did to get out of there. He knew what he was doing and saved the lives of everybody that was saved aboard that ship.

BF: You feel he did?

RG: There's no question about it. Where was you going? I couldn't swim to Ford Island in burning oil. He evidently, somewhere in his academy days, had had that experience. But I had never been taught how to swim through burning oil. I didn't know. None of our guys did. Some of the kids jumped over and burned up in the stuff. I don't remember who they were to this day, but I couldn't swim through it.

BF: Something very important happened to Captain Young.

RG: Yes, I remember about two or three weeks later, Admiral Nimitz came aboard and awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor and no man that ever went to sea deserved it more. But I learned one thing, no matter how tough the captain is, it's when you're in combat, brother, you want the guy that knows just what the hell he's doing when that time comes for that old showdown. And I've lived that all my life, and I think every young serviceman, if they learn that one thing, they want that guy at the top that knows what he's doing when those old bullets starts coming at you (chuckles), and he did. And later, the Captain Cassin Young, he got killed when he took command of the *SAN FRANCISCO* off the Guadalcanal. Him and Admiral Callaghan got killed on the *SAN FRANCISCO*. I think the counting tower of the *SAN FRANCISCO*, it's on display over in San Francisco there on the beach there now.

BF: How long did you stay in Hawaii after the attack?

RG: Well, I left April 30, I got my orders and I went back to Miami, Florida. They sent me to submarine chaser training center in Miami, Florida.

BF: And, briefly, what did you do for the rest of the war?

RG: Well, I don't think there's very few people that seen more combat than I did during World War II. When I went back to Miami, Florida, they sent me to a submarine chaser training school. What I . . . I think that was the only schooling I ever got in the Navy. I lasted fifteen minutes. And the commander come in and -- that had the shakedown center at Miami -- and he says, "Who's Goold?"

I says, "Well, what the hell did I do now?" (Laughs) I mean, aw, come on, you know, I just dropped to engineering office.

So I went up there and he says, "Well," he says, "Ralph," he says, "we've been looking at your records and we see you're one of the few people, probably, that we have around that's capable of rewinding anything that's made." And he says, "I'll tell you what we got, " he says, "right now," he says, "our job from the Navy Department is that we have to set up a repair base here to take care of probably a thousand ships that will be built in the ship yards on the East coast." So he says, "What I want you to do is to set up a motor rewind shop, a gyro repair shop, a plane shop and the crews to get all of the bugs out of these ships." And he says, "Your priority is above air. You can have anything you want." So it's the only time in my life I could get anything I want. (Chuckles)

BF: So, to sum up . . .

RG: So I stayed there. I stayed there about year and a half, something like that. Then after I got that all organized, I left, I had to go back to sea and I had my choice at that time, because I knew everybody at the shakedown center and I chose a ship that -- was probably the meanest warfare I've ever seen. That was aboard the [*USS*] *PCER 851*, Patrol Convoy Escort Rescue ship. There was only three of 'em ever built and probably two of them had only seen major combat. They were built to travel with the North Atlantic convoys. They had the most modern echo ranging, submarine detecting and fighting equipment known in the world at that time.

So we traveled with the North Atlantic convoys for a little while, but we seen -- we were just a little bit late then, because they had mastered the U-boats with the small carriers. So what they done, we was -- we pulled into Bermuda one evening and somebody had got, somebody had captured a complete German U-boat. So they give us a German U-boat crew and we went into a Philadelphia Navy yard and that was a mistake that, in my life, that's always stuck with me.

The fellow that --- the guy it was -- in fact, this fellow flew a one-star flag, which is a commodore. And the commodore of the ship that was in front of us when we were unloading these German U-boat cruisers happened to have graduated from the Harvard law school with our captain. But our captain had never seen combat, but probably one of the finest captains. I had never served with a finer human being. But he wanted to go out to the Pacific. So we got by -- he told this commodore what he wanted and what he liked to do. He'd liked to get out where he could do a little more good than what he was doing at the present time. So anyway, the captain come up to me there in Bermuda, I was setting out in the foscle one night in the evening and the captain come up and looked at me and he says, "Ralph," he says, "you know, I finally got the good word."

And I says, "What's that, captain?"

Well, he says, "We're going out to the Pacific where we can do some good."

BF: So let's just briefly summarize what you did in the Pacific.

RG: Okay. We left there, went through the Panama Canal, went out to [*Funafuti*] and the Ellice Islands and there to pitch--, I mean into New Guinea, and back to Manus, we farmed there. Went on the initial invasion of Leyte Island. In Leyte Island, we hit, then we hit three reinforcement landings at Ormoc Bay and soon the site of the Leyte Island. And I remember about the

second night or third night after we went into Leyte, they sent us out through the Surabaya Straits and our job was rescue. Our job up there was to go alongside any ship, under any conditions, take all their dead, their wounded, help them fight their fires and their damage control work to keep afloat. I was a warrant electrician at the time and I had charge of fifty percent of the crews.

Okay, we went out that one night. We laid halfway out through the Surabaya Straits, on a stretch of land that the Army had held next to Leyte Island. And all I know is we could see these, on our radio, we could pick up our PT boats lined up across the channel and the DD's and the DD's behind 'em and the light cruiser and the eight-inch cruisers, the fourteen-inch battle wagons and the sixteen-inch battle wagons left. But I'll never forget it when it come over the TBS, it says, "Stand by for Japanese fleet bombardment."

So there we were, between the two fleets, set off to one side and the Japanese fleet and the American fleet met head on, and we were in between 'em. And, brother, if you ever seen fireworks, you should have witnessed that. And I think it was three days before we ever got any sleep, pulling people out of the water.

BF: Let me bring you back to Pearl Harbor just then. I was remiss in not asking you about this earlier. During the time after the attack . . .

RG: Yes.

BF: . . . martial law was in effect. Did that affect you in any way?

RG: We never had time for it to affect us. 'Cause, see, we put our own ship back in condition. The only thing we done was put a caisson underneath a ship and poured it full of concrete, pumped it all out at one end of the dry dock and patched that thing. And then we took all of our motors and we done all of our overhaul work ourselves. No ship work was bid, we all stayed aboard until we got the ship back in commission. It took us about two or three weeks and everything was ready to go. And we were back in service, overhauling battleships and cruisers.

BF: When someone mentions the words "Pearl Harbor, December 7" what do you think of now when someone mentions? What's the first thing that comes to mind?

RG: I think what I think of more than anything else is the two years that I spent out here with the pineapple fleet prior to that. It was a fairly well lost two years of my life. You know what, I don't have to tell you the serviceman was pretty well disliked in the Hawaiian Islands at that time. In fact, the last year, I don't think I ever went ashore more than two or three times. When I did go ashore, we'd go and play handball over at Aiea Landing, or we'd go to submarine base and have a couple of beers.

BF: Some people who lived through the attack on Pearl Harbor still hold some bad feelings about Japan and about the Japanese. What are your feelings?

RG: Well, I have a lot of good friends that are Japanese today. I've had to forget it. I've had to forget it but every once in a while, like something like this, it really gets it out of your system, you know. It just sort of makes a person feel good to get it out. To me, it makes me feel good if I get someone to listen to me once in a while. So I don't have no hard feelings against 'em at this time. I . . . it's just hard to explain how you feel at different

times. Every once in a while, if the wrong part of it comes up or, you know, it . . . it's just tough to -- I can say it, I can live with it today. Maybe that's an easy way to put it.

BF: Would you like to sit down and talk with Japanese survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack?

RG: Wouldn't bother me a bit. I have a lot of good Japanese friends at the present time.

BF: If you could sit down with one of the attacking pilots, what would you like to know more than anything?

RG: Well, I'm an ardent reader and I don't know if there's anything I really need to know, I've read everything so thoroughly in all of the different fine books that's been written.

Now, we stopped out there in the Philippines and I should probably go through the rest of that with you.

BF: Very briefly, we're running out of time.

RG: Oh, okay, okay. We got through the Philippines then the next was Mindoro in the Philippines, then we went back and went through Iwo Jima and all of that. Then we went back to Philippines again. From Philippines, we went to Okinawa and the [*Ryukyu*] Island. Okinawa and AH-EH-SHU and the [*Ryukyu*] Islands. And then there, in the [*Ryukyu*] alone, we went alongside, I think it was over 100 American destroyers that was hit with suicide warfare, if that tells you anything. And if I remember correctly, I think we were assigned to three complete squadrons and destroyers, we were the only ship that didn't get hit, in the picket lines.

BF: Did you make it through the war unscathed, except for the injury on your leg during the attack?

RG: The only thing I had -- I would have been a career man in the Navy, but that year in the rescue work and handling the thousands of dead and wounded and pieces and fighting was -- I just got to be a plain, damn nervous wreck. The whole crew was that way. We just plain had it.

BF: You played a very key role in a very important event in history. Has that had a major impact, an effect on your life?

RG: It probably has. It probably has, 'cause I wouldn't have left the service if it hadn't been for me going, or us going through that, on that rescue ship. That was just a little more than the human anatomy could take.

BF: But specifically . . .

RG: The reason it's been good to me is for the simple reason I left the service. And for twenty-seven years I was an electrical contractor in California, and most of my work is with the oil companies. And yes, my life has been much better since then. I retired ten years ago and . . .

BF: Did the Pearl Harbor, did living through the Pearl Harbor attack teach you something? (Pause) About yourself?

RG: Yes. I think it probably would teach everyone on earth the same thing. It taught me one thing, when the old chips is down, the human anatomy is capable of doing anything.

BF: We can stop. Just a second.

(Taping stops, then restarts)

BF: In the weeks following the attack, after you prepared your own ship, then you started working on others, tell us, paint us a picture. What did you do? What was it like?

RG: Well, it was just -- actually, what was going on after that, I know they put me in the fire control department, and what we were doing, we started to put these stabilizers on these turrets on the light cruisers and the heavy cruisers . . .

(Tape is interrupted, restarts.)

BF: . . . right alongside the *ARIZONA*.

RG: The afternoon of December the sixth.

BF: So it's Saturday afternoon.

RG: That's right, yes.

BF: What was the *VESTAL* going to do to the *ARIZONA*?

RG: Overhaul it. Get all the final preparations to put the . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#166 GEORGE HOGAN: USS *LEXINGTON*

(Conversation off-mike)

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay, I'm going to slate this. The following interview is with George Hogan and it was conducted on December 3, 1986 in Honolulu. And it's about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Hogan lives here in Honolulu. And the interview was conducted by me, Bart Fredo, and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders, who is with the National Park Service.

Mr. Hogan let me briefly start you off by asking you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

George Hogan (GH): My name is George Hogan and I'm originally from San Leandro, California.

BF: What branch of the service were you in and what was your rank, back in '41?

GH: I was in the Navy and at the time of the attack, I was a Fireman Third Class.

BF: And you were stationed aboard which ship?

GH: I was aboard the USS *LEXINGTON*, one of the fleet carriers here.

BF: Now, the *LEXINGTON* and some of the other carriers of the fleet were at sea the day of the attack. Tell us a little bit about that. How far out at sea were you?

GH: Well, we were about, I would say, 700 miles west of here in the direction of Midway.

BF: Going in which direction, back to Pearl?

GH: No, we were heading for Midway. We were taking Marine fighter planes as replacements, reinforcements, to Midway Island.

BF: And you got word of the attack that morning?

GH: We went to general quarters at about 8:30 and, well, after we were general quarters, then they passed the word that hostilities had started and there was an air raid going on at that moment at Pearl Harbor.

BF: They announced this over the ship's loudspeaker?

GH: Oh, after we, . . . yeah. The, well, for the reason, it was to tell us it wasn't a drill GQ, it was the real thing.

BF: Did they tell you very much, initially, about what had happened?

GH: Not really. I imagine the command knew but as far as we knew, there had been considerable damage and there had been some serious damage and some heavy casualties, but the full extent wasn't known. No. Not to the general crew, I'm sure.

BF: What other ships were traveling with the *LEXINGTON*?

GH: We were with the heavy cruiser *CHICAGO*, *PORTLAND*, *ASTORIA*, and five destroyers. There was nine of us.

BF: But the *LEXINGTON* was the only carrier in this particular task force?

GH: The only carrier in our task group.

BF: What happened next? Did the ship turn around and head back towards Pearl?

GH: No, we stayed out and from subsequent results, I'm sure that we had orders to stay out and search, try to find the Japanese, but we didn't find them. We looked for the biggest part of the next week and didn't find any trace.

BF: So you diverted from your cruise to Wake to look for . . .

GH: No, we were to Midway.

BF: . . . the Japanese fleet. I'm sorry, Midweek, Midway, excuse me.

GH: Yeah. And I'm not sure at this time yet whether we actually launched those Marine fighter planes to reinforce Midway or not. I was an engineer so I wasn't on the flight deck, so I didn't really know. Anyway, we stayed out for the following week on kind of a hopeless search, as it turns out now.

BF: Never saw anything?

GH: Never saw anything.

BF: Turned around and came back to Pearl Harbor when?

GH: They ordered us back into Pearl on the fourteenth. So we came back into Pearl Harbor the following Sunday morning.

BF: Describe what you saw.

GH: Well, the . . . what we saw was not what we expected. I mean, we expected to see something, but not as bad as it was. And the only strong impression that I still retain today is as we were coming in, they had the crew at quarters on the flight deck, which was usual. And usually when 3,000 men are at quarters, there's a little bit of jostling and horseplay. And the thing that I still remember is the silence. (Clears throat) There wasn't a sound. And that sticks with me.

BF: When you went by Battleship Row and you saw all this devastation, was there conversation among the men on the deck?

GH: Not really. Not really. Maybe just somebody standing next to you, but no big demonstration. There wasn't any outpouring of rage, just, you know, shock.

BF: What kind of activity was going on that day when you came in?

GH: There was all kinds of salvage work starting and there was numerous small boats still operating in the harbor. And the harbor was full of oil, so that was another thing I remember, the extent of the oil spilled in the harbor. Of course, the fires were all out, but . . . and it was just, we just -- it was this total damage. It was just hard to imagine that was the fleet.

BF: Did you have an opportunity to talk to anybody who had lived through the attack?

GH: No, because as soon as we got out of Fox-nine, which was our pier, on the backside of Ford Island, they started organizing working parties and everybody that wasn't on watch was on a store's party or working party of some kind. And small boats, or the fifty-foot boats going over to the supply dock.

BF: What did you do?

GH: I worked up until way late in the morning, after midnight. It was a working party on a fifty-foot launch that was running back and forth between the ship and the supply base.

BF: Supply your own ship?

GH: Supplying us, yeah. We didn't engage any in the salvage work at all. No, we had all we could handle.

BF: How long did the *LEXINGTON* stay in port?

GH: As near as I can recall, it was probably -- it was very short. It was probably forty-eight hours or less.

BF: And then how did it go?

GH: And then we went out on patrol again.

BF: Do you remember for how long?

GH: No, I don't. But I know we never went anyplace very far from Pearl, I mean any great distance, until early February, we made a long range . . .

BF: Of '42?

GH: In '42. We made a long range patrol and hit-and-run over to the Solomons. And that was about the first time that we really strayed far, a great distance, from Pearl.

BF: Am I right, the ship was in and out of Pearl a lot during the December of '41 and throughout '42?

GH: Yeah. Yeah. We made fairly short patrols, as I recall -- and it's getting kind of long time ago -- but I don't recall ever us being out for any great length of time until we made the patrol in February, when we went to the Solomons.

BF: Because you were in and out, you were away for part of the time when repairs were being made. Each time you came back, did you notice a marked improvement in the situation?

GH: No. I don't suppose, maybe we weren't looking for it. But I never noticed anything really, you know, advancing that fast. The harbor was clearing up fairly well, you know, the oil seemed to be working it's way out or being cleaned up. But as far as the ships, they still looked pretty bad.

BF: It looked as bad in . . .

GH: That was my impression, yeah, that, you know, you just had the feeling they're never going to get this straightened out.

BF: When you were in port, did you have occasion to go ashore?

GH: Oh yeah, yeah. We were free to go ashore later on, when we'd come back in off patrol and . . . but like I said, I didn't go to town too often, because there wasn't too much to do when you got in town. And so our gang used to make a lot of our liberties right there at the enlisted men's beer hall, which, as I remember, was about where Bloch Arena is now, down by [*Merry Point*].

BF: So you didn't really go very far.

GH: So we really didn't go far. The only time I can really remember going into town was we had an opportunity to make phone calls. We had to go to the phone company building in Honolulu and make an application to make a phone call through our parents or wives or whatever. And that was almost a day's process right there. You had to be interviewed and they told you what you could say and what you couldn't say. You don't talk about this, you don't talk about weather, you know. So all you could really say was, "I'm still alive. How are you?"

BF: So martial law did affect your life and it affected . . .

GH: It did, yeah.

BF: . . . with your liberty.

GH: Yeah.

BF: Did you have an opportunity to know any civilians during that period?

GH: No, not in Honolulu.

BF: So, basically, the people you knew were other Navy men?

GH: Yeah, people off other ships, my own ship.

BF: Eventually, just very briefly, summarize your war activities after Pearl Harbor.

GH: Oh, after . . .

BF: The attack.

GH: You mean like to the end of the war?

BF: Yeah, but very briefly summarize.

GH: Oh, yeah, briefly. Well, we, like I said, we had less than five months and May we went into the Coral Sea and we were sunk there.

BF: Were you aboard?

GH: Yeah. And then we were taken back to San Diego, the survivors. And then we were sent to different ships over the fleet. I was sent to an escort

carrier, at Seattle, wound up in the Atlantic fleet and we patrolled the mid-Atlantic for submarines all of '43. At the end of '43, I was transferred off to a light fleet carrier in Philadelphia. And as soon as we went on commission, then we came back out to the Pacific, then I spent the last seventeen months on this light carrier.

BF: Did you come through unscathed?

GH: I never got a scratch.

BF: Even when you were sunk with the *LEXINGTON* in the Coral Sea?

GH: Yeah. The only thing I got was some rope burns on my hands from sliding too fast down the rope. But no injuries.

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: Yes, yes, good point to stop. Is there anything else . . .

(Taping stops, then restarts)

BF: Did someone come in wanting to let us know something?

--: No, no, I got the message here.

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: A lot of people who went through World War II, particularly people who went through the attack on Pearl Harbor, still hold some bad feelings about Japanese, Japan.

GH: Mm-hm.

BF: Where do you come down on that?

GH: I don't have any at all, really, actually.

BF: Did you ever?

GH: No, because I was born and raised in California. I lived in a town that had more than just a few Japanese people. I went to school with a lot of Japanese kids, so I never developed any feelings that way about them. I mean they were just guys I went to school with. And during the war, I didn't have too much patience with them, but after the war, I figured it's done. And then after the war, I went back to the Mainland, I worked with a lot of Japanese when I used to work for an oil company, and I worked with a lot of Japanese-Americans. And I just can't feel that way.

BF: Do you ever talk to other veterans, particularly survivors of Pearl Harbor and hear the negative feelings they have?

GH: Oh sure. We run into people all the time down at the Memorial that still of 'em are very bitter. Some of them are very negative and they just can't understand why I don't want to strangle -- I never get into it. I never argue with them, I just tell them I don't feel that way and let it go at that.

BF: You are a volunteer at the memorial. Has there been any interesting things that have happened to you?

GH: Nothing extremely unusual. One thing that surprised me, I mean, you know, is everybody figures there's no hope for the younger generation, that they don't give a damn about anything. But down there, I'm surprised that the young people that are interested, you know, they want to, they come up and they've got some questions they want answered and they express great interest.

BF: I would think that while you've been out there, you might have run into some survivors who've come back. Has that happened to you?

GH: I have never met an *ARIZONA* survivor myself.

BF: Or Pearl Harbor?

GH: Oh, lots of Pearl Harbor survivors, yeah. Yeah, we get them frequently.

BF: How do they react?

GH: Some of them are very much in control and some of them get -- nobody really breaks, and they don't really break down, but some of them are a little moved emotionally. It's easy to tell. And some more than others, but they all feel it, I'm sure. It's evident.

BF: Do they talk?

GH: They'll talk, yeah, most of them. There's one point, it'll point out where their ship was and . . .

BF: Does it seem to help that they verbalize?

GH: It seems like they want to talk about it, because, you know, nobody's pushing 'em and they come up and volunteer. But some of 'em just seem -- and then I've talked to several in the last three or two years that I've been here that it's been the first time they've been back since, and they seem to be glad that they're there.

BF: Have you had any Japanese visitors? Either war veterans or civilians?

GH: Personally, I've never met any ex-Japanese servicemen. They have been there, but I have never met, I've always been off when they were there. I never came in contact with them. But there are Japanese civilians, tourists that come down, that were, probably, well, they were in Japan, I'm sure, at the time. And they, for the biggest point, they don't talk too much.

BF: Can you tell how the older Japanese visitors are reacting?

GH: It's very hard. They're very quiet. And they're very reserved and it's kind of like almost reverent.

BF: More so than the average American visitor?

GH: The average, yeah. There are more Japanese that come down there that act like they're in church than there are American people that do.

BF: Do the young Japanese seem to act the same way as the older Japanese?

GH: For the biggest part, yeah. In my opinion, the Japanese are very good tourists down there, I mean in the sense that they are respectful, quiet and it seems like that they're . . .

BF: They know where they are.

GH: . . . reflecting on what happened. I always think that maybe they feel the same way I did when I went to Hiroshima. I certainly didn't feel like doing a big cheer when I was there. I don't apologize for what happened, it had to be done, but I don't think it was something to go and get exultant over it. And I think they probably feel the same way.

BF: He's very good. That's excellent. You know, that's the kind of stuff there would make it good . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#167 DONALD SEELY: USS *HENLEY*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay, let me slate this. The following interview is with Donald Seely and it was conducted on December 3, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel at about six o'clock in the evening. Mr. Seely now lives in Kansas City, Kansas. I'm the interviewer, my name is Bart Fredo and also in the room is Dan Martinez, and he is a historian with the National Park Service.

Mr. Seely, let me first of all ask you to start this tape the way we started with all the others. Tell me your name and what your hometown was back in 1941.

Donald Seely (DS): I was Donald James Seely at the time of the attack. I was born Donald James Spitzengel in Kansas City, Kansas. In '41 -- I don't know much about Kansas City, Kansas in '41. I only had one liberty from the time I enlisted.

BF: What service were you in?

DS: Navy.

BF: Rank?

DS: Gunner's Mate Third Class, at the time of the attack.

BF: When did you . . .

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: Who was it? Was it me? Oh, let me move a little bit. And what part of my anatomy was it?

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: We can do it again. We can start it again.

(Tape stops, restarts.)

BF: Okay, this is take two. The following interview is with Donald Seely, also known as Donald Spitzengel. It was conducted on December 3, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, about six o'clock in the evening. Mr. Seely AKA Spitzengel lives in Kansas City . . .

(Tape stops, restarts)

BF: Mr. Seely lives in Kansas City. I'm Bart Fredo doing the interview, and with me is Dan Martinez, a historian with the National Park Service. So again we start.

Why don't you tell us your name and what your hometown was back in 1941?

DS: I'm Donald Seely. I'm from Kansas City, Kansas.

BF: Let's do that again. You're also going to tell me the Spitzengel part too, like you did the second time. Let's start again now. I'm going to ask you what's your name and where were you from back in 1941?

DS: My name is Donald J. Seely. I was born Donald James Spitzengel in Kansas City, Kansas.

BF: What branch of the service were you in?

DS: Navy.

BF: And rank?

DS: Gunner's Mate Third [*Class*] at the time of the attack.

BF: Aboard the ship?

DS: USS *HENLEY* DD391.

BF: That's a destroyer?

DS: That is a destroyer.

BF: When did you arrive in Hawaii?

DS: April 6, 1938.

BF: So you were here a while?

DS: Oh, yes, yes. We were the original Hawaiian Detachment.

BF: Let me take you back to the morning of the attack. Before the attack started, where were you? What were you doing?

DS: I was on the fantail. We were getting gathered up for muster, roll call.

BF: What happened then?

DS: A mistake was made at the quarterdeck. The petty officer of the watch, Third Class Torpedoman, Don J. Wilson, was eating. And he inadvertently did not watch but he was eating and he reached up and he grabbed the wrong gong. It was a battle station gong instead of the muster call. And immediately, the battle stations, everybody was manning battle stations. And he had a young recruit, messenger, and he tried passing him along to say, "Hey, tell everybody it's a mistake, I goofed. It's still just for muster."

BF: This was before you realized there was attack?

DS: Oh yes. And muster was 7:55. So you can see how close it was to the attack time.

BF: So what did the crew do?

DS: Everybody that was awake went to battle stations. And those people down in the decks, they were hitting the deck and getting clothes on so they could go to their own battle stations.

BF: So were they at battle stations when the actual attack occurred?

DS: Some of them were, absolutely. They --- you can see, on a 341 foot ship, the word cannot get from bow to stern immediately to belay that it was a mistake.

BF: When did you first realize that something was wrong, something was happening?

DS: A group of us noticed aircraft near Barbers Point. We turned to look. It was not unusual to see the aircraft coming in with the aim of a supposed attack on the Navy forces. But this time, they dropped fish. Well, we still didn't think anything about it until they hit the ships and exploded.

BF: When you say fish, you mean torpedoes?

DS: That's correct.

BF: Tell us more about what you saw.

DS: As soon as these torpedoes hit, I think then we knew immediately something was wrong, 'cause they never dropped torpedoes inside the Pearl before. At that particular time, I looked up and right down the way, towards the sea, was Ford Island and here come a Japanese air-- we didn't know it was Japanese at the time -- but an airplane came down strafing. And just as it got to us within less than 150 feet, it banked to go around for another turn and here's the big red flag on the fish launch.

BF: You realized then?

DS: Oh yes. It was immediate. And the pilot just grinned at us.

BF: You got a good look at him?

DS: Oh yes. No problem.

BF: Still remember that face?

DS: Well, I couldn't identify him with his helmet and everything, but I remember him grinning. Now, he was getting away with murder because nobody was firing back.

BF: About these torpedoes that you saw dropped, what happened to them?

DS: As soon as this attack started --- I was machine gun petty officer, it was my responsibility for fifty water-cooled Brownings and I had charge of the machine gun ammunition lockers. Well, I immediately tried to go down to where there was machine gun magazines to get ammunition and already the hatches were being dogged down.

BF: And that means?

DS: That means that I had to open a manhole, undog it, go down through it, went into another deck, had to open another hatch, go down and I picked up ammunition, threw it around my shoulder in belts, dogged that hatch down, come back up that staircase, the ladder, going up to that first hatch, open the manhole, undog it, climb through, push the ammunition up, dog it back down, and then I went out through the number four gun handling room and started up the deck house, towards my guns.

BF: How long did that take?

DS: Who knows. All I know is I was busy. I didn't look at any watch.

BF: You didn't tell us what happened to those torpedoes. Did you see them hit anything?

DS: I seen 'em hit the *UTAH*.

BF: And what happened?

DS: Well, when I came back up on deck, the *UTAH* had already turned over.

BF: So by the time you went below deck and came back up . . .

DS: The UTAH had capsized.

BF: You came back up on deck, what did you see then when you looked up, besides the UTAH capsized?

DS: Aircraft, all kinds of aircraft. I started up the starboard side of the ship, trying to hug the deckhouse because I knew these people were out to kill us. It was evidently war. I got up to my machine guns and we had just come in the night before from a 300 mile patrol out. And we had taken heavy grease and greased our machine guns so that no salt spray would hurt them. And they were just immersed in grease. So I had to go back down to the torpedo locker and get a five gallon can of diesel oil and bring it back up and I was busy pouring this five gallon can of diesel oil over these fifty caliber machine guns forward, two mounts, to get them to where they would operate.

BF: So after you initially realized that there was an attack under way, how long was it before you were actually able to operate the weapon?

DS: The first opportunity I had to operate the weapon on a target, we got under way . . .

BF: You left your moorings?

DS: We went a-buoy. We slipped the buoy, and as we came about, a bomb hit, probably, about 150 yards away. We were throwing anything that would burn, splinter, or catch fire, we were throwing over the side -- the brow, the gangway, all the paints, the varnishes, the mops, the brooms. Anything that would splinter or burn.

BF: Sounds like the deck was a beehive of activity.

DS: Oh, it was. Now, we must remember, we had the flag for the division. The division commander was ashore and the captain was ashore, the exec was ashore. We had a lieutenant senior officer present who took us out. As we came down the Row, past the *RALEIGH*, the *DETROIT*, the *RALEIGH* was already taking a fish in her stern. I didn't know about a bomb hit, which she had had . . .

BF: That was a cruiser?

DS: Light cruiser, scout. The *UTAH*, of course, had capsized, and the [*TANGIER*] was afire from her boat deck aft. I later learned she had knocked a

plane down that had went into her boat deck, and I think they lost thirty-four men there.

BF: What kind of a ship is the [*TANGIER*]?

DS: Seaplane tender.

BF: Were you taking fire during this time?

DS: No. No. All the targets were the battleships and the heavy cruisers. We received no fire of any kind.

BF: As you're getting under way, are you using your weapons?

DS: No. No.

BF: Still washing 'em down with the oil, the kerosene?

DS: They were diesel oil. They were being manned and we were busy belting up ammunition into belts. But I had no opportunity to fire on any of 'em, anything.

BF: Tell us about the planes you saw.

DS: The most planes that I saw were attacking the west side of Ford Island.

BF: That's the side where the *UTAH* was.

DS: That's correct. They had those pretty well EN-SIV-ED.

BF: *ARIZONA*, *NEVADA*, *MARYLAND*, *WEST VIRGINIA*, all on the other side.

DS: They were on the east side, that's correct.

BF: Could you see the east side of Ford Island?

DS: Oh yes, because I was up on the secondary com of the destroyer I was on, so we was probably somewhere in the vicinity of forty feet above the water line.

BF: Did you see any of the battle wagons on the east side of Ford take any hits?

DS: I didn't see 'em take anything except bombs, because I was so high up, but yet I could not see the other side of the battleships open to torpedo fire.

BF: What did you see when you saw these hits on the battleships?

DS: Fire, flame, explosions.

BF: These planes, now, back to the planes. Did you see any of the attacking planes get hit?

DS: I don't recall anything because our five-inch was going off at that time and any plane that got up was a target. They didn't bother to identify anybody. If they got up, as far as we were concerned, they were enemy. Now remember, a goodly portion of our crew was ashore, and they were being manned with anybody that could get up there and throw a projectile into the breach of a gun and

hammer it home with a spade. No fuses set, no nothing. The bombardment of Honolulu was Navy artillery, pure and simple, fuses were not set.

BF: So you, eventually, you began to operate your weapon?

DS: Yes. We came down and as we passed the [*TANGIER*], the battleship *NEVADA* came into view. As we went astern of the battleship *NEVADA*, she took two more 500 pound bomb hits.

BF: You saw that?

DS: Oh yes, I sure did. And as we turned to be on her port side, it was evident she was going to beach. If they had sank the *NEVADA* in the channel, nothing was going to come in, nothing was going to go out. Fortunately, all of the torpedoes and all of the bombs had been expended on the battleships. All we took were strafing fire from strafing aircraft. One guy made a mistake, he came down our starboard side and I picked him up and I put rounds into him until he caught fire and went into the sea.

BF: You hit him?

DS: Oh yes, I cut him to pieces.

BF: You're sure it was you?

DS: All the ship's company and I've got my division officer right on the bridge and I'm immediately below him.

BF: You fired tracer rounds?

DS: Yes, every fourth round was, the rest of it was ball, the fourth round was a tracer.

BF: You knew it was your stuff going in?

DS: Oh yeah. The whole ship's company forward could see it. It was very evident.

BF: How long were you firing at him before you saw that you were having an effect?

DS: Well, I picked him up by the tail and I didn't stop until it went up into his engine. And I would estimate that I was probably on him four or five seconds.

BF: And was this a torpedo plane?

DS: They tell me it was a light bomber. He had no armament on him, the torpedoes or bombs had been expended. Pretty hard to identify.

BF: And where did he go in?

DS: Forward of us, probably a quarter of a mile ahead of us.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

BF: After you saw this plane go in, what happened next?

DS: A five-inch, they were firing as we were coming out.

BF: I'm sorry. I don't understand what you mean. They were firing the five-inch gun on the *HENLEY*?

DS: That's correct.

BF: Why?

DS: The targets . . . well, out of the tube, I would judge to be in excess of twenty to twenty-five thousand feet.

BF: The high level bombers?

DS: Well, we didn't know, I didn't know . . .

BF: Or fighters?

DS: . . . what it was. All I know is it was an aircraft, he was headed south. I looked up at the director and the director and the guns turned together and gunner two fired and you could watch the white projectile go up underneath that plane and it exploded. No plane.

BF: So the *HENLEY* has its second kill?

DS: That's my story, yes sir, that's right.

BF: What happens for you next?

DS: I really don't recall during the attack because I don't remember dropping any depth charges. I don't remember any more firing, from the fifty-calibers anyway. I met a man tonight that told me that he remembered us coming out, "boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom," and you know, I don't recall this particular occasion.

BF: As you're making your way through the water, are you on the west or the east side of Ford Island?

DS: To seaward.

BF: Seaward of it. Did you have an opportunity to see the destruction, the extent of the destruction on Battleship Row on Ford Island?

DS: Only as we passed down the channel on the west side.

BF: So you really didn't get a good look at it, at that point?

DS: Oh, no, we did not because all I seen was bomb blast. I seen no torpedo hits whatever.

BF: What happened when you were on the seaside of Ford Island? I understand you saw a launch coming in?

DS: After we went out the channel, we were completely out the channel.

BF: You were outside the . . .

DS: Oh yes.

BF: . . . outside the harbor?

DS: Yes, we were.

BF: What did you see?

DS: I seen a forty-five to a sixty foot motor launch.

BF: Coming in . . .

DS: Coming along the beach, on the west side of the beach, coming up to the channel area.

BF: Could you see who was in it?

DS: I only seen one man waving a white handkerchief.

BF: A civilian or a . . .

DS: Well, he was not in uniform.

BF: I understand the *HENLEY* was firing at this launch . . .

DS: Only with fifty-caliber machine guns.

BF: Did you hit it?

DS: I cut it in half, as far as I'm concerned. I hit it.

BF: This launch?

DS: Yes.

BF: And then when the man started waving the flag?

DS: My division officer told me, "Seely, cease firing."

BF: Then what happened?

DS: I ceased fired. And then I happened to glimpse behind us and the next ship behind us was a light cruiser, *ST. LOUIS*. I saw the turret on the *ST. LOUIS* trained towards the motor launch and fire.

BF: A five-inch gun, three-inch gun?

DS: Six-inch forty-sevens.

BF: And?

DS: No boat.

BF: Hit it?

DS: It hit it.

BF: The next thing you knew, the launch was gone?

DS: There was no pieces, nothing.

BF: And I understand you have some question as to whether or not this has ever been reported before.

DS: That's correct.

BF: You've never heard that it had.

DS: No sir. It's not in any of the books I read. And I'm a reader.

BF: What happened then, after this incident with the launch? What happened to the *HENLEY* and you?

DS: The --- as I related earlier, the five-inch fired up at this aircraft, somewhere between twenty and twenty-five thousand feet, and hit it. I think about that time, if there was any more gunfire, I don't remember. We spent a considerable amount of time bringing aboard our division commander and the captain and the exec.

BF: Where did you pick them up?

DS: From a life raft, let loose by the *TREVER*, a destroyer.

BF: Inside the harbor or . . .

DS: Oh no, outside it, past the channel.

BF: So you were out in open water?

DS: That's correct.

BF: When did you come back into the harbor?

DS: December 10.

BF: So you were about three days, then?

DS: Yes.

BF: What did you do during those three days?

DS: They came down and told us that we were going to hunt that Japanese fleet that had inflicted so much damage on us. It was interesting because the officer that took us out, after being relieved by the captain and the exec, came down, gun mount by gun mount, and he explained to us. He says, "Look back there and see what them SOBs has down to our fleet. Now we're going to go out there and we're going to get them guys."

And we all looked at one another and I know I was only twenty-one and I started bawling, 'cause I could see the flames and the smoke still rolling up, and I know how many aircraft they put above them. And we were going to go out and take these people on? I counted ships, I counted nineteen. One cruiser,

the *DETROIT*, age 1921, and the others were destroyers, and we were going to go out and attack a fleet that can do that to Pearl Harbor?

BF: During those three days, you didn't see anything?

DS: We saw, before dark, we came upon an American submarine and he gave us a blinker light at probably something in the neighborhood of six or seven miles. He was surfaced and he says, "I am friendly, I am friendly, I am friendly, I am friendly."

Sometime later, we came in contact with an American tanker, no fuel aboard. He was high ballast. And he was also blinking the light. I don't remember what his call was, but I know he was friendly.

BF: No --- you saw, no sign of the enemy, however?

DS: No, none whatever.

BF: When you came back into the harbor on the tenth, what did you see?

DS: Can we stop right there and go back to what occurred on the evening of ninth?

BF: We just have . . .

DS: On sometime after dark, on the evening of the seventh, we picked up a carrier. I'm going to assume it was the *ENTERPRISE* . . .

BF: Picked it up meaning on your radar?

DS: We didn't have no radar.

BF: Oh.

DS: No, we sighted, visually and we immediately formed a screen for her. The evening of the seventh, we were in company with her all of the evening of the seventh, the eighth, and the ninth. On the evening of the ninth, after dark fall, nightfall, four destroyers on either side of that carrier, she was hit by a torpedo, on the port quarter. She immediately went to flank speed and left us wallowing. This was after dark. We never saw this carrier again until the next morning, at daybreak. We were coming back into Pearl. I never saw so many torpedo wakes and the carrier planes, they had lost all her carrier planes, and they were all over the area outside of the channel, dropping bombs, depth charges, smoke bombs, pots, and the torpedo wakes everywhere.

BF: These were planes from this carrier?

DS: That's correct, American carrier.

BF: Was it the *ENTERPRISE*, coming back in?

DS: It has to be, it would have to be.

BF: Do you know where this torpedo that hit the ship came from?

DS: Well, they tell me it was a sub.

BF: Do you know if it did very much damage?

DS: I think it killed something like eighteen men and seeing as how they've got about eighteen fire rooms, well, it didn't slow her down at all.

BF: So when you did come back into the harbor, if we can go there now, what did you see?

DS: All kinds of destroyers trying to trace down these torpedo wakes and dropping depth charges everywhere.

BF: So, in other words, you were seeing and hearing explosions going off in the harbor three days after the attack?

DS: Not in the harbor, outside the harbor.

BF: Outside the harbor.

DS: Oh yes.

BF: So lots of activity off shore?

DS: Just particularly with submarines. No surface craft, no aircraft.

BF: When you came back and the ship came back into the harbor here, the *HENLEY* . . .

DS: Yes sir.

BF: . . . what did you see? What did you see?

DS: Debris. Things were still burning. Of course, ships were still damaged.

BF: Did you go down by Battleship Row?

DS: No, we went over on the other -- same on the -- stayed on the west side of Ford Island again.

BF: Could you see, though, could you see?

DS: Oh yes. It was very clear. Now, let's make something here, I would like to make a point. When we came back into Pearl, they lowered a whaleboat for me, put me in a whaleboat and sent me to the hospital ship *SOLACE.*

BF: What was wrong with you?

DS: You must remember that we went out after breakfast on December the seventh. We had nothing to eat. It was approximately the third day before we got anything to eat. They told us that one man at a time could leave a battle station, on the third day, because that's the only time you left that battle station, was to eat. And we had one meal. We came down, they had a rack of cups at the galley window. You stuck one cup in there, they threw two eggs in there and a biscuit and said, "Next." That's it.

They brought the coffee up to your battle stations. This particular coffee pot -- probably a two-gallon one -- was boiling coffee, but we hadn't even had water. So I pickled the ladle up and I lowered her down and it burnt

my tonsil tissues. I had no tonsils. It was just tissue, but blood poisoning set in. I had an abscess. I went to probably around 105 degrees.

BF: So you went to this infirmary . . .

DS: *SOLACE*.

BF: . . . dispensary.

DS: I had to go to the hospital ship.

BF: Okay and that's --- and you spent how much time there?

DS: Oh, I would say at least two weeks, because my ship waited until the *SHAW* had a false bow and escorted her back to San Francisco. I'm still on the *SOLACE*.

BF: How long did you stay in Hawaii after the attack?

DS: Probably less than a month.

BF: And a couple of weeks you were in the hospital?

DS: Well, I was on the hospital ship.

BF: Hospital ship. Did you get to go ashore at all?

DS: No.

BF: So martial law didn't affect your life in any way.

DS: No. I was aboard the hospital ship.

BF: What the most vivid memory you have of the attack itself? The thing that stands out in your mind more than anything?

DS: The two torpedoes they put into the *UTAH.*

BF: Early on.

DS: Right on.

BF: Almost the --- one of the first things you saw?

DS: We saw them coming in and thought nothing about it, until they dropped the fish. And then they hit.

BF: During the attack, did you see acts of heroism or men doing unusual things?

DS: Well, I know that the torpedo men couldn't man torpedo, but torpedo battery, so the torpedo men were manning machine guns and I'm sure there were other people manning the five-inch, 'cause we had dual purpose mounts that would elevation of seventy-eight degrees. And they probably weren't loaders. They probably weren't shell men, or hop shell men, or pointers, or trainers, but they were in there, trying to get the job done.

BF: Did the *HENLEY* take any hits?

DS: Only machine gun fire.

BF: Any casualties?

DS: None. No hits whatever. No personnel.

BF: Have you thought much about the attack over the last forty-five years?

DS: Oh, I read every book I can lay my hands on. And I taught -- I'm state chairman of Kansas and I talked with the personnel at my district Pearl Harbor meetings in seven states and then I talk with my own convention personnel in my own state, and we rehash a lot of things that went on.

BF: Some of the survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack, still to this day, hold some bad feelings about Japanese, about Japan.

DS: I'm one of 'em.

BF: You do?

DS: I don't buy Japanese products.

BF: For that reason, or for economic reasons?

DS: For that reason. Japanese products are probably better and they're cheaper, but I won't buy 'em. When I came over here, my ship went out in possibly January of 1942. I did not return to Pearl Harbor, even on that ship, until thirty-five years later, in '76. My ship was sunk by a Japanese torpedo off of New Guinea. We lost personnel. I have a bitter hatred for the Japanese and when I came back in '76, for the first time in thirty-five years, one of the first things I met was a Japanese tourist party. It did not set well with me. They could've been me, see. I don't know. But that hatred was still there.

BF: How do you feel about your hatred? Would you rather not have it?

DS: Oh yes. It's mellowing. It's mellowing. But it's still there.

BF: Even though the people at whom you're directing this hatred probably had nothing at all to do . . .

DS: That's right. They were doing a job. It could've been the pilots that actually were in that attack. I do not know. When you see machine gunning of people, actually they're helpless. It just doesn't set well. There was no declaration of war. There was no declaration of war.

BF: You played a part in a very important event in history. Has that fact affected your life?

DS: Oh yes. Oh it sure did. One thing, it's been pointed out to me. It has one thing, a national occurrence of this magnitude, World War II, entry of the United States forces, I was there and I'm credited officially with knocking down one aircraft. My children, their children and their children, it's going to be here in eternity, that their relative was there and he took a part in it.

BF: If you had the opportunity to speak with a surviving Japanese who participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor, let's say an attacking pilot, would you like to talk to him?

DS: Sure.

BF: What would you want to know? What would you say?

DS: I'd like to know where he got his training, how long was he training, what actions he took part in, was he a portion of that outfit that we had to mix it up with in Guadalcanal or the Coral Sea, or over in New Guinea?

BF: How do you think you would feel talking with him?

DS: We were men doing a job. I was trained to shoot to kill, so was he.

BF: And yet you still -- given what you just said -- you still have these very negative feelings.

DS: Oh, it's still there. Sure it is. Yeah. It's mellowing, but it's still there.

END OF INTERVIEW

#168 HENRY PEPPE: ARMY MAN AT FORT SHAFTER

Bart Fredo (BF): . . . and it was conducted on December 3, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel at about seven o'clock or so in the evening. Mr. Peppe now lives in Tucson, Arizona. My name is Bart Fredo and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders, who is with the National Park Service.

Mr. Peppe, let me start by asking you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Henry Peppe (HP): My name is Henry Peppe and I lived in Barnbrook, New Jersey, which is a small town of about 10,000 people.

BF: What branch of the service were you in? What was your rank and job?

HP: Well, when I came into the service, I thought I was going to go into the infantry, but I ended up in the coast artillery.

BF: This is Army, then?

HP: Army, United States Army.

BF: When did you come to Hawaii?

HP: I came to Hawaii in August of 1941.

BF: So just a couple of months before the attack?

HP: That's right.

BF: Where were you assigned?

HP: I was assigned to Fort Shafter with the end battery, 64th Coast Artillery [*Regiment*].

BF: Let me take you to the morning of the attack, early that morning, before you realized it was an attack. What were you doing?

HP: Well, that morning, I went up, as I always do on Sunday morning, to go to church services. We had a chapel up on the hill, in Fort Shafter. And I asked two of my buddies if they wanted to go and either of one of them said, "Nah, this is my day off. You and so-and-so go," whatever his name was. So the both of us, we just took off. And we put on our civvies because we're both off that day.

BF: Civilian clothes.

HP: That's correct. And we went into church. But it was around, I'd say, about twenty minutes to eight, when we started walking. Of course, we had quite a walk to walk up there. By the time we got up there, it was about eight minutes to eight when all heck broke loose. We looked down towards Pearl Harbor, we could see the blasting, bombing, whatever you want to call it.

BF: You could see impact?

HP: We could see it very, very clear because it was so -- we were up high! And we thought maybe it was a maneuver or something, because we weren't on the

alert. And at the time when I saw all that, I saw a plane get hit, and I said, "Oh my god, don't tell me," because I was a machine gunner and we used to shoot at targets and once in a while we hit the plane.

BF: Where was this plane that you saw hit?

HP: We saw it over at Hickam, somewhere, in that area. We could see it down there, but it was in the vicinity between Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field.

BF: You saw it go down?

HP: I saw it go down in flames. We thought they were one of ours, you know.

BF: What happened where you were?

HP: Well, where I was at the particular time, people were going into the church -- officers, women.

BF: Were they aware of what was happening?

HP: They were like me. I mean, we were all puzzled. We didn't know what was going on.

BF: You still weren't sure what was going on?

HP: I really didn't know. I tell you, I was wondering what was going on myself. And then all of a sudden, Roy says to me, "Peppe, let's go. It's almost eight o'clock!" So we ran up the steps and went into the chapel.

BF: And then what happened?

HP: Well, while we were in the chapel, we could hear the explosions in the background. And our priest at the time was named Connors, I believe it was, Father Connors, Catholic priest -- I was a Catholic. And I imagined he realized there was something going on, but we were all stunned, really. And all of a sudden -- I'll say within about ten minutes of the Mass was going on -- and all of a sudden an awful explosion right behind the church. And the chandelier up on top there just shook right over me and I'm looking up and going, "Oh wow," you know, "this is something else."

Just about that time, I turned and I looked in the back and there was officers' wives, children crying, standing in the back of the church. And then an officer walks in, he walks right by, and right in front of me was Colonel Shea, which was our commanding officer in that Fort Shafter. And I heard him whisper, and he said, 'Colonel, we're being attacked by the Japs."

And I went -- I was stunned. He got up, walked right out. Went to his captain. I stood there and waited until communion was served, which was right, almost instantly. The priest knew and he just gave us communion and we just went out. I walked right out that door and went right out there and there was a sergeant there. I don't recall if it was my sergeant or with K Battery, because I was in M Battery. And I could recall him saying, "Get out of them civvies, get into khakis. The Japs are boom, they're bombing us. They're in ODs," in olive drab uniforms, you know. "And go and put on the olive drabs on."

Well I started to walk across this parade field, which I would say was about 300 yards and it was palm trees.

BF: This is the parade field at Fort Shafter?

HP: Right in front of the chapel, not too far down. And all of a sudden I looked up, and there's a plane, he's Japanese. And they come down and it was one right after another. And they come down and they were firing. How they hit me, I don't know, there was three or four of us. They were actually trying to hit the people who were coming out of church.

BF: The rounds were hitting all around you?

HP: Right. You could see it popping up in front of us. We dived for the trees, but I started to run. At first, I was stunned. I couldn't run when they told me to go, go. But then, after that, I ran. And I remember remarking, I'll always remember this until the day I die, I says, "I could have been Jesse Owens." I got under the trees.

And there was another plane come circling around. And he started doing the same thing.

BF: Strafed you?

HP: So we took off for our barracks, and I got there. I could recall going into my tent -- I didn't have a barracks then, I had a tent -- and my locker was down, it was all smashed. It was hit with something, shrapnel or whatever. There was blood all over the floor from some of the guys that never made it out of there. I tried to get my locker open. It took two of us to pull the door open -- it was all jammed -- to get my khakis out. And I changed immediately and ran over to the quartermaster's office to get our guns to put 'em on the truck. The sergeant wouldn't open 'em. He said he didn't have orders to open it and all the ammunition was in there and everything else. And I could always recall that. And I told him, I had my rifle in my hand, the old three, and that was loaded, and I said, "Either you open it up, or I'm going to shoot."

He says, "You're going to be court marshaled."

I said, "To hell with it."

And another sergeant right behind me, he shot the lock off. We mounted all the machine guns on the truck and we took off, but we couldn't get through anything. The whole highway -- and that was King Kamehameha Highway at that time, right from Fort Shafter. I don't know what they call it today.

BF: Where were you trying to go?

HP: We were trying to go to Hickam Field. See, I was on the machine guns and our positions were at Hickam Field, to protect the searchlights battery, 'cause we were like, had units, and we were in that particular unit.

BF: Did you . . .

HP: Well, we tried to get out there and on our way down we had to go through rice paddies. We got stuck. The highway was completely jammed with people. I mean, you couldn't blame 'em. They were trying to get away from all that area in there. And they were scared.

BF: What finally happened?

HP: Well, after several, well I guess, what seemed to me like hours -- wasn't really hours -- we finally made it there. But in the meantime, while we were going down there, we were being attacked by the Japanese. I mean, there was three of us, three trucks, mounted fifty caliber machine guns on it. And they were firing at us, going after us.

BF: Were you strafed?

HP: And but we shot one down. I can't say I did it. I mean, tracers were going in, but the whole three of us were doing it. We knocked one down, it went right into a house. I remember that. It was not too far away from the highway. I can remember the women and children running out of that house. We could see that. I said, "Oh my god."

BF: Could you see the pilot?

HP: He was burnt right up in that.

BF: He didn't get out.

HP: He exploded right out of the plane. And then, another one went down, but I don't think we had anything to do with that. But we finally made our positions at Hickam Field. I never saw such disaster in my life.

BF: What did you see?

HP: Well, we seen men laying all over the place. We had to get out of the truck many times just to move bodies away from the road. Bodies burning, planes on fire. By the time we got to our position, it was all over. I mean, as far as the Japs were concerned, they already did their job. And then we stood there until about, oh I'd say, almost evening, and then we got orders now to move out and go back into Fort Shafter so that machine guns in the hills and I was on the fourth position, I remember that. And I remember this Lieutenant Tanimura -- now, he happened to be Japanese. The nicest guy you'd ever want to meet. And he says, "Peppe, son, let me tell you something." He says, "You're going to have to stay here." And he says, "There's going to be a machine gun up the hill about a hundred yards behind you. We've got orders to stop any Japanese that might come into this little channel." He says, "We understand that they're going to invade soon." And he says, "It's up to you to hold them back and if you can't," he says, "if you make one move back, the gun behind you got orders to shoot you down." In other words, we were on like a suicide mission, really.

Well, I tell you, I never saw a night in all my life like that.

BF: That's the night of the seventh?

HP: That was the night of the seventh. I could recall all night long, all you heard was firing machine guns, rifles, pistols firing. They were shooting at cacti. The guys were so panicky. They were shooting at anything that moved, really. And we kept ducking bullets. We could hear 'em winging by. And the next morning, we wondered why we didn't get any chow, and somebody went up the road and we found a jeep completely shot up. And our staff sergeant, who was our mess sergeant, tried to come up and take our food, he was killed. And I saw that, I said, "My god." And then the orders came up, anyone start firing their guns for any reason at all, they better have a damn good reason because they didn't have a good reason, they'd be court marshaled.

BF: Did you fire your weapon that night?

HP: Tell you the truth, I didn't fire it once. I fired the machine gun when I was on the truck.

BF: On the truck.

HP: But I never fired a gun that night, because I couldn't see anything to fire at. I mean, sure, I seen cacti, it looked like human beings out there under the moonlight. But in fact, it was dark. If I recall correctly, I don't think there was much of a moon out that night, it was so dark.

BF: What were the next few days like?

HP: Hell. Real hell because we had to stay up there in our positions for two days and the third day, they come up and they start building concrete and they started to say, "You're going to man this."

And they poured, actually poured bunkers up in there and we had to man a machine gun in there. And I can always remember, I went in there and I fired one round and I don't know if you know how the acoustics is in concrete. I couldn't hear for about an hour. My ears were shattered for about an hour. So we went out to the junkyard, we got cardboard and we lined the whole thing up with cardboard and you could smell the softness of the cement, it was still drying up on us. And then we were able to fire. We were up there in that position for almost a week before we decided that the Japs weren't coming back.

BF: How long did you stay in the islands after the attack?

HP: Well, I was fortunate. While I waited here, they looked up the record -- before I came into the Army, I was a professional painter. Not an artist, wallpaper and taping and painting and all the stuff like that. And I never thought that they would look up my record and they saw ladder work. And they thought, "Well, hell, this man will make a good fireman."

They put me in the Fort Shafter fire department because I had ladder work. And I always wondered why until I found out and they put me in that.

BF: So you were here a while?

HP: I was here with the fire department. I was here for almost four and a half years. The only time I've left the island was when I had some recruits, we had to teach 'em how to operate a fire truck because they were going on further, going on in the Pacific onto another island. And I had 'em for six weeks and I couldn't break 'em in and I remember the colonel was saying, "How are they doing?"

I says, "Colonel, I'm sorry. I have to be honest with you," I says, "they don't know this truck yet."

He says, "Pack your bag, you're going with 'em."

And I -- that's the only time I left the island. I never got off the ship. We went out in the Pacific and I taught them right on the deck. They had this fire truck on the deck and by the time they hit that island, they knew that

truck from A to Z. And I can't even tell you where the island was because they went by code numbers.

BF: So you were here a while, so you lived under martial law. How did that affect your life?

HP: Well, to be honest with you, the martial law didn't affect me at all. I imagine it affected the poor people in town. And I can remember going into town, I can remember these poor people out there with signs on them that says, "I'm no Jap, I'm Chinese." Now, that's how it was. And yet, some of my best friends were Japanese that were in the service. And you know, a lot of the boys here that were Japanese that formed their own regiment.

BF: How did your Japanese-American friends deal with this situation?

HP: Well, they were in the military, like I said, this Lieutenant Tanimura, he was in. In fact, he was such a nice guy that the next day, he come over and he says, "I want to send a cable gram or telegram to your folks that says that you're alive." But he says, "Only three words because," he says, "there's so many of 'em," you know, under his group.

And all I said was, "I'm okay," and we copy and that's all, and sent it out. And he paid for that.

BF: Your Japanese-American friends . . .

HP: That's right.

BF: . . . how did they deal with this . . .

HP: Well, he was . . .

BF: . . . immediate aftermath?

HP: . . . one of the lieutenants that went with that sort of group that they formed. He went with them, over in Europe. They took 'em right out of the Pacific area and put them in Europe.

BF: What is your most -- oh, I'll ask that, later. A lot of people, some people, who have survived the attack on Pearl Harbor on Oahu have some bad feelings still against the Japanese and against Japan. How about you?

HP: I had them feelings for maybe ten, fifteen years after I come out. I would refuse to buy anything made in Japan name on it. But since then, I mean, we mellowed and then we started realizing, hey, they were like us. They had to do a job. They were recruited like we were and got into the army, or whatever they were, navy, whatnot. And they fought just like we do. I seen these right here now in the hotel and I have no qualms against them at all. In fact, I even talked to them, if I could.

BF: What if you had the opportunity to talk to a Japanese survivor of the attack, let's say a pilot, would you . . .

HP: Well, I did have an experience about four days after the attack. They took me off the hill for about, oh, maybe eight or nine hours. And lieutenant says, "I want you to go up on post one," which post one, at the time, was the guard house off of Fort Shafter, at the main gate. When I went there, they had

a Japanese prisoner they got out of one of the submarines that they put up. And I saw the guy in there and he looked so pitiful laying in there. He stood there and they stripped him right down to a loin cloth, that's all they had, because they didn't want him to commit suicide in there, because they wanted to question him. And I looked at him and I says, "Oh my god. That could be me."

But I had no --- in fact, I, all I kept thinking about is god was good to me because I survived and a lot of my buddies didn't.

BF: Did you see a lot of your friends go?

HP: I saw two or three of them that were cut pretty bad. In fact, I saw one that wasn't too far away from me when they, one of the shells missed and I saw nothing but blue. And I didn't even know he was hit and I looked down and he was cut, just cut right open.

BF: Apparently a lot of U.S. shells exploded in the downtown area.

HP: Quite a few.

BF: Were you --- have an opportunity to see any of that?

HP: The only time I saw that was before we got on the truck to get out of there.

BF: So that very day . . .

HP: And that was . . . all this happened within the first hour or so.

BF: What's your most vivid memory of that day?

HP: Well, a vivid memory that sticks in my mind is that when I came back, and we had to go up into the hills, we had a movie house. And I could hear on the radio, they were saying that we didn't lose too many men, that more civilians were killed than there was army. And the officer said to me, he said, "I want you to go down there and call Lieutenant,"-- I can't remember his name now, Lieutenant Jones, I think, or something like that. Well, he was at this movie house, and I walked in there and I was shocked. They had sheets over these men that were killed. They had 'em lined up on either side of the walls of the movie house, on the aisles and down the middle, stacked five and six high there. They were dying in Tripler General Hospital, right across the way, and bringing those bodies right there.

That is vivid, lives in my memory more than anything.

BF: When you saw that . . .

HP: And they kept saying, "We only lost a few men." And I'm saying, "Oh my god, there's more than a few men there."

BF: When you saw that, how did you feel?

HP: I felt mad. I felt mad. I felt that I wanted to do something. I had to do something. I guess every one of us did at that time. I think we wanted to go into town and kill anybody that looked like a Japanese, but we got over that.

BF: You played a part in a major event in history. Has it affected your life?

HP: Well, maybe it has and hasn't. I'm one of those fellows that believe that we need defense, we need the big stick, as Teddy Roosevelt used to say. And with that, I figure we can deter something like that ever happening again. And I think we're the most fortunate country in the world right now, that we haven't had any big conflict since then. I mean, well, right, we had Korea, we've had Vietnam, but nothing like what's happened.

BF: Given that, did taking part in that day, being a part of that day, affect you from a personal standpoint, throughout your life?

HP: I can't say that it really did that deep, no. I mean, actually it would if I had a relative that was killed or something in there, but I can't -- right now, you see, we -- it's been so many years that I can't really say that.

BF: Let me ask you that same question another way. If you could somehow change history, would you put Henry Peppe back there at Fort Shafter, on December 7 or not?

HP: I think if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't want to change one iota, because I was one of those fellows that always took faith as it came. I didn't believe into volunteering anything. I felt if I had to do a job, I would do it to the best of my ability and I stuck to the Army manual.

BF: You're not sorry you were here that day.

HP: No, no, I won't say that at all. No. In fact, I still say that somebody higher than me must have been looking after me because when I was in Angel Island, California to ship over here, and the morning that they called us in and they asked -- we were going to get out. They started alphabetical order, they went from A all the way up to K, and they didn't get to L, M, N, O, P, see. And all those guys got on board ship and some of 'em I trained with, you know, some of the boys. And then, when the next day we come in, the rest of us got on board ship. We ended up in Honolulu, Hawaii, the others went to Philippine Islands. So they had it worst than we did.

BF: Taking part in the, being a part of the attack, being here that day, did it teach you anything about yourself?

HP: Yes. Yes, it certainly had. Number one, it taught me that I had more going for myself than some of my sergeants and officers. I had a level head about the whole thing, even though everything was going astray at the time. In fact, I saw some of my officers that ran around in circles, were calling out orders and they didn't know what the hell they were doing because they weren't prepared for that.

BF: What else did you learn about yourself?

HP: I learned that, well, I had the strength and the . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

BF: This Japanese airplane that you and the men and the other two trucks were firing at as you were trying to get to Hickam, tell us a little bit more about that.

HP: Well, as we were approaching, we noticed them peeling off. There was three planes up there and one started peeling off and we hollered, "It's coming down at us."

So I was on the lead truck and I started to fire and it come right down, straight at us. And I could see my tracers right at it. And then I noticed another pattern of tracers going into 'em, and another pattern. I would say within, oh, I guess, within about 500 yards of us, it blew right up. But it blew up and it circled to the right and came right down into the house. It didn't actually break up right away, but then, when it hit, then I said, "Oh my gosh." There was fire all over, every place.

BF: You saw it hit the house.

HP: It hit the house, right on the roof. I remember that. I remember that part of the roof went down and then we're seeing these people coming out. I remember this woman carrying a little baby in her arms.

BF: Was she and the baby all right?

HP: Yes, they got out alive. There was three of 'em. There was a little boy too. I remember the little boy running right alongside of his mother, I guess. I assume it was his mother, I don't know.

BF: Can you pinpoint the location of the house?

HP: It was about 150 feet off the King Kameha [sic] Highway, on . . .

BF: King Kamehameha Highway.

HP: King Kamehameha Highway, yeah.

BF: How close to Hickam? How much further was it from Hickam?

HP: I would say that it was no more than about a quarter of mile then we were in Hickam Field. There was a certain amount of homes that were built out there, I imagine for the employees that worked in the base. They weren't on the base . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

BF: Were you wounded at all?

HP: Yeah, I was hit and I didn't realize I was hit. And all of a sudden, they said, "You're bleeding."

And I says, "Where?"

And they showed me. And I said, oh, it's nothing. He said, "You better get to the doctors."

BF: Where were you hit?

HP: I didn't go to the doc -- I was hit right on the groin, right here.

BF: On the thigh.

HP: Right. I still got a scar there.

BF: What hit you?

HP: I don't know. Shrapnel, something, because when they were firing from that plane, it could have been something from the plane, because I didn't even realize until I got there -- I felt wet, I felt my side of my pants wet.

BF: At what point, when you were in the truck or before?

HP: I was in the truck when I felt the first sting that I . . . and I stood there all day with that wound, until that night and then I went into the Tripler General Hospital and all they did was wash the wound out and I saw more people that were being stitched up that needed more help than me, and I said, "Don't worry about it." I even bandaged my own leg and went back out again, and went up in the hills.

BF: Any other little gems like that?

HP: (Chuckles) You call them gems? (Chuckles) I didn't call -- because when you're fighting for your life, you don't even think . . .

BF: No, I know.

HP: . . . that was nothing! Forty-five years later, I could . . . . You know, I don't know, I don't know if I should say this or not, but . . .

BF: Well, say it.

HP: You'd better censor it. I was a married man when I went in. And I never patronized these, what they call cat houses here. And if it wasn't for those women, they're called call girls today, prostitutes and whatnot, I would say that half of them were working in the operating room, 'cause that's when I went in there and I was told by some of the nurses that I knew that if it wasn't for them, they couldn't handle it. They were working in there with blood running out there, they said like water, really. And they just stood right there. I think they were the only ones could handle something like that. And I always remember that, too. And my god, they, they were heroines and no one even gave 'em any credit at all.

BF: And when the job was done, they went back to Hotel Street?

HP: They went right back to Hotel Street. That's right. Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

#168 HENRY PEPPE: ARMY MAN AT FORT SHAFTER

Bart Fredo: . . . and it was conducted on December 3, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel at about seven o'clock or so in the evening. Mr. Peppe now lives in Tucson, Arizona. My name is Bart Fredo and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders, who is with the National Park Service.

Mr. Peppe, let me start by asking you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Henry Peppe: My name is Henry Peppe and I lived in Barnbrook, New Jersey, which is a small town of about 10,000 people.

BF: What branch of the service were you in? What was your rank and job?

HP: Well, when I came into the service, I thought I was going to go into the infantry, but I ended up in the coast artillery.

BF: This is Army, then?

HP: Army, United States Army.

BF: When did you come to Hawaii?

HP: I came to Hawaii in August of 1941.

BF: So just a couple of months before the attack?

HP: That's right.

BF: Where were you assigned?

HP: I was assigned to Fort Shafter with the end battery, 64th coast artillery.

BF: Let me take you to the morning of the attack, early that morning, before you realized it was an attack. What were you doing?

HP: Well, that morning, I went up, as I always do on Sunday morning, to go to church services. We had a chapel up on the hill, in Fort Shafter. And I asked two of my buddies if they wanted to go and either of one of them said, "Nah, this is my day off. You and so-and-so go," whatever his name was. So the both of us, we just took off. And we put on our civvies because we're both off that day.

BF: Civilian clothes.

HP: That's correct. And we went into church. But it was around, I'd say, about twenty minutes to eight, when we started walking. Of course, we had quite a walk to walk up there. By the time we got up there, it was about eight minutes to eight when all heck broke loose. We looked down towards Pearl Harbor, we could see the blasting, bombing, whatever you want to call it.

BF: You could see impact?

HP: We could see it very, very clear because it was so -- we were up high! And we thought maybe it was a maneuver or something, because we weren't on the alert. And at the time when I saw all that, I saw a plane get hit, and I said, "Oh my god, don't tell me," because I was a machine gunner and we used to shoot at targets and once in a while we hit the plane.

BF: Where was this plane that you saw hit?

HP: We saw it over at Hickam, somewhere, in that area. We could see it down there, but it was in the vicinity between Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field.

BF: You saw it go down?

HP: I saw it go down in flames. We thought they were one of ours, you know.

BF: What happened where you were?

HP: Well, where I was at the particular time, people were going into the church -- officers, women.

BF: Were they aware of what was happening?

HP: They were like me. I mean, we were all puzzled. We didn't know what was going on.

BF: You still weren't sure what was going on?

HP: I really didn't know. I tell you, I was wondering what was going on myself. And then all of a sudden, Roy says to me, "Peppe, let's go. It's almost eight o'clock!" So we ran up the steps and went into the chapel.

BF: And then what happened?

HP: Well, while we were in the chapel, we could hear the explosions in the background. And our priest at the time was named Connors, I believe it was, Father Connors, Catholic priest -- I was a Catholic. And I imagined he realized there was something going on, but we were all stunned, really. And all of a sudden -- I'll say within about ten minutes of the Mass was going on -- and all of a sudden an awful explosion right behind the church. And the chandelier up on top there just shook right over me and I'm looking up and going, "Oh wow," you know, "this is something else."

Just about that time, I turned and I looked in the back and there was officers' wives, children crying, standing in the back of the church. And then an officer walks in, he walks right by, and right in front of me was Colonel Shea, which was our commanding officer in that Fort Shafter. And I heard him whisper, and he said, 'Colonel, we're being attacked by the Japs."

And I went -- I was stunned. He got up, walked right out. Went to his captain. I stood there and waited until communion was served, which was right, almost instantly. The priest knew and he just gave us communion and we just went out. I walked right out that door and went right out there and there was a sergeant there. I don't recall if it was my sergeant or with K battery, because I was in M battery. And I could recall him saying, "Get out of them civvies, get into khakis. The Japs are boom, they're bombing us. They're in ODs," in olive drab uniforms, you know. "And go and put on the olive drabs on."

Well I started to walk across this parade field, which I would say was about 300 yards and it was palm trees.

BF: This is the parade field at Fort Shafter?

HP: Right in front of the chapel, not too far down. And all of a sudden I looked up, and there's a plane, he's Japanese. And they come down and it was one right after another. And they come down and they were firing. How they hit me, I don't know, there was three or four of us. They were actually trying to hit the people who were coming out of church.

BF: The rounds were hitting all around you?

HP: Right. You could see it popping up in front of us. We dived for the trees, but I started to run. At first, I was stunned. I couldn't run when they told me to go, go. But then, after that, I ran. And I remember remarking, I'll always remember this until the day I die, I says, "I could have been Jesse Owens." I got under the trees.

And there was another plane come circling around. And he started doing the same thing.

BF: Strafed you?

HP: So we took off for our barracks, and I got there. I could recall going into my tent -- I didn't have a barracks then, I had a tent -- and my locker was down, it was all smashed. It was hit with something, shrapnel or whatever. There was blood all over the floor from some of the guys that never made it out of there. I tried to get my locker open. It took two of us to pull the door open -- it was all jammed -- to get my khakis out. And I changed immediately and ran over to the quartermaster's office to get our guns to put 'em on the truck. The sergeant wouldn't open 'em. He said he didn't have orders to open it and all the ammunition was in there and everything else. And I could always recall that. And I told him, I had my rifle in my hand, the old three, and that was loaded, and I said, "Either you open it up, or I'm going to shoot."

He says, "You're going to be court marshaled."

I said, "To hell with it."

And another sergeant right behind me, he shot the lock off. We mounted all the machine guns on the truck and we took off, but we couldn't get through anything. The whole highway -- and that was King Kamehameha Highway at that time, right from Fort Shafter. I don't know what they call it today.

BF: Where were you trying to go?

HP: We were trying to go to Hickam Field. See, I was on the machine guns and our positions were at Hickam Field, to protect the searchlights battery, 'cause we were like, had units, and we were in that particular unit.

BF: Did you . . .

HP: Well, we tried to get out there and on our way down we had to go through rice paddies. We got stuck. The highway was completely jammed with people. I mean, you couldn't blame 'em. They were trying to get away from all that area in there. And they were scared.

BF: What finally happened?

HP: Well, after several, well I guess, what seemed to me like hours -- wasn't really hours -- we finally made it there. But in the meantime, while we were going down there, we were being attacked by the Japanese. I mean, there was three of us, three trucks, mounted fifty caliber machine guns on it. And they were firing at us, going after us.

BF: Were you strafed?

HP: And but we shot one down. I can't say I did it. I mean, tracers were going in, but the whole three of us were doing it. We knocked one down, it went right into a house. I remember that. It was not too far away from the highway. I can remember the women and children running out of that house. We could see that. I said, "Oh my god."

BF: Could you see the pilot?

HP: He was burnt right up in that.

BF: He didn't get out.

HP: He exploded right out of the plane. And then, another one went down, but I don't think we had anything to do with that. But we finally made our positions at Hickam Field. I never saw such disaster in my life.

BF: What did you see?

HP: Well, we seen men laying all over the place. We had to get out of the truck many times just to move bodies away from the road. Bodies burning, planes on fire. By the time we got to our position, it was all over. I mean, as far as the Japs were concerned, they already did their job. And then we stood there until about, oh I'd say, almost evening, and then we got orders now to move out and go back into Fort Shafter so that machine guns in the hills and I was on the fourth position, I remember that. And I remember this Lieutenant Tanimura -- now, he happened to be Japanese. The nicest guy you'd ever want to meet. And he says, "Peppe, son, let me tell you something." He says, "You're going to have to stay here." And he says, "There's going to be a machine gun up the hill about a hundred yards behind you. We've got orders to stop any Japanese that might come into this little channel." He says, "We understand that they're going to invade soon." And he says, "It's up to you to hold them back and if you can't," he says, "if you make one move back, the gun behind you got orders to shoot you down." In other words, we were on like a suicide mission, really.

Well, I tell you, I never saw a night in all my life like that.

BF: That's the night of the seventh?

HP: That was the night of the seventh. I could recall all night long, all you heard was firing machine guns, rifles, pistols firing. They were shooting at cacti. The guys were so panicky. They were shooting at anything that moved, really. And we kept ducking bullets. We could hear 'em winging by. And the next morning, we wondered why we didn't get any chow, and somebody went up the road and we found a jeep completely shot up. And our staff sergeant, who was our mess sergeant, tried to come up and take our food, he was killed. And I saw that, I said, "My god." And then the orders came up, anyone start firing their guns for any reason at all, they better have a damn good reason because they didn't have a good reason, they'd be court marshaled.

BF: Did you fire your weapon that night?

HP: Tell you the truth, I didn't fire it once. I fired the machine gun when I was on the truck.

BF: On the truck.

HP: But I never fired a gun that night, because I couldn't see anything to fire at. I mean, sure, I seen cacti, it looked like human beings out there under the moonlight. But in fact, it was dark. If I recall correctly, I don't think there was much of a moon out that night, it was so dark.

BF: What were the next few days like?

HP: Hell. Real hell because we had to stay up there in our positions for two days and the third day, they come up and they start building concrete and they started to say, "You're going to man this."

And they poured, actually poured bunkers up in there and we had to man a machine gun in there. And I can always remember, I went in there and I fired one round and I don't know if you know how the acoustics is in concrete. I couldn't hear for about an hour. My ears were shattered for about an hour. So we went out to the junk yard, we got cardboard and we lined the whole thing up with cardboard and you could smell the softness of the cement, it was still drying up on us. And then we were able to fire. We were up there in that position for almost a week before we decided that the Japs weren't coming back.

BF: How long did you stay in the islands after the attack?

HP: Well, I was fortunate. While I waited here, they looked up the record -- before I came into the Army, I was a

professional painter. Not an artist, wallpaper and taping and painting and all the stuff like that. And I never thought that they would look up my record and they saw ladder work. And they thought, "Well, hell, this man will make a good fireman."

They put me in the Fort Shafter fire department because I had ladder work. And I always wondered why until I found out and they put me in that.

BF: So you were here a while?

HP: I was here with the fire department. I was here for almost four and a half years. The only time I've left the island was when I had some recruits, we had to teach 'em how to operate a fire truck because they were going on further, going on in the Pacific onto another island. And I had 'em for six weeks and I couldn't break 'em in and I remember the colonel was saying, "How are they doing?"

I says, "Colonel, I'm sorry. I have to be honest with you," I says, "they don't know this truck yet."

He says, "Pack your bag, you're going with 'em."

And I -- that's the only time I left the island. I never got off the ship. We went out in the Pacific and I taught them right on the deck. They had this fire truck on the deck and by the time they hit that island, they knew that truck from A to Z. And I can't even tell you where the island was because they went by code numbers.

BF: So you were here a while, so you lived under martial law. How did that affect your life?

HP: Well, to be honest with you, the martial law didn't affect me at all. I imagine it affected the poor people in town. And I can remember going into town, I can remember these poor people out there with signs on them that says, "I'm no Jap, I'm Chinese." Now, that's how it was. And yet, some of my best friends were Japanese that were in the service. And you know, a lot of the boys here that were Japanese that formed their own regiment.

BF: How did your Japanese-American friends deal with this situation?

HP: Well, they were in the military, like I said, this Lieutenant Tanimura, he was in. In fact, he was such a nice guy that the next day, he come over and he says, "I want to send a cable gram or telegram to your folks that says that you're alive." But he says, "Only three words because," he says, "there's so many of 'em," you know, under his group.

And all I said was, "I'm okay," and we copy and that's all, and sent it out. And he paid for that.

BF: Your Japanese-American friends . . .

HP: That's right.

BF: . . . how did they deal with this . . .

HP: Well, he was . . .

BF: . . . immediate aftermath?

HP: . . . one of the lieutenants that went with that sort of group that they formed. He went with them, over in Europe. They took 'em right out of the Pacific area and put them in Europe.

BF: What is your most -- oh, I'll ask that, later. A lot of people, some people, who have survived the attack on Pearl Harbor on Oahu have some bad feelings still against the Japanese and against Japan. How about you?

HP: I had them feelings for maybe ten, fifteen years after I come out. I would refuse to buy anything made in Japan

name on it. But since then, I mean, we mellowed and then we started realizing, hey, they were like us. They had to do a job. They were recruited like we were and got into the army, or whatever they were, navy, whatnot. And they fought just like we do. I seen these right here now in the hotel and I have no qualms against them at all. In fact, I even talked to them, if I could.

BF: What if you had the opportunity to talk to a Japanese survivor of the attack, let's say a pilot, would you . . .

HP: Well, I did have an experience about four days after the attack. They took me off the hill for about, oh, maybe eight or nine hours. And lieutenant says, "I want you to go up on post one," which post one, at the time, was the guard house off of Fort Shafter, at the main gate. When I went there, they had a Japanese prisoner they got out of one of the submarines that they put up. And I saw the guy in there and he looked so pitiful laying in there. He stood there and they stripped him right down to a loin cloth, that's all they had, because they didn't want him to commit suicide in there, because they wanted to question him. And I looked at him and I says, "Oh my god. That could be me."

But I had no --- in fact, I, all I kept thinking about is god was good to me because I survived and a lot of my buddies didn't.

BF: Did you see a lot of your friends go?

HP: I saw two or three of them that were cut pretty bad. In fact, I saw one that wasn't too far away from me when they, one of the shells missed and I saw nothing but blue. And I didn't even know he was hit and I looked down and he was cut, just cut right open.

BF: Apparently a lot of U.S. shells exploded in the downtown area.

HP: Quite a few.

BF: Were you --- have an opportunity to see any of that?

HP: The only time I saw that was before we got on the truck to get out of there.

BF: So that very day . . .

HP: And that was . . . all this happened within the first hour or so.

BF: What's your most vivid memory of that day?

HP: Well, a vivid memory that sticks in my mind is that when I came back, and we had to go up into the hills, we had a movie house. And I could hear on the radio, they were saying that we didn't lose too many men, that more civilians were killed than there was army. And the officer said to me, he said, "I want you to go down there and call Lieutenant,"-- I can't remember his name now, Lieutenant Jones, I think, or something like that. Well, he was at this movie house, and I walked in there and I was shocked. They had sheets over these men that were killed. They had 'em lined up on either side of the walls of the movie house, on the aisles and down the middle, stacked five and six high there. They were dying in Tripler General Hospital, right across the way, and bringing those bodies right there.

That is vivid, lives in my memory more than anything.

BF: When you saw that . . .

HP: And they kept saying, "We only lost a few men." And I'm saying, "Oh my god, there's more than a few men there."

BF: When you saw that, how did you feel?

HP: I felt mad. I felt mad. I felt that I wanted to do something. I had to do something. I guess every one of us did at that time. I think we wanted to go into town and kill anybody that looked like a Japanese, but we got over that.

BF: You played a part in a major event in history. Has it affected your life?

HP: Well, maybe it has and hasn't. I'm one of those fellows that believe that we need defense, we need the big stick, as Teddy Roosevelt used to say. And with that, I figure we can deter something like that ever happening again. And I think we're the most fortunate country in the world right now, that we haven't had any big conflict since then. I mean, well, right, we had Korea, we've had Vietnam, but nothing like what's happened.

BF: Given that, did taking part in that day, being a part of that day, affect you from a personal standpoint, throughout your life?

HP: I can't say that it really did that deep, no. I mean, actually it would if I had a relative that was killed or something in there, but I can't -- right now, you see, we -- it's been so many years that I can't really say that.

BF: Let me ask you that same question another way. If you could somehow change history, would you put Henry Peppe back there at Fort Shafter, on December 7 or not?

HP: I think if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't want to change one iota, because I was one of those fellows that always took faith as it came. I didn't believe into volunteering anything. I felt if I had to do a job, I would do it to the best of my ability and I stuck to the Army manual.

BF: You're not sorry you were here that day.

HP: No, no, I won't say that at all. No. In fact, I still say that somebody higher than me must have been looking after me because when I was in Angel Island, California to ship over here, and the morning that they called us in and they asked -- we were going to get out. They started alphabetical order, they went from A all the way up to K, and they didn't get to L, M, N, O, P, see. And all those guys got on board ship and some of 'em I trained with, you know, some of the boys. And then, when the next day we come in, the rest of us got on board ship. We ended up in Honolulu, Hawaii, the others went to Philippine Islands. So they had it worst than we did.

BF: Taking part in the, being a part of the attack, being here that day, did it teach you anything about yourself?

HP: Yes. Yes, it certainly had. Number one, it taught me that I had more going for myself than some of my sergeants and officers. I had a level head about the whole thing, even though everything was going astray at the time. In fact, I saw some of my officers that ran around in circles, were calling out orders and they didn't know what the hell they were doing because they weren't prepared for that.

BF: What else did you learn about yourself?

HP: I learned that, well, I had the strength and the . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

BF: This Japanese airplane that you and the men and the other two trucks were firing at as you were trying to get to Hickam, tell us a little bit more about that.

HP: Well, as we were approaching, we noticed them peeling off. There was three planes up there and one started peeling off and we hollered, "It's coming down at us."

So I was on the lead truck and I started to fire and it come right down, straight at us. And I could see my tracers right at it. And then I noticed another pattern of tracers going into 'em, and another pattern. I would say within, oh, I guess, within about 500 yards of us, it blew right up. But it blew up and it circled to the right and came right down

into the house. It didn't actually break up right away, but then, when it hit, then I said, "Oh my gosh." There was fire all over, every place.

BF: You saw it hit the house.

HP: It hit the house, right on the roof. I remember that. I remember that part of the roof went down and then we're seeing these people coming out. I remember this woman carrying a little baby in her arms.

BF: Was she and the baby all right?

HP: Yes, they got out alive. There was three of 'em. There was a little boy too. I remember the little boy running right alongside of his mother, I guess. I assume it was his mother, I don't know.

BF: Can you pinpoint the location of the house?

HP: It was about 150 feet off the King Kameha [sic] Highway, on . . .

BF: King Kamehameha Highway.

HP: King Kamehameha Highway, yeah.

BF: How close to Hickam? How much further was it from Hickam?

HP: I would say that it was no more than about a quarter of mile then we were in Hickam Field. There was a certain amount of homes that were built out there, I imagine for the employees that worked in the base. They weren't on the base . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

BF: Were you wounded at all?

HP: Yeah, I was hit and I didn't realize I was hit. And all of a sudden, they said, "You're bleeding."

And I says, "Where?"

And they showed me. And I said, oh, it's nothing. He said, "You better get to the doctors."

BF: Where were you hit?

HP: I didn't go to the doc -- I was hit right on the groin, right here.

BF: On the thigh.

HP: Right. I still got a scar there.

BF: What hit you?

HP: I don't know. Shrapnel, something, because when they were firing from that plane, it could have been something from the plane, because I didn't even realize until I got there -- I felt wet, I felt my side of my pants wet.

BF: At what point, when you were in the truck or before?

HP: I was in the truck when I felt the first sting that I . . . and I stood there all day with that wound, until that night and then I went into the Tripler General Hospital and all they did was wash the wound out and I saw more people that

were being stitched up that needed more help than me, and I said, "Don't worry about it." I even bandaged my own leg and went back out again, and went up in the hills.

BF: Any other little gems like that?

HP: (Chuckles) You call them gems? (Chuckles) I didn't call -- because when you're fighting for your life, you don't even think . . .

BF: No, I know.

HP: . . . that was nothing! Forty-five years later, I could . . . . You know, I don't know, I don't know if I should say this or not, but . . .

BF: Well, say it.

HP: You'd better censor it. I was a married man when I went in. And I never patronized these, what they call cat houses here. And if it wasn't for those women, they're called call girls today, prostitutes and whatnot, I would say that half of them were working in the operating room, 'cause that's when I went in there and I was told by some of the nurses that I knew that if it wasn't for them, they couldn't handle it. They were working in there with blood running out there, they said like water, really. And they just stood right there. I think they were the only ones could handle something like that. And I always remember that, too. And my god, they, they were heroines and no one even gave 'em any credit at all.

BF: And when the job was done, they went back to Hotel Street?

HP: They went right back to Hotel Street. That's right. Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

#169 ORAN DANIEL SMITH: NAVY CORPSMAN AT EWA

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. Let me slate this. The following interview is with Oran Daniel Smith. It was conducted on December 3, 1986 here at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, and it is about 7:30 in the evening. Mr. Smith now lives in Tucson, Arizona. I'm doing the interview, my name is Bart Fredo, and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders, who's with the National Park Service.

First of all, let me ask you to give us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Oran Daniel Smith (OS): My name is Oran Daniel Smith and I, well, originally came from Girard, Pennsylvania.

BF: Let me stop. Don't look at anybody but me.

OS: Okay.

BF: Don't look over at her or anyone, and we'll start again. This is . . . we're still rolling?

--: Still rolling.

BF: Okay, again, why don't you tell me who you are and where you were from back then.

OS: My name is Oran Daniel Smith and I come from Girard, Pennsylvania.

BF: What branch of the service were you in?

OS: U.S. Navy.

BF: What was your job?

OS: I was a, well, a Pharmacist's aide [*Mate*]. Of course, the Marines call 'em corpsmen.

BF: So you were assigned to the Marines?

OS: Yeah.

BF: When did you come over to Hawaii?

OS: Of course, I was on a cruiser before then. And of course, well, we came over in early '40, I think. Of course, we went down to South America, and then we came back to the islands, and then I got transferred to the Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa. That was in May, I think, of '41.

BF: By the way, what's your rank? I don't think I asked you that.

OS: Well, it was Pharmacist Mate Second Class, at the time.

BF: Let's go to the morning of December 7, '41. Early in the morning, before the attack, what are you doing?

OS: We'd been out all night and sleeping on the beach at Waikiki.

BF: This is on liberty?

OS: We were on liberty and I had the duty that Sunday, so we missed the last bus and we slept on the beach, so we caught the first bus, it was about 5:30 in the morning, back to Ewa. Then I think I laid down about a half hour before, you know, colors went and well, then I got up and went outside and, well, colors was going. We were standing outside when the attack came. We could see those planes coming in.

BF: What did the planes -- the first thing you were aware of were the planes?

OS: Yeah.

BF: What did you see?

OS: Well, they were, you know, they were all painted black. They were real dark. Then, of course, you know the impression everybody got was, you know, they were our own planes, you know, having a little fun out there.

BF: How many did you see?

OS: Oh gosh, I don't know. I think when they came over -- you know, I think they flew over before they started shooting. Then they, you know, they swept around and came back. And then, when they started firing, then all our planes started burning, that's when we realized something was going on pretty badly. But I mean, nobody did anything. I mean it was just standing there, watching, until -- well, when the plane, you know, our duty is -- anything like that happens, the fellows laying the fire trucks have got to go out on the line. So that's when we, the ambulance driver and myself, went out on the line. And of course, there wasn't anybody out. There wasn't soul out there but of course, we got out. Well then, they were swinging around for another run, you know, that's when I got shot (chuckles) in the leg and we both dove under the ambulance, see.

BF: You were with one other person?

OS: Yeah. Yeah. I can't think of his name and I never saw him again after that. I don't know where he went.

BF: So you took a round through the leg?

OS: Yeah.

BF: What happened to you then?

OS: Well, we dove under the ambulance and stayed there until they, you know, were through with their strafing, you know. Of course, I don't know, it was -- then they went around about three or four times, I think. You know, they made a circle and came back with a strafing run.

BF: Did they drop any bombs?

OS: Not then. They did when they came back the second time, was when they dropped some.

BF: About how long after these planes strafed did the other planes come and drop bombs?

OS: God, that's what I was always trying to realize. I know I was . . . well, it must have been fifteen minutes. I'm sure it was just about there.

BF: You obviously didn't spend the rest of the war under that ambulance. What happened to you next?

OS: Well, of course we drove back. You know, we were all sleeping in tents. You know, the mess hall and the payoff and everything was tents. And of course the sick bay was a tent. Of course, we didn't have any facilities for operations or anything. We were sent down to the Navy hospital.

BF: So where did you go? You got a bullet wound in the leg.

OS: Well, the ambulance had four flat tires, so we managed to get back to the sick bay with her. Well, then the wounded started coming. There wasn't any bad wounds. It was mostly little penetrating wounds in the arms and legs and the extremities and so forth. Of course, the second attack is when they got most of the bad ones. And the second one is when, well, they had several killed and most of the wounded. They had some guts shot. Well, we didn't have any facilities to take care of 'em. So the ones that were really serious afterwards, oh, we took them down to the Navy hospital. Of course, you know what the Navy hospital was like. It was so --- people laying all over the place, trying to get in.

BF: Was your wound treated out there at the Ewa [*Marine Corps Air*] Station?

OS: Well, actually, they didn't do nothing about it, with all the wait, I mean, I never even thought of it. Didn't even hurt.

BF: So, in other words, while you have this wound, you were working as a corpsmen?

OS: Well, yeah. I mean, in fact, I didn't, you know, I never felt it. I mean, of course, there was blood on my pants leg and all that. But, heck, I didn't even hardly notice it until the colonel comes and says, "Geez, where'd you get that," you know.

Of course, then we --- hold on. But then I --- we had a guy that was gut shot and the hospital couldn't take any more, so we went over to a plantation hospital at Ewa. You know, there's a little town in Ewa there? And there's a little plantation hospital and I had to go over there for three days to take care of him.

But of course, I had a shot of tetanus. The doctor finally says, "Well, you're gonna get a shot of tetanus." And, oh god, that made me so sick, I couldn't hardly move.

So I went over there with him and of course that wore off about the next morning. I was all right. Of course, I stayed over there three days with him and he finally died, you know.

BF: You were taking care of this . . .

OS: Yeah.

BF: . . . it was a Marine?

OS: Well, this Marines corporal, yeah. So then I came back to the base and everything went along. I mean, that's when the Navy started moving in and they, geez, they built all permanent buildings and new dispensary with an operating room. Oh god, it was really nice.

And then we left in February and went down to the New Hebrides.

BF: While you were here, in those first few days after the attack, you spent those three days, as you said, at this little plantation hospital in Ewa. When you did go back to the Ewa station, what -- the Navy's coming in, but what did the place look like? Still wreckage all over the place?

OS: No, they had cleaned up pretty well. I was surprised. I mean, you thought there was a disaster. I mean, you thought, you know, it was a calamity, but it didn't seem that -- everything was getting back to normal and everything. They got new planes were coming in and the ones, you know, I'm sure they repaired some of those planes. And actually, I don't know what they did with the ones that were destroyed. I mean it seemed like it was all cleared up by the time I got there.

BF: Just in a short period of time?

OS: Oh yeah.

BF: Did you ever have an opportunity to go over to Pearl Harbor and see Battleship Row and what happened?

OS: Oh yeah.

BF: When did you get over there?

OS: Oh gee, we had to get onto the Navy yard. I mean, we took some paces down there. We must have been about four or five days after. And we had to take two guys, you know, from the Naval hospital, that's when we saw all that.

BF: What was your reaction when you saw that?

OS: Jesus! Christ, I couldn't believe it. (Chuckles) I never saw anything like that.

BF: You had --- even though, of course, you knew it had been bombed, you had no idea it was that bad?

OS: Well, we could see the smoke rolling up, you know, from where we were. And of course, you didn't know the extent of it. That's the thing, you know, you never want to have. Just --- we had one guy that the FBI, I think, called up there. You know, it got tense, everything was tense. We had a gate that looked like a cow pasture, you know, a gate for a cow pasture. When they called up the gate and says, "Get this guy." And he was a Marine sergeant. They just says, "Get him."

So all of a sudden, this was after the second attack, these Marines brought this guy in. He was on the bumper of a car. I says, "Jesus, what are you doing, what are you putting him on a bumper for? Let's get him off there."

They wouldn't touch him. And he had ten bullet holes in his head. Well they got him all right, they went out and shot him.

BF: Again, who was this man?

OS: He was a Marine sergeant.

BF: Why did they shoot him?

OS: Well, the FBI called up and says to get him. That's all they said. What they found out later, that his father was a Nazi and they'd been watching his mail for months, you know. And they thought there was a connection, he might have been a spy. I don't think he ever was. He was a real nice guy, real nice friendly sergeant. But, boy, when he come in, he had -- did you ever see a guy shot in the head that you know, some of them come out and some don't and there's big knots all over his head. But you know, those Marines wouldn't touch him. You know, they hated him so much, just because they thought he was, you know, when they told him that.

BF: What's your most vivid memory of that day of the attack? What do you remember the most?

OS: Well, that the -- actually the -- naturally the surprise. I mean, good lord, you can't imagine anything like . . . . You know, everything was running smooth. Everybody was intent, there was no . . . you know, the only excitement out there was in September and October, everything started happening. Everything was smooth before that. And then they started sending squadrons to Wake and Midway. I almost got on Wake because, you know, somebody had to go with the squadron and this guy was married, so he said, "Well, you know, I don't have my family here. I ought to go out there." And of course, he was captain, which was -- I never did see him again. I don't know what ever happened to him.

BF: So surprise was the thing that you remember the most?

OS: Oh yeah. I mean, just looking up there, I mean, what are these things coming over?

BF: Did you notice anyone at the Ewa station shooting back at these attacking planes?

OS: The second time. First, hell, there wasn't anybody out there. Nobody had any weapons. Of course, then, after the first one, they, geez, I was issued a forty-five and I carried that for twenty years, you know. Never did turn it in.

BF: The second time, though, the Marines were then firing back?

OS: Then they were firing back with rifles. One guy was -- well, two or three of 'em were firing back with a little machine gun, an SBD.

BF: SBD, what's that?

OS: Well, dive bomber.

BF: Firing from the plane, but sitting on the runway?

OS: Yeah, sitting on the run-- the plane was damaged, but he got in the back, you know, there's a two seater and he got in the back and was firing. You see, that's the difference between a ship and a base. A ship can get into action in

fifteen seconds, boy, you're ready to go, but a base is -- I never realized the difference until I was out there. You just don't fight like you do with a ship.

BF: Did you see any acts of heroism that day?

OS: Well, the thing is, after that, I was mostly in the dispensary taking care of wounds and stuff, and I didn't see actually what was going on out on the line or something. For as far as heroism, I don't know. I didn't actually see any.

BF: In the time that you were here, after the attack, as you know, martial law was in effect. Did that affect your life in any way?

OS: I had to wear a gas mask, the only thing that I had to do.

BF: I mean, for example, did it restrict your going on liberty or anything like that?

OS: Well, we had just bought a car. I just bought a new suit. We had a couple of girls we were going with and then this happened, and that ended the whole thing.

BF: This "we" you're talking about is a buddy of yours?

OS: Yeah, mm hm.

BF: So martial law didn't really affect your life one way or the other?

OS: No. Of course, we didn't stick around too much then. I mean, we left right after that. And then we didn't come back 'til, gee, I don't know.

BF: Long time.

OS: Well, we didn't come back. And we were in Guadalcanal but we didn't come back, we went right back to San Diego when we left there. And I didn't come back here 'til '45, I think, or something like that -- '44, I don't know. I gotta go.

BF: Just a couple more questions. One --- some people who lived through the attack still have some bad feelings towards Japan, towards the Japanese. How do you feel?

OS: I like 'em. Jesus, wherever we had -- Japanese were our barbers, they were our tailors, they were the ones that worked in the store. They were all nice people. I don't know.

BF: I guess I was thinking more in terms of Japanese from Japan, Japanese nationals. Do you have any negative feelings towards them? Some people do.

OS: Well, you know the *NORTH CAROLINA* just had a reunion there in the -- you know, the Battleship *NORTH CAROLINA*? And they invited, they got torpedoes out there in the middle, I mean the South Pacific. They invited four of the survivors of the submarine that, you know, shot the torpedo out. And they were over here in May, I think, or it was June. I forget. See, it's all, I mean, it's all smoothed over now. They got along and they really enjoyed each other.

BF: So, for example, if you were to talk to one of those pilots who attacked the . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#170 KARL A.JOHNSON: USS *UTAH*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay, let me slate this. The following interview is with Karl Johnson and is being conducted on December 3, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. It is about 7:45 in the evening. Mr. Johnson now lives in Livermore, California. My name is Bart Fredo, I'm doing the interview and also with me is Dan Martinez, who's a historian with the National Park Service.

Let me start off, Mr. Johnson, by asking you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Karl Albert Johnson (KJ): All right. My name is Karl Albert Johnson. I was born in Burlington, Iowa, which is on the Mississippi River in the southern part of the state of Iowa.

BF: What branch of the service were you in?

KJ: I went in the Navy.

BF: What was your job and rank?

KJ: I was Seaman [*First Class*], leading seaman of the Second Division, at that time. And one of my jobs was helmsman aboard the *UTAH*.

BF: You were aboard the battleship, turned into a target ship, *UTAH*.

KJ: Right.

BF: Let's go back to that morning, the December seventh attack. Before this attack started, what were you doing?

KJ: I was reading the Sunday newspaper in a metal chair, tilted back against the set of lockers on the starboard side on the second deck of the ship.

BF: You were topside?

KJ: No, I was two decks down.

BF: When did you first realize something out of the ordinary was happening?

KJ: Well, the first notice, a friend of mine was laying on the deck writing a letter and he said, "Hey, Cale, something happened up forward."

And I said, "Oh, you're crazy, Jigger."

And he said, "No, I felt the ship shake."

But I didn't. And then all of a sudden, we took the first torpedo and -- excuse me (drinking) -- I stood up and started over these, towards the ladders and the second torpedo hit us, maybe twenty, thirty seconds later and I was knocked over and I landed on my jaw and I busted sixteen of my teeth. I didn't know at the time.

About that time, someone hollered, "Japanese air raid, honest to god."

I thought a heavy bomber like a B-17 or B-24. I thought the ship would rise up, rock, settle down, 'cause I thought it was a near miss. However, I

started down to shut watertight compartment because we'd been wide open, getting ready for an INSERV inspection, and someone stopped me. I turned around and came back up, went up the ladder to the next deck. Went aft a way up the ladder 'til I was up topside, in the aft part of the ship.

BF: How long was it from the time of that first hit, to the time you managed to get topside? Was it very long?

KJ: Oh, I doubt if it was more than a minute and a half. It seemed rather long, but I think we were moving pretty rapidly.

BF: Were you feeling your jaw at that point?

KJ: No, I had spit out several pieces of teeth but -- it stunned me for a minute, but I'd done a lot of boxing and taken some pretty good punches. No, I wasn't feeling any pain.

BF: So you get topside, what do you see?

KJ: The first thing I saw was a plane swooping low overhead, coming from my left, which would be the Ford Island, and a huge column of black smoke off to my left, which I assume must have been the *ARIZONA*.

BF: That's on the other side of Ford Island from where the *UTAH* is.

KJ: On the opposite side.

BF: And what else did you see?

KJ: Well, I did see the *TANGIER*, the ship immediately astern of us, firing . .

BF: That's a seaplane tender?

KJ: Mm hm, a seaplane tender -- firing a gun. And then I was so busy occupied getting up to the side of the ship and down where I can jump into the water that I didn't see anything right at that time.

BF: Well then, what was happening to the *UTAH* at this point when you just reached deck?

KJ: Well, she was already beginning to list outboard port side enough of an angle that I put my hands down, I walked up the covered deck much like an animal or a dog would walk up, on my hands and feet. It was easier to walk up that way than try to stand erect.

BF: At this point, you knew the ship was going to go down?

KJ: I knew she was going to go down before I ever got topside. We were wide open like a bathtub.

BF: Because you were ready for this inspection?

KJ: Mm hm.

BF: So what happened to you next? You were . . .

KJ: Well, I slid down the side of the ship, to the blister, dove in, swam over to a whaleboat that was tied up by the after quay, and I got in and I looked up to the quay and I hollered up, "Is there an engineer who can run this boat?"

And a friend, Leonard -- we called him Gus -- Gus Horn came down, started the boat up. I couldn't remember where the tiller was. My mind was a blank. It was right there but I grabbed the jackstaff. We used the jackstaff to steer with.

BF: Let me go back just a moment. When you left the ship, did a lot of guys leave with you?

KJ: I guess it must have been. Some were still -- the lines had not parted yet. Some of them were still going over on the lines over to the quay, and they hadn't parted. And . . .

BF: This is onto the land side?

KJ: Yeah, on the land side, which was the starboard side of the ship.

BF: You went off the other side?

KJ: No, I went off the land side. I went off the high side, starboard side.

BF: How many other men did you see in the water when you were there?

KJ: Well, as soon as I got in the boat, I could see heads all over. And . . .

BF: Any estimate on the number?

KJ: No, I'd really not care to estimate -- if I were to make a guess, I'd say between fifty and a hundred.

BF: Was there much oil in the water? Was it on fire?

KJ: Not on our side. The oil was on the outboard side and the temp--

(TAPE STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

BF: I understand that there were timbers on the *UTAH*. What were they used for?

KJ: Well, since the ship was a target ship, she was subject to being bombed with dummy bombs. Either fifty-six pound water bombs or five-pound black powder bombs. And these timbers were to protect the deck and some of them were built up over capstans and winches, so that none of the equipment got hurt. These were either six-by-six or six-by-twelve and some of them as long as thirty feet long that we placed over the entire deck of the ship.

BF: Did these timbers cause any problems during the attack?

KJ: I didn't know at the time, but I understood as they started to slide off, men were either trapped or hit and it probably caused several casualties. How many, I have no idea.

BF: But you didn't see any of these?

KJ: No. By this time, I was over on the opposite side of the ship.

BF: Were you one of the first ones to manage to get off?

KJ: Well, by the time I got into the boat and Gus Horn got there, there were heads floating around in the water, men swimming, some of them swimming in the island and some of them paddling around, waiting to be picked up, which we started doing.

BF: Did you see many wounded?

KJ: No, I didn't see, I didn't see any bloody ones that I would take to be severely wounded. Scraped by the barnacles, probably, something like that.

BF: The fact that the *UTAH* was no longer a battleship but a target ship, how many men were aboard that morning?

KJ: Our complement was somewhere between 610, 620, but many of 'em were on the beach, our . . .

(TAPE STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

BF: Besides being a target ship, I understand the *UTAH* had another function.

KJ: She was a gunnery ship. We had some of the latest guns, most up to date, including British guns, the Swedish twenty-millimeter and the forty-millimeter.

BF: Those are anti-aircraft guns.

KJ: Yes.

BF: So it was a pretty sophisticated ship, besides being something that the Navy dropped dummy bombs on.

KJ: That's true. You see, in order to drop bombs on us, we had to get below decks and the estimated to be a million dollars worth of remote control gear to con her from the second deck so that no one would be up where the bomb might the bridge and injure somebody. Yeah, she was sophisticated.

BF: Let's go ahead now to -- you're in this whaleboat?

KJ: Yes.

BF: What happens next?

KJ: Well, Gus came down, started up, and by this time, there were men all around. The first man I pulled out of the water had a life jacket and a baseball uniform on. His name was Donald Austin Green from my hometown of Burlington. So he became my bow hook and as we'd ease up, he'd pull a man in and then we'd pick 'em up and I remember one in particular, all I saw was about this much of his face. He was next thing to drowning. A man named Green and -- we pulled him in. So we soon had a boatload, took 'em over to Ford Island, dumped 'em off, turned around and came back and started picking up a second load. And we got about half full and we picked up Lieutenant Commander Solomon Isequith, and he said, "Take me into the beach."

Well, a seaman listens to what an officer says, so I turned around. We took that half a load into the beach. Then we came out for a third load and by this time, there were very few in the water. We may have picked up, oh, four, five, six. And the ship was doing her last slow -- and I mean very slow -- roll. I had no idea how deep the water was and I screamed at the -- I really hollered because I was frightened that she might go under and suck us under. I had read about things like that.

BF: How close were you at that point?

KJ: Oh, twenty to thirty feet off from her, heading in towards her. So we stopped, Gus backed her down and we watched the men, as the ship rolled away from us, the men walked towards us. And then we slowly brought the bow of the boat up and . . .

BF: Up to the . . .

KJ: Up to the . . .

BF: . . . capsized ship?

KJ: . . . capsized ship and they walked into the . . .

BF: They never touched the water?

KJ: No, they never touched the water, the last group. Once again, oh, right, I guess, somewhere between six and ten or eleven.

BF: So how many total did you save, did you pluck from the water or from the capsized *UTAH*?

KJ: Oh, perhaps twenty-five, thirty-five, maybe forty-five or fifty. I really don't know.

BF: Really, pretty good.

KJ: We were so damn busy, we were too busy to be frightened, I'll tell you that. (Chuckles)

BF: Because you were so busy, did you have much of a chance to see what was happening around the rest of the harbor?

KJ: No, I didn't even know they machine gunned us.

BF: You were machinegunned?

KJ: Don, yeah, Don Green -- well, when he brought the boat in, the boat swung and the rudder disengaged. They had what's called pintle and gudgeons. And the rudder disengaged, so I tried to get it back in and of course, the action of the water, I couldn't do it. So Don Green got over, went over the side with his life jacket on and was -- so I just settled back to let him put it back in, and thank god he called me because when he called me, I leaned forward, they machine gunned past. Well, I was saved (chuckles). I didn't even know it. But he felt the bullets pound into the water. They hit that close to him that he could actually feel the force of the gun, or the slugs hitting the water.

BF: If you had not leaned forward?

KJ: I'd have probably taken it right through here, somewhere.

BF: Was that the only strafing that you took that day?

KJ: The only one I knew about. Like I said, I didn't know that 'til he told me about it.

BF: You were so busy.

KJ: Yeah, we were busy.

BF: So you really didn't have a chance to think about what was happening?

KJ: No, we then dropped a third load off. We said let's go outboard and see who's out there. So we tried to go between her and the *RALEIGH*, which was sinking, forward of us.

BF: That's a cruiser, light cruiser.

KJ: Mm hm, light cruiser, *RALEIGH*. The timber stopped us. So we went aft and tried to go between the stern of the *UTAH* and the *TANGIER*.

BF: These are the timbers in the water?

KJ: Mm hm. Those heavy timbers. In fact, we rammed 'em. We backed off and I thought maybe we could push. All we did was slide up on 'em, slide off. So we said the heck with it.

BF: So you went around 'em?

KJ: So we went -- no, we couldn't get around 'em.

BF: Oh.

KJ: Because we couldn't get around the *RALEIGH* and we couldn't get around the TANGIER, we were trapped in our own little lake there, so to speak.

BF: What happened?

KJ: Well, we took the boat back in and I jumped out of the boat and I don't know where Gus Horn went.

BF: You jumped out of the boat onto Ford Island?

KJ: Onto Ford Island, because there was nothing else to do and I had saw a pile -- now, this is the weird part. There was a pile of dirt there -- oh, I don't know, two, three blocks long, about six feet high. Where did this dirt come from? Some kind of a hole. That didn't register. I ran over the pile of dirt. I was like a dog, trying to, trying to dig a little spot to get into. (Laughs)

BF: Why?

KJ: I was going to hide (laughing).

BF: Were there attacking planes still overhead?

KJ: Yeah, there were planes overhead.

BF: You could see them?

KJ: Yeah, you could hear 'em. And I thought, "Where's Don Green?" I turn around and looked behind me and Don was tying the boat up. I thought, what a stupid thing to do. Who cares about the whaleboat at a time like this? But what I was doing was very intelligent. (Laughing)

BF: So you dug your hole, did you go in?

KJ: Don Green -- next thing I knew, he was right alongside of me and we were like two dogs trying to get somewhere to hide, and about that time, we heard the funniest sound. It was -- the best way to describe it, is if you took a piece of cardboard or a playing card and stuck it into the blade of a fan. It kind of made that funny noise like that. We looked over and a bomb had lit upside down between us and the *TANGIER*, sticking tail first. And I thought, delayed action bomb, the safest spot's on the other side of that -- I thought it was going to explode and kill us. And we both ran up that pile of dirt and there's the ditch. And we jumped from the pile of dirt down into the ditch. It's a wonder we didn't break a leg or an ankle, but that was the crew that we'd been wondering where they were.

BF: The rest of the *UTAH* crew?

KJ: The rest of the *UTAH* crew and some of the shore members from Ford Island were down in that ditch.

BF: How many men would you estimate were there?

KJ: Well, let's say the ditch was about three blocks long. We were standing at least as close as you and I are. And then it dawned on me, here we were with our whites on, a nice long -- what a beautiful target. And that's -- that frightened me, 'cause they could have strafed us and nowhere to go. The ditch was over our head.

BF: So what did you do?

KJ: Well, what could you do?

BF: Did you go in the ditch?

KJ: Oh yeah, I was already in the ditch. I got frightened after I got in there and got time to think.

BF: Oh, and you thought about getting out, but did you?

KJ: No.

BF: You stayed with the rest of the guys.

KJ: My division officer, Lieutenant J. G. Hawk, came along and he had confiscated -- he'd gone down to the Navy housing, he came back with several bottles of liquor and cigarettes. Now, I boxed so I didn't smoke. He handed out a cigarette and lit a cigarette. I don't know why (chuckles) I did.

BF: Did that bomb ever go off, do you know?

KJ: I don't know, because by this time, I was on the other side of the big pile of dirt and down the ditch a ways up. I wasn't . . . if it went off, I don't know.

BF: Did the attack end with you still in the ditch?

KJ: You know, there was a pause in the attack.

BF: Between the two waves.

KJ: Yeah. When everything got quiet, we climbed out of the ditch and some men started coming across the island. We said, "Where you from?"

They said, "Wee-vee." *WEST VIRGINIA*, in other words.

And one of us said, "My god, did she get hit?"

And they named off the rest of 'em.

BF: You couldn't see what was happening.

KJ: All we knew is what they told us.

BF: What happens next?

KJ: All of a sudden, off in the distance, we heard shooting again. Back in the ditch we went. (Laughs)

BF: What kind of shooting? Anti-aircraft fire or . . .

KJ: It sounded like it and it was the second wave coming and I imagine, I don't know, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five minutes, space in there. Long enough to get out of the ditch and walk around a little bit and . . . . But still, we didn't really see what was on the far side of Ford Island.

BF: That's on the east side of Ford Island.

KJ: Yeah. The Battleship Row, in other words.

BF: So the next wave, the second and last wave of attacking planes come in, what do you do?

KJ: The only thing we could do, hide in the ditch. And an odd thing that happened, it started to rain. And a rainbow appeared. Another one, directly over it. (Crying) It was just -- oh, I'm sorry -- it was just like an omen saying, "Hey buddy, you're all right." Exactly like an omen.

BF: You stayed in the ditch throughout the second wave, the second attack.

KJ: Mm hm.

BF: Were you able to see very much?

KJ: Our field of vision was, well, let me see, you can imagine the ditch just a little wider than we were, and over our heads, so our field of vision was maybe eighty to ninety degrees total.

BF: Did you see any attacking planes get hit?

KJ: Yeah, I saw five planes either smoking or burning. I never saw a single one hit the ground, because they'd flash across and you could see 'em in that span of vision, then they were out of sight.

BF: Once the attack was over, you were still in the ditch, what happened to you next?

KJ: We got out of the ditch and they commandeered a group of us to go over to get some bombs out. We went over toward bomb storage and they were going to break out bombs. They never did and I -- to show you how ignorant I was, I had the Navy pocket knife in my pocket and that Navy pocket knife is buried by one of the old trees over there, somewhere, because I thought if I'm going to go in there, I don't want any metal on me (chuckles). So I dug a hole, put my knife in there and never got a chance to get back to get it.

BF: So what was the rest of the morning like?

KJ: If there's a complete, if there is a blank in my mind, it's what happened from then until we got over to the gun[*boat*] *SACRAMENTO*.

BF: You and all the members of the *UTAH* crew?

KJ: Yeah, they took quite a group of us. I think there was one man on from *NEVADA* got over there and quite a group of us. Essentially, there wasn't anything we could do. There weren't any planes to put the bombs on. The people on Ford Island were manning the guns that were out, and there were few of them. And the hangar was in shambles.

BF: This period of time that you really don't remember what happened, do you know how long a period . . .

(TAPE STOPS THEN RESTARTS)

BF: (Clears throat)

(Conversation off-mike.)

BF: Okay. Let's go back. Early in the attack, you were still below deck.

KJ: All right.

BF: I understand something happened, a man ran by you and told you do something and because he did, it may have saved your life? Tell me that story.

KJ: Well, we'd been cleaning bilges out at sea. I guess, maybe rights, but we'd been doing it. So we were wide open about six decks straight down. When they hollered, "Japanese air raid," and we took our second hit, I started down the ladder -- I was going to go down and try to set watertight integrity. And I was down the ladder about up to my ribs here and a pair of legs came by and a voice said, "Where you going?"

I said, "Down to shut C-group."

And he says, "Don't go down there, you'll get killed."

And I went down, it was completely black and I thought, "He's probably right." So I turned around, came back up and whoever he was, he was gone. But . . .

BF: No idea who he is?

KJ: Haven't the foggiest who he was. Just a pair of dungaree legs and a voice.

BF: And you listened to him?

KJ: I listened to him and that's why I'm here today, I think. Yeah, because then I turned and went up the ladder.

BF: Once you got off the ship and you got into the, to launch the whale boat and you were helping to pick men out of the water, I understand you also were involved in trying to help men who were trapped in the hull of the *UTAH*.

KJ: Well, only indirectly.

BF: Tell me about that.

KJ: Jack Vaessen was the electrician striker and he was down at a panel, electrical panel board that was directly above the manhole cover that I had put on with only four nuts. I had asked the bosun mate what to do and he said, "Pull the lens hole electrical leads out. Just put a couple of nuts on it."

So I put four nuts on it and put the dog wrench back where it belonged. Jack was down there with a battle lantern. When the ship was hit, he saw that manhole and he took the four nuts off and as the ship rolled over, he went down into that set of bilges, which left him in an air pocket. Because about, I would guess, probably ten to twelve feet of the ship, of the bottom of the hull was above the water line. And he was hammering with that wrench. Incidentally, he still has the wrench and the battle lantern at home. They're his. But they heard him and in that interval between the first and second attack, [*Lieutenant*] Commander Isequith commandeered a boat and got some men and a cutting torch and a ship fitter off the *RALEIGH* came down. Jack can tell you what his name is -- Hill. And I can't remember his initials. I think it's J. W. Hill. And they cut a hole in the bottom of the ship and got Jack out.

BF: Did you see any of this?

KJ: We were standing on the beach, watching them, but I had nothing to do with it. Just watched them go over there.

BF: Did you see any other activity around the capsized *UTAH* that caught your attention?

KJ: While we were picking up people, there was one other spot back by what's called the shaft alley and we could hear a tapping in that, but you could also see bubbles of air coming up. After a while it quit, so I imagine the man in there was probably drowned. Other than that, that's the only incident within the hull itself.

BF: Let's go to the time after the attack. It's over and you've gone over to the *SACRAMENTO*, which is a cruiser.

KJ: No, it was a gun ship.

BF: I'm sorry, gun ship. What happened then? Where did you go? Was this ship under way? [*Note: USS SACRAMENTO (PG-19) was a gunboat.*]

KJ: No. She was tied up over near ten-ten in one of the slips there. And . . .

BF: This is opposite the east side of Ford Island?

KJ: Yes. That's heading up towards [*Merry*] Point.

BF: So you can see . . .

KJ: Yeah, we could see out.

BF: . . . Battleship Row.

KJ: We could see Battleship Row then, and the *ARIZONA* is busted in half. Her mainmast and foremast were twisted like this. And she's burning fiercely. The stern of the *TENNESSEE* is on fire. The *WEST VIRGINIA* is sunk. The *CALIFORNIA* is down by the bow on the port side, looking like she's going to sink. And the *NEVADA* had beached herself farther out.

BF: And the *OKLAHOMA* . . .

KJ: Oh, of course . . .

BF: Yeah.

KJ: . . . the OKLAHOMA was over. Yeah, I'd forgotten about it. And the *OGLALA* was laying over.

BF: That was a destroyer?

KJ: No, that was a minelayer.

BF: Next to the *HELENA* on the opposite shore?

KJ: Right.

BF: Tough question, when you first had a good look at Battleship Row, could you believe what you saw?

KJ: No, not really. I couldn't believe my own ship would -- we weighed 27,500 tons. I didn't think they could sink her and I certainly didn't think she'd roll upside down in seven minutes. The odd Saturday, I had gone Christmas shopping and all the flags were out. They called it "airing bunting." And I thought, what a beautiful sight it was to see all those different color signal flags, because we went around from the topside of Ford Island, clear past Battleship Row to get over to [*Merry*] Point. It looked beautiful. And I remember thinking, "What a hell of a mess now!" It was a bad situation.

BF: What was your reaction when you first saw it?

KJ: Well, almost total disbelief and by this time, rumors were all over that they were landing, that the water was poisoned, that there were arrows cut in the cane fields, pointing towards Ford Island (chuckles), all the weird . . . . And it was easy to believe that they could send a landing force in.

BF: Do you remember how you felt? What emotion you were feeling when you saw Battleship Row from the *SACRAMENTO*? Was it one of anger?

KJ: That's funny. We had talked earlier -- we always said, "We're gonna have to fight 'em. Let's do it and get it over with. We could lick 'em in six months." And then when we looked at that mess, you realized, hey, we didn't have an opponent that couldn't fight. We're gonna have a tough fight on our hands.

BF: What was the rest of the day like for you?

KJ: We went over on -- when we got on the ship, they broke out clothing for us. I had on a pair of white shorts, a skivvy shirt -- though I had taken the skivvy shirt off, 'cause it got wet. So all I had on was a pair of shorts and the shoes and socks. And so they broke out dungarees and different clothing for us so at least we had something. They made sandwiches. And they were making pots of coffee. And they were arranging for us to sleep there that night. And by this time, by the time all that was done, it was into dusk or maybe dark already.

BF: At what point did you become aware that you had a rather serious injury to your jaw?

KJ: Well, the teeth surprisingly enough, didn't hurt. I didn't have -- I hadn't busted enough of 'em off that the nerves were exposed. When I hit, my jaw slid sideways, because I hit here, and as the teeth slipped across one another, they chipped. I chipped sixteen teeth. And I went until 1943 before we got a dentist to start working on 'em. So, see, they couldn't hurt too bad. They were just chipped. (Chuckles)

BF: But not much pain?

KJ: Not no pain.

BF: What was the next day like and then a few days after that?

KJ: Well, after firing at our own planes at night, I got put on burial detail. And I spend Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on burial detail. And I was twenty-two years old when we got hit, with a seventeen-year old mind. No cares, no worries, but I grew up quick, real quick.

BF: That was not a very nice job.

KJ: No, that was a bad job.

BF: Has the thought of that lived with you?

KJ: Yes.

BF: That must be a pretty vivid memory of that whole episode.

KJ: Yeah. At first, I couldn't talk about it. Once I got so I could talk (crying), it gradually went away.

BF: What is the most vivid memory? Forty-five years later, what's the most vivid memory of that day?

KJ: Well, I think the ones that stand out are the first torpedo hitting us, that bomb dropping (chuckles) that I thought was going to explode and kill us, seeing the rainbow and then the first impression when we got over, where we could really see Ford Island. That plus the fact that we were always almost positive they would -- I felt myself that within two, three days, I'd be a prisoner. I honestly did, because I don't think we could have stopped 'em. I don't see how we could have stopped 'em, if they had landed.

BF: In the years since the attack, when you've heard or read the expression or the words, "Pearl Harbor," or "December seventh," does it bring back memories immediately?

KJ: Yeah, absolutely. Sure, it brings back -- and I'll tell you of what it reminds me. We were so woefully unprepared. We were so naive, sitting there, getting ready to go to church, play football, baseball, reading the Sunday paper, writing letters home.

BF: Hearing these words, though, did it suddenly transport you back in time? Were you suddenly back aboard the *UTAH*?

KJ: (Chuckles) I think when I come out here, like in '71 when we went out for the ground breaking of the *UTAH* memorial, and '76 when we went over there and took pictures of it to see the old ship, yeah. It tugs at your heart.

BF: Some people who lived through the attack have some bad feelings about Japan, (CJ mumbles) bad feelings about Japanese, still. How do you feel?

KJ: Well, first of all, they were doing a job like we were. The average military person that hit us was taking orders like we were. I had a lot of hate in my heart for the Japanese at first, but the only one I saw up close was one of the pilots, when we were on burial detail. We picked up one of the pilots. And . . .

BF: Will you tell me about that?

KJ: Oh. When we brought him in, he had a plotting board and they had a map. And believe it or not, the map showed the *ENTERPRISE* being where we were. See, that was their normal tie-up.

BF: Carrier *ENTERPRISE*?

KJ: Carrier *ENTERPRISE*. Now, she was supposed to -- we had heard that we were supposed to get under way at seven o'clock that morning because the *ENTERPRISE* was going to come in and take her rightful berth there, at Fox-11, where we were tied up.

BF: Where did you find the Japanese pilot?

KJ: I don't know. They brought him in and after they brought him in, we handled him then.

BF: I see.

KJ: I didn't see where . . .

BF: You didn't see the wreckage of his plane.

KJ: I don't know whether he was in a plane. I think you've seen the picture where they're hoisting a man, his face is gone? That was, I think, the one. I think that was the Japanese fellow that we picked up.

BF: You said a moment ago that you, at that time, you had a lot of hatred.

KJ: Yeah.

BF: What's happened to that hatred?

KJ: Well, the entire war was so personal, aboard ship you don't see your enemy face to face.

BF: So impersonal you mean?

KJ: Or so impersonal, I mean. Excuse me. Sorry. It's not like a man on the ground, seeing his enemy firing at him. We didn't see the enemy. The only man I saw was when I first came up topside, the first plane that came over, I could see his face very clearly.

BF: So the only enemy you saw the whole war is in the first minute?

KJ: Uh . . .

BF: Just about?

KJ: Just about. Up at Kiska and Attu too, I saw a few of 'em, but they were dead. Yeah. The only ones.

BF: So you were saying over the course of the war, this hatred that you felt dissipated?

KJ: Not 'til after the war was over. We still had a lot of hatred to get rid of in our heart, until after the war ended. And then, I guess it's like anything else, hurt goes away.

BF: You've been back to Hawaii . . .

KJ: Yes.

BF: . . . since the war. You see there are a lot of Japanese tourists here. What goes through your mind? How do you feel when you see a group of Japanese tourists walk by?

KJ: (Chuckles) I wonder if they've taken over our island if they wanted in peace what they lost in war?

BF: That's another question altogether.

KJ: (Laughs) Yeah.

BF: But how does Carl Johnson feel, when he sees them?

KJ: I don't have any, I'm not -- no ax to grind, I guess, is the word. I worked with some very good friends of mine at the lab in Livermore were Japanese and some of them came over from Japan and visited our lab. I think my feelings are pretty well resigned to they did what they did and we came back and did what we did, except when they say Hiroshima. My blood boils then.

BF: How so? Explain what you mean.

KJ: Well, okay. We were at peace when they hit us. They were at war. And anybody who has studied the invasion plans knows that if we had invaded -- and I probably wouldn't have lived through it -- they might have lost as many as two, two and a half million people and we might have had up to a million casualties, because we wound up going into Tokyo Bay, on the cruiser *DETROIT*, the twenty-ninth of August. And, boy, they were ready for us. So where they killed, maybe, a hundred, 130,000 people, they probably saved a million and a half of their own people and maybe a million of ours.

BF: Have you dreamt very much about the attack?

KJ: (Chuckles) My wife says I used to. I was damage control. And I used to have one dream in which a fire would start and the compartment like this would start closing in. And shortly after we were married, why, I was thrashing around, I guess, and so she put her arm and leg over me. I threw her clear out of bed. Because in my dream, the weight of her arm and leg was something had fallen over me and I had to get it off of me and I guess I just exploded.

BF: Did anything like that happen to you in the war?

KJ: Oh, then they're the same as I got my leg burned and took a piece of shrapnel across there, but . . .

BF: Where were you then?

KJ: I was up on deck of the ship. I don't know which ship I was on. Well, the carrier -- oh just a minute -- *SACRAMENTO* -- oh, not *SACRAMENTO*, excuse me -- *SARATOGA*.

BF: And where were you?

KJ: Off Iwo Jima. She had taken a kamikaze.

BF: And you took some shrapnel?

KJ: Yeah and we were fighting a fire. And some of the planes exploded. They had night fighters. She was so slow, by that time, that she was carrying night fighters, and the kamikaze got her. And part of the ship blew up.

BF: Was that . . .

KJ: That was . . .

BF: . . . your second wound received in war?

KJ: Well, yeah, if you want to call . . .

BF: The joint stood up then . . .

KJ: Yeah, but I didn't even go up to the hospital for that. This one here, aboard ship, they cut the eyebrow off and he put two stitches in it, so I relaxed and then he said, "I think I better put another stitch in that." Boy, did that third one hurt. I was, I was already for the first two, and then when I relaxed and he put that third one in, it burned. (Laughs) It hurt.

BF: You've played a part in a very important event in history. How has that affected your life?

KJ: Good lord, it's affected my whole rest of my life. I have taught high school kids. I've been interviewed out at the lab where I work. It got embarrassing at times, and at home, there were three boys on that same ship, all from the little town of Burlington, Iowa, and every time one of us got home, there would be a letter or an article in the newspaper . . .

(TAPE STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

KJ: . . . war, got out again in '54. And I retired in January the first, 1970, no 1980. Forty years, five months and sixteen days regular and reserve time.

BF: What did you do at the Livermore lab? Are you still there?

KJ: Well, I retired in '81, but I'm back two days a week. I carried a security clearance in what was called an AE, authorized . . .

(TAPE STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

BF: Okay. You lived through the attack. What did you learn about yourself from the experience?

KJ: Oh boy. Well, I guess, number one, I grew up. I maybe became more tolerant. I loved to travel. I got a chance to travel. And I think my outlook on life, since I did live through it, was live a full life. I've enjoyed every single day. It changed my life enough that I probably am a better man for it.

BF: Really?

KJ: I hope so. Yeah.

BF: If you had a way of waving a magic wand and changing history around a little bit so that you, Carl Johnson, could eliminate your presence on Oahu that day, would you do it?

KJ: No.

BF: You wouldn't change anything?

KJ: No. No, I was having a ball out here. I didn't ask to be in on the attack, but I was here and I can say I think I profited from it. I think I'm a better person because of it. I wasn't hurt, I was lucky. I went all the way through the war. I wound up sitting in Tokyo Bay watching them sign the peace treaty. And I don't think you can do much more than that. If you came through

that, why (chuckles) you were, number one, lucky and I just, I think that mentally I grew too. Yeah.

(Conversation off-mike)

BF: Hello? Keep it rolling? Okay. Let's see. Have you had a chance at all to talk with any Japanese survivors of World War II?

KJ: I had a conversation with Commander [*Mitsuo*] Fuchida.

BF: Well, tell us about that.

KJ: You know he . . . . Oh.

(Conversation off-mike)

(TAPING STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

KJ: . . . by the time these kids passed the word along, by the time the fourth class came in and I said, "Would you care to venture a guess?," everybody hollered, "Nineteen thirty-seven." (Laughs)

BF: I understand that you, at one time, had an opportunity to talk with Commander Fuchida, who led the Japanese attack.

KJ: Yes. He converted to Christianity and gave a talk at a church in Livermore. I went to the talk and I went backstage and sat and talked with him like we are for about fifteen minutes.

BF: What did you talk about?

KJ: Mostly the attack.

BF: Well . . .

KJ: Okay, I had mentioned that I was on the *UTAH*. He says, "Yes, *UTAH*." He knew about it.

And he said -- we got talking about how they caught us so unaware. And then he told me the story that other people have heard of how come we were hit simultaneously, not only with the fighters, but the torpedo planes and the bombers.

They had two plans of attack. And they had a signal, was a Very pistol. If they came in undetected, he'd fire one shot and the torpedo plane would hit us first. If he fired two, that meant that they had been discovered and the fighter planes and the bombers were supposed to try to knock out the gun defense.

Well, he fired that first flare and it went into a cloud. And he said he thought that his pilots did not see it. So he fired a second one. Still needed to be one, okay. The ones that were looking for two, saw two. The ones that were looking for one saw that one and so we were hit almost simultaneously -- when the torpedoes hit the ship, the fighter plane was overhead. The first plane I saw was a fighter plane, so they were in there simultaneously, and fortunately for them it worked out perfect. For us, it was a disaster that . . .

BF: What did you think of him, the man?

KJ: He was a very quiet man, soft spoken and seemed to be genuine. He evidently was an intelligent naval officer and pilot. And at that time, I had more curiosity than animosity towards him. We had a nice conversation. He spoke English well enough that you could understand him well. And he knew that they had sunk the *UTAH.*

BF: Did he apologize?

KJ: No. I didn't ask him too, either. (Chuckles) No, he did not.

BF: Did you sense that he was in any way sorry for that day, or what was your perception?

KJ: Sorry or contrite. No, I think it was a very straightforward talk we had, and he had done his job as he was supposed to do. He didn't seem like he was bragging about it or anything. It was very matter of fact, like an engineer would go over a set of specifications.

BF: What if you had the opportunity to talk to some other Japanese veterans of the war? Would you avoid such a meeting or would you look forward to such a meeting?

KJ: I think it'd be nice to change experiences. See what, see how they felt, see what it was like to them. Yeah, I don't think I would shun away from meeting them. There are certain ones who would. In fact, five years ago, they didn't want to put a wreath out there that was brought in by the Alaska chapter, given to them by the Japanese vice consul, I believe, from Anchorage.

BF: Some people who went through the attack don't really like talking about it. Were . . .

KJ: I thought a lot if you talk about it, you get it out of your system.

BF: Are you still getting it out of your system?

KJ: Mm hm.

BF: It's not all out yet.

KJ: (Crying) I don't think it'll ever be out.

BF: Stop.

KJ: It just . . . no, it's a . . . but, I think if I had not gotten it out, you know how some of these Vietnam veterans are? Mental cases? You can't keep it bottled up. You gotta talk about it and surprisingly enough, the things I remember worked most about the war are the funny things. Even --- I didn't put this on the film, but I swam in boot camp for a kid who was that much taller than me. His name, Jimmy Oberto. I was a typical Swede, blonde, blue-eyed, fair-skinned. He was dark-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned. He couldn't swim.

So our chief had larceny in his heart. He had about five of us. I put on Jimmy Oberto's pants and I rolled 'em up about that much and I put his dog tag on and I memorized it and I said, "My name is James Oberto," and gave him the

dog tag number. I learned to swim in the Mississippi River when I was about like that. Swam up, swam back. He was aboard the *UTAH* with us, and he couldn't swim. He couldn't swim then, he couldn't swim when the ship was sunk. And Lefty Holtz literally put his foot in his butt and pushed him over the side. (Chuckles) And he told me -- he lives in Arizona, I believe, yeah, somewhere in Arizona. He told me that when he hit the water, he had a life jacket on him. Well, some of those life jackets were deadly. (Chuckles) They were a hindrance. And he maintains that my boat went over his head. Then he hit the water and the life jacket just sort of filled up with water and he started sinking. So he peeled it off. He came to the top and he swam. And he swam all the way to Ford Island, but he couldn't swim. That is, he couldn't swim until then. (Chuckles)

Now, that's a type of funny thing you remember so well. (Chuckles) That and trying to dig a hole in that pile of dirt. I was stupid. (Laughs)

BF: Thank you, Karl.

KJ: Sure.

(TAPE STOPS, THEN RESTARTS)

BF: Okay. Let me know when I can talk.

END OF INTERVIEW

#171 FRANK CAMPARELL: USS *UTAH*

Bart Fredo (BF): Tell him you don't have to worry about a thing. I'm driving.

Let me slate this thing. The following interview is with Frank Camparell. It was conducted on December 3, 1986, at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. It's about 8:50 at night. Mr. Camparell now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I'm doing the interview, my name is Bart Fredo, and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders, who's with the National Park Service.

Let me ask you to tell us your name and where you were from back in 1941.

Frank Camparell (FC): My name is Frank Camparell. I was from Youngstown, Ohio.

BF: What branch of the service were you in?

FC: U.S. Navy.

BF: When did you enlist?

FC: Nineteen thirty-seven, but I had to wait 'til 1938 to get in, because of the waiting line.

BF: In 1941, what was your rank and what was your job?

FC: I was seaman first class, working in the ship's laundry.

BF: When did you come to Hawaii?

FC: The first time, I believe, was in 1938, on the way to Samoa.

BF: And you came back?

FC: Yes.

BF: And you were assigned to which ship?

FC: USS *UTAH*.

BF: And that was a battleship converted to a target ship and an anti-aircraft ship, right?

FC: And it's converted from the BB31 to the AG16.

BF: Let me take you back to the morning of the attack, before the attack started, what were you doing?

FC: I was licking stamps and putting them on Christmas cards.

BF: Below deck?

FC: Below decks, in the laundry.

BF: Doing your laundry at the same time?

FC: No. No, no. No, I wasn't doing any laundry. It was a Sunday morning and I was -- just before eight o'clock.

BF: When did you get some kind of an indication that something out of the ordinary was happening?

FC: I heard something splash into the side of the ship on the port side and I felt like it was an ammunition lighter, or something, that broke loose, but it really, truly, it wasn't. It was a torpedo that had hit, evidently, on the port side.

BF: What effect did it have on you and on the ship?

FC: Well, the ship started listing pretty badly to port and I didn't know what was happening. I didn't know there was a war going on.

BF: Did it knock you off your feet, the impact?

FC: It really didn't knock me off my feet, because this was on the port side and I was on the starboard side.

BF: What did you do?

FC: Well, I tried to get off.

BF: Off the ship?

FC: Yes. (Chuckles)

BF: Tell us about your efforts in trying to get off the ship.

FC: Well, you couldn't get on topside because I now know there was a first wave that hit, it was almost really impossible because of the strafing, so I went back below decks, where I was all the time, anyway, and tried to get back from another part of the ship, up forward, and wasn't able to get up at all. It was clogged by fellows trying to get through the hatch.

BF: People are on this, on this -- is it a ladder?

FC: It was a -- yes -- on the ladder trying to get up on the next deck, on the main deck.

BF: So there was a backlog?

FC: Oh yes. Quite a few fellows.

BF: What happened?

FC: Well, I finally -- I'm a little guy -- I finally went through a guy's legs and got up into the air castle on the starboard side of the ship.

BF: Was it someone frozen with fear or whatever on the ladder?

FC: It appeared to be, yes.

BF: And you just went right through 'em?

FC: Right through his legs.

BF: You got topside, what did you see?

FC: Well, I saw smoke billowing from the Battleship Row and I could -- of course, I realized the ship was sinking.

BF: Your ship was sinking?

FC: Oh yes. And the Japs' planes coming in from the stern and couldn't get off.

BF: You couldn't get off?

FC: Nobody could get off.

BF: Why?

FC: Well, they finally realized they had tail gunners, and the tail gunner was getting most of the boys 'cause they could see the strafing from the planes diving in, but I doubt if most of the fellows realized those tail gunners were the ones that were really getting the guys.

BF: As the plane was pulling out . . .

FC: Mm hm.

BF: . . . you saw quite a few people hit?

FC: Oh yes.

BF: So where were you protecting yourself, by getting behind?

FC: Well I was behind a Hawser, there in the air castle, and I was with a fellow by the name of George Krauss, and there was a Lieutenant Commander there with us and I had no life jacket, neither did George Krauss, but the Lieutenant Commander wanted a life jacket and I think George Krauss threw him one.

BF: What happened to you next?

FC: Well, I was trying to go off the side and I told George to synchronize getting off that ship. I said, "You wait 'til after they make their run and watch that tail gunner. And don't come too soon."

Well, when I hit the side of the ship, I was walking down. Of course, it was pretty slick, I guess with a lot of barnacles.

BF: Now, the ship is already capsized and you're walking along the hull.

FC: Right. And George come up and hit me and straddled me all the way down. And he rode me all the way down the side of that ship.

BF: And you hit the water?

FC: Oh, we both hit the water, but he was riding me all the way down.

BF: Did you both come out, were you hurt when you . . .

FC: Well, I believe the barnacles ripped my shirt and trousers, dungarees pretty badly. I didn't see George until months later.

BF: Did you have any problems with the timbers that were used on the ship?

FC: The timbers were going to port and I was going off the starboard side.

BF: And there was no fire in the water or anything like that?

FC: No, no. I didn't see any fire there, but I could see smoke billowing from, I guess it was the *ARIZONA*, which was up on the other side of the island.

BF: You really couldn't see the battleships on the other side of the island?

FC: Just the smoke.

BF: That's all?

FC: The smoke, yes.

BF: You're in the water, what happens next?

FC: Well, I started to go to one of the ships, and I didn't know whether to change over to the CURTIS, and there was another fellow with me -- I think his last name was Wesley, or Wellesley -- and they wouldn't let us board ship. They said they were going to shoot us. (Chuckles)

BF: Why?

FC: Well, they didn't know who we were. So I went back and to the beach, and that's when the second wave hit.

BF: Tell us about that.

FC: Well, that's kind of bloody. I was --- it was --- they were digging up either a water line or something, and they're coming in and some guy recognized me and told me I better duck because they're going to get me, and I ducked into this slip trench, what it looked like. And from there, I went to a metal building and then over there, they -- it was kind of rough. I got to the metal building and there's a huge desk and there was two other guys and I don't know who they were. I said, "We'd better get this desk over because if they strafe, they're going to come through the roof."

And about that time, they started strafing and that desk just flew over me. (Chuckles) I don't know where they got the strength. But then they said that the Japanese were landing at Barbers Point. And a guy handed me a steel helmet, the old bellboy type, gave me a rifle, I think with five rounds of ammunition, and put me on a boat, I think it was a whaleboat, and said, "Get out there, defend Barbers Point."

BF: Let's go back to the beginning of the second wave attack. You said it was pretty bloody. What did you mean by that?

FC: Well, I was with two fellows and I don't know, there was a hole about the size of this room and I couldn't feel anything, but when the smoke cleared up, they were gone.

BF: I don't understand. What do you mean they were gone?

FC: Well, I guess they evidently got hit.

BF: A bomb went off near this hole you were in?

FC: No, they were running for the building, a bomb went off.

BF: What impact did it, effect did it have on you? Did it knock you off your feet?

FC: Yes it did. And subsequently, they found that -- I didn't even know -- I was pretty young. They found that I had some shrapnel.

BF: How much?

FC: Oh, I don't know. Still in my head, little piece, that's what they told me at the VA hospital.

BF: Were you aware at the time that you had been wounded?

FC: No.

BF: It just knocked you off your feet, this bomb that went off?

FC: Mm hm.

BF: And you looked around and these two men that were running with you?

FC: They disappeared.

BF: No sign of them.

FC: No sign. And then I made it to this building by myself and I found the other fellows in the building when I got there. It was a metal building.

BF: Anything else happen along those same lines?

FC: Well, inside the building, I couldn't see anything going on, other than that second wave. Everyone was doing a lot of strafing, dropping bombs.

BF: Did you see the effects of this strafing, dropping bombs?

FC: Oh yes.

BF: Tell us about that.

FC: Well, evidently, they were fighter bomber planes -- and if I'd had the time to unlatch that machine gun, I'd a been hero today. If I had a potato, I would have been a hero.

BF: The planes were that low?

FC: Yes.

BF: Could you see the pilot?

FC: I could see the -- I didn't see the pilot, I saw the tail gunners.

BF: Real close?

FC: Oh yes.

BF: What kind of destruction were they causing?

FC: Well . . .

BF: That you could see.

FC: Well, on Ford Island, I really didn't see much, other than the one area that you could see the smoke from, I think, the *ARIZONA*. A lot of smoke was coming from.

BF: When did you first have an opportunity to actually see, get a good look at Battleship Row, on the east side of Ford?

FC: I was sent to the USS *ARGONNE*, most of the crew from the *UTAH*, and while we're there, we could see the devastating effect of what they had done to Battleship Row.

BF: Is this still on the same day, on the seventh?

FC: Yes sir.

BF The morning or afternoon?

FC: The evening. And that night, evidently some of our planes were coming in and one of the -- I thought it was the USS *CALIFORNIA* -- the guy that was on the *CALIFORNIA*, I met at Salt Lake City last June, swears up and down it wasn't. But someone opened up with some twin fifties at those airplanes coming in, and some of us were frozen on her as they splattered the side of that *ARGONNE*. 'Cause I know, 'cause I saw a guy get hit.

BF: This is in the evening when American planes were returning, flying over. And now, I'm a little confused, who hit who now?

FC: Well, I don't know who did the shooting, but either off the shore batteries, or off the *CALIFORNIA*, which was up on the other side of ten-ten dock. I think that's what they called it, ten-ten dock in those days. I don't know what they call it now.

BF: And you're saying that shells of some kind were hitting the *ARGONNE*?

FC: Those were machine gun came right through the side of that whole ship.

BF: That you were on?

FC: Yep. In the evening. And I just tonight verified with another guy, 'cause I was told I was nuts. But I know I had blood splattered on me and that, I've had nightmares about that and no one believes that guy got hit But I met a guy tonight who was the last guy off the UTAH, and they had to cut him out from the RALEIGH. Jack Basil, I think his name is.

BF: Who got the hit on the *ARGONNE*? I'm a little confused here. Did someone get hit by this friendly, so-called friendly fire?

FC: Yes, guy sitting down there just toppled over.

BF: So he was killed that night . . .

FC: Yes.

BF: . . . by U.S. fire?

FC: As far as I'm concerned, he was killed.

BF: What were the next few days like? What did you do?

FC: See, I don't know. They sent us to a barracks. There were barracks there some-- I don't really recall. We spent a couple of nights there at the barracks, no clothes. Just what we had on. Then they sent me to the *DETROIT*, USS *DETROIT*.

BF: And is that a heavy cruiser?

FC: No, light cruiser.

BF: Light cruiser.

FC: Four piper, Omaha class. It was in the line there, just before the *RALEIGH*.

BF: And when did you leave Hawaii?

FC: Very shortly. Well, the *DETROIT* had gone out with a Captain Wilkes, one of the ships that did go out, I understood that before I got on there. And subsequently when they took the goals off of Corregidor, we transferred to go from one of the submarines to the *DETROIT* and take it out to San Francisco.

(Taping stops, then restarts)

FC: . . . no, but he's here in the hotel.

BF: Maybe we can talk to him.

FC: And tomorrow, we're going to meet in the hotel, and I went nuts.

BF: Let me get your, to put your hands on -- there you go. (FC coughs) Sitting the way you were sitting before. That's fine.

About your wounds, when were they tended to?

FC: I didn't even know I had it until I went to the VA hospital did I know that -- after the war, that even had anything.

BF: You took shrapnel in your head, there was no blood?

FC: I had a scratch, I scratched it. I didn't know. It's still there.

BF: They never took it out.

FC: No. No, there's a little scar there, they tell me.

BF: What's the most vivid memory you have of that day? The thing that sticks out in your mind most.

FC: Rear gunners and those planes coming down so low. The devastating effect they had on these kids that didn't realize, coming out of the hatches, what was happening.

BF: Have you dreamt much about that day?

FC: Well, my wife said when I first got out of the Navy, I, one time, went back on leave, and she said I was kinda nuts. (Chuckles)

BF: Why did she say that?

FC: Oh, evidently in the middle of the night, there was a fire engine or something, I thought I was going to general quarters. I was deep asleep then. She said I looked like a cat with distemper.

BF: It hasn't disturbed you though, I mean.

FC: No. No. This disturbs me because I never talked about this to anyone, but two other people. Fellow by the name of Robert Widmark, who was on the *ARGONNE*, and this other fellow tonight. The only time I ever talked about it.

BF: Why?

FC: Well, I was led to believe I was nuts, 'cause nothing, something never happened that did. I thought it was just a bad dream.

BF: Then why are you talking about it now?

FC: Why, I don't know, because of Jack being able to verify, hopefully, something that I know I had witnessed.

BF: This man on the *ARGONNE* being hit.

FC: Well, he wasn't on the *ARGONNE*, but he knew two men that were, off the UTAH who witnessed the same thing I witnessed.

BF: How much, how long after the attack did you leave Hawaii?

FC: We took a convoy of -- well, the, I understood that there was the families of military people, we took 'em back to San Francisco.

BF: How long after the attack was, did that happen?

FC: Oh, I'd say, a couple of weeks.

BF: During that couple of weeks you were here, did you have occasion to go ashore at all, or were you just more or less on Pearl Harbor base the whole time?

FC: We weren't allowed off.

BF: So martial law didn't affect you in any way?

FC: No.

BF: Have you ever had the opportunity to talk with any Japanese who participated, either on the attack on Pearl Harbor or in World War II, ever?

FC: No. No. I had a Japanese secretary that lives here in Pearl City, lovely lady, who was born on the Island of Hawaii. Her daddy was a macadamia nut farmer.

BF: But you haven't had a chance to talk to any war veterans from Japan?

FC: No. No.

BF: How do you think you might react if you had the opportunity to talk to someone?

FC: Well, they were doing their job. You know, I don't know. I don't hold any animosity towards anybody.

BF: That's an interesting point you raised because, as you know, some people who went through the attack at Pearl Harbor still, to this day, hold some bad feelings towards Japan, towards the Japanese. You apparently don't.

FC: No. Why not hold it against the Italians, the Germans? No, I don't think it's right to hold a grudge.

BF: You played a part in a -- as you know -- a very important event in history. Has that fact had any effect on your life?

FC: Yes, I think it helped make me a better American. I feel when -- of course, I don't want to get into politics, but my children call me a reactionary because I feel that we're a different breed of cats. And we, I think, most of us, I don't know -- I can't speak for other people, but -- are sort of more of a patriotic bunch.

BF: The fact that you were here that day, what did you learn about yourself, if anything?

FC: I learned that I was a human being, that I was well trained. I wasn't scared one bit, until it was all over, and then I was scared as hell. Didn't have time to get scared.

BF: If you could change history and change it so that you were not there on the UTAH that day, would you change history?

FC: I once had a college professor that told me the past, the future are all part of the evolving present. And right today, I don't know that I could think of what I would have done last year, or what I would do next year. No, who knows? I think the Italians have a saying, "Que sera, sera," you know. Doris Day?

BF: Okay. That it? Okay, thank you very much.

FC: I wish I hadn't done this now . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#172(part 2) HOWARD TROST - PHOTOS

Chris Conybeare (CC): . . . walking down Hotel Street, Honolulu in July of '41. Both were attached to the USS *ANTARES*. What . . . are you rolling?

--: Yeah. Yeah, we've been rolling all this time.

CC: What was --- do you remember that incident, or do you remember that picture?

Howard Trost (HT): Yeah, I sure do. That's one of our lean and mean liberties and we were walking down Hotel Street, probably heading for the Black Cat to eat some chow, but that picture there is right opposite Wo Fat's, almost at the entrance to Wo Fat's right there. That was --- I was twenty years old at the time.

CC: You guys . . .

HT: Pretty sharp?

CC: . . . look pretty sharp. (HT chuckles) Like to --- a little bit of pride there, you think?

HT: Yeah. You can tell by the walk. Yeah, we were --- I don't know what ever happened to DE-KOON-IS, I lost track of him and none of the other fellows that I know, know what happened to him. But we were on liberty. You see, also in 1941, liberty was curtailed. I guess about after September, liberty went at ten, and you had to be back at four, because we were blackout after.

CC: So you were really in . . .

HT: Wartime conditions.

CC: . . . war conditions.

HT: Yeah, we really were.

CC: And so this took place on . . .

HT: July of '41.

CC: July of '41.

HT: That's just when the, well, about couple months after the fleet got out there.

CC: So things were a little easier . . .

HT: Right then, yeah.

(Conversation off-mike.)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

HT: After we went into the yard, after we got back to the Pearl and things were more or less settled down, the ship was mounted with a five-inch fifty on

the bow and the stern. And we had a three-inch here, on either side, and we had a three-inch here. Go ahead.

CC: No, no.

HT: On either side. And then we had two twenties here and two twenties here, and there's four twenties here. And I had my twenty here, because, again, I was interested in aviation . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

HT: . . . on River Street. The New Senator was one of the many . . .

CC: Try it again without . . .

HT: Okay. The New Senator was one of the many houses of ill repute located on River Street.

CC: And there's some indication here that maybe some people from your ship even knew about such a place?

HT: Oh, I'm sure . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

#173 JIM GREEN: USS *ARIZONA*

Chris Conybeare (CC): . . . just look at me and . . .

Jim Green (JG): Can't you pull that jack on the phone there?

CC: Nah, it's wired into the wall, unfortunately. And we'll just try to ignore all the rest of this. I think we'll get along real well.

This is an oral history interview with Jim Green, conducted December 4, 1986 at the Sheraton Waikiki in Honolulu. It's approximately 9:45 AM. Mr. Green lives in Troy, Michigan. My name is Chris Conybeare and I'm being assisted in the interview by Mark Tanaka-Sanders.

Mr. Green, we start these interviews with everybody the same way. Could you state your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

JG: Jim Green, Gunner's Mate Third Class.

CC: And where were you stationed?

JG: I stationed turret four.

CC: Of?

JG: On the USS *ARIZONA*.

CC: You were on --- let's go back a little bit first. How did you get on the ARIZONA? Had you been there long or what was your . . .

JG: No, I went aboard in 1940, August of 1940. I joined the Navy in 1940, March, and went to -- I requested the *ARIZONA*. I had a preference of aircraft carrier, battleship, or destroyer, and I took the *ARIZONA*.

CC: And how old were you?

JG: I was eighteen at that time.

CC: Still wet behind the ears?

JG: Yeah, still wet. Good kid too, though. Didn't smoke either.

CC: That morning, December 7, 1941, where were you and what were you doing, and how did you learn that you were under attack?

JG: I had the twelve to four magazine watch, and it was Sunday morning, we were allowed to sleep in. And I was a third class gunner's mate and I was allowed to sleep in the lower hamming room on a cot and a mattress. And as I was sitting on the couch, waiting, I just woke up, and three guys come running through the door saying we're being attacked by the Japs. And the crew down there, they said, "Well, you're full of baloney," words to that effect. We didn't believe it.

And shortly after that, the ship was hit by a bomb and the P.A. system, "Man your battle stations," and then I climbed a ladder to my battle station, which is on the left gun. I was a trade man.

CC: And where was that gun, on the ship, where was it located?

JG: In turret four.

CC: Turret four?

JG: Fourteen-inch turret gun.

CC: What was going on? What was going on around you? Did you get a chance to see anything or . . .

JG: Well, during the attack?

CC: Yeah.

JG: Well, you could look out the ports, for training and elevate the guns, and we'd take turns looking up and we see the planes buzz by and machine gunning. We see a bomb hit the ship, in the background.

CC: Now, you say a bomb hit the ship. What was that like? What . . .

JG: You mean when it hit the *ARIZONA*?

CC: Yeah.

JG: Well, you could feel that the ship would shudder. You could feel it. And after the seventh bomb, I think I wrote down there that the communications went out, and the lights went out.

CC: Then what happened?

JG: Then the men in the lower hamming room were starting to come up into the gun booth 'cause the, the lower hamming room was flooding. Water was coming in.

CC: And how many of 'em were able to come up?

JG: Well, everybody in the lower hamming room come up, but it got pretty crowded in the gun booth.

CC: At what time did you realize that the, the ship was sinking?

JG: We didn't realize the ship was sinking until we were told to go out on topside. Officer of the deck inside the -- and officer of the turret -- he went outside to see what was going on and he was told to come out of the turret by [*Lieutenant*] Commander Fuqua. He was the senior officer in charge that day, because the captain was killed. And the crew left their turret and we started putting the wounded into the boats and life rafts. And meantime, we're still being machine gunned, and they were still dropping bombs.

CC: Now, you're nineteen years old, and as you say, a little still wet behind the ears and all of a sudden you're in the middle of war and people are getting killed and wounded around you. How did you feel at that time?

JG: Well, I went aboard the *TENNESSEE* and we had to take the ammunition out of it because it was flooded. And during the break there and guys were smoking cigarettes and being that I didn't smoke, that's when I started smoking. I was

scared to death. Somebody'd drop something, we'd jump and take off and we didn't know where we was running to. We were scared.

CC: And how did you get to the *TENNESSEE*? How did that happen?

JG: Well, I went to Ford Island, as I said, I was going to Ford Island and being a gunner's mate, then they flooded the magazines and so I went aboard and helped take the ammunition out.

CC: Okay. Now, when you left the *ARIZONA*, you just jumped and swam?

JG: Yeah, I swam to one of the keys where we were tied to, and I rested there for four or five minutes, then I swam to Ford Island.

CC: What was the condition of the water? What -- was there oil and fire, or what?

JG: Well, where I got out, where I swam to, there was no oil. But forward of that, the water was on fire. And that oil, when I swam to Ford Island, the corpsmen cleansed my eyes out. (Mumbles)

CC: And did you see other ship mates trying to swim or . . .

JG: Oh, there was several of us trying to swim over.

CC: So, could you try to stick together, or did you . . .

JG: No, I think we was all, one for one by then, look after himself.

CC: And, okay, so you go over to the *TENNESSEE*. Did somebody put you into, press you into new service? I mean, how did you get involved with that action? They told you, assigned you there, or somebody gave you orders, or what happened when you got to Ford Island?

JG: When I went aboard the *TENNESSEE* I got . . . the officer in charge of the turret area, he told me to go down below and take out the ammunition, help carry out the ammunition.

CC: What time was that about?

JG: About ten o'clock in the morning.

CC: So the attack was just . . .

JG: Just barely over.

CC: Of course, you didn't know . . .

JG: I didn't know.

CC: You didn't know what was going to happen next.

JG: No.

CC: How about that evening and later on, when did you realize how many of your shipmates had been lost? At what point did you know how bad it was?

JG: Oh, I didn't know actually how many men were lost 'til the next day, 'cause I was aboard the *TENNESSEE* for two days. And then I got transferred to the receiving station and that's when I found out that that many men were lost.

CC: How'd that hit you?

JG: Well, it was quite a jolt. At that time, I lost a lot of my buddies, in fact twenty-eight from the state of Michigan were aboard that ship. And six guys that went through camp, they lost their lives that day.

CC: What'd that make you think about?

JG: What do you mean, what did it make me think about?

CC: Well, when you realized just how bad it was, do you remember how you felt or what kinds of things you were thinking?

JG: Well, just like everything else, we was mad, we're gonna go for revenge.

CC: So what happened next? Did you --- what was your next assignment?

JG: Well, I was assigned to ordnance salvage, that's where I repair guns and they put on a board, they wanted a man who lived aboard a ship to volunteer as a diver. So that's when I had a buddy, we volunteered as a diver, we knew how to -- I'd gone down there for sixteen months, I knew how to get around pretty well. Easier, it'd be easier for me to get around than try to go by a blueprint.

CC: And then they trained you in the diving?

JG: I went aboard the [*USS*] *WIDGEON* [*ASR-1*] and went through training for a diver, salvage diver.

CC: And you, one of your assignments then was to, first one, was to work on the *ARIZONA*?

JG: That was the first one, yes.

CC: What was that like? What kinds of things did you have to do?

JG: Well, we took out the ammunition, because it was going to be reworked and used, and took out gas masks and anything of any value. And they told us go to a certain compartment to check on it. And at one time, we even tunneled out of the ship to check the keel, see if the keel was broken. Because they had plans on raising in the *ARIZONA*. Then they found out they didn't know if the keel was broken, they had to have something to anchor the patch if they had to put a patch on it.

CC: And what'd you find?

JG: Well, the keel was broken in two places.

CC: So it wasn't really feasible.

JG: So they cancelled her. And they figured it cost 4,000,000 dollars at that time to, hell, you know, to raise it.

CC: What were the conditions, what was the condition in the water when you would go down? Was there a lot of oil and debris?

JG: Lot of oil and debris and stuff floating around inside the compartments.

CC: Yeah. And what . . .

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Okay.

(Taping stops, then resumes)

CC: Let's go . . .

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Yeah, okay. Why don't we do that? Why don't we go back to the day of the attack a little bit and . . . . Yeah, did you --- when you received the --- you got a call to battle stations, and how did that happen? Did it come over the usual system, or did just people . . .

JG: Over the old Klaxon.

CC: Klaxon? And you reported to your station.

JG: I climbed the ladder to my battle station.

CC: Could you see other people reporting to their stations at that time or . . .

JG: Well, in that old hamming room there, that's where they were going to, their stations, gun stations.

CC: How about the other turrets?

JG: Well, I seen men running to their turret, or manning their positions, right opposite ours.

CC: Did you ever get your gun into action?

JG: No, you can't fire a fourteen-inch gun at an aircraft. Twenty-two hundred pound or 1,200 pound shell.

CC: What about other guns on the ship? Any other guns ever get into action?

JG: I didn't hear it, 'cause I was inside the turret.

CC: You wouldn't be able to?

JG: I wouldn't be able to hear it.

CC: Did you observe any of the damage forward, or any of that?

JG: I didn't see that 'til I left the ship, when I was on Ford Island.

CC: So basically, you just weren't able to really ascertain what the status was?

JG: I found that out when I was on the Ford Island, then when I was on the *TENNESSEE*. 'Cause on the *TENNESSEE*, they had the screws, four screws turning to agitate the water, due to the fact the heat was so intense, coming from the *ARIZONA*, because they were afraid their magazine was going to explode. That's why they flooded it.

CC: So the water surrounding the *TENNESSEE* was -- why were they agitating it now?

JG: To cool the water, keep the water cool.

CC: The water was that hot from the fire?

JG: Yes. Even though -- that's what they claim -- if they didn't flood it, the ship might explode, the magazines.

CC: Later, when you got into the salvage work, what would the process be if you were trying to salvage the ammunition and what was that like? How would you do it, physically? One guy would go down, or would there be a team? Or just could you describe the process you would go through?

JG: Well, when we first started, one guy would go down but we always sent another guy down with him after one diver lost his life, then we always sent two down. And we'd bring it back to the opening, that raise up to the outside, overhead, hoist it up, lift it up. Sometimes you gotta use the chain fall to raise it. And sometimes we used the crane to pull it up.

CC: Now, when you say a diver lost his life, that wasn't on the ARIZONA, though?

JG: No, that was on the *UTAH*.

CC: And you were --- did you get involved in salvage on the *UTAH* as well?

JG: I dove several times on the *UTAH*.

CC: Same --- what kinds of things did you do there, same things?

JG: Well, no, I was told to inspect, to check a room or compartment.

CC: And what did you find?

JG: Well, this was empty or nobody knew it was flooded.

CC: Did you try to retrieve bodies of people who were killed?

JG: No, that time, the Navy did not wear dog tags, so we had no way of identifying and the medical records were destroyed one day after the explosion. While diving in the *ARIZONA*, I was walking around in a compartment and air from my helmet, would cause a whirlpool, and a body would bump against my arm. And I pushed it away. But after months and months, they had the flesh decomposed and there's nothing left but bones. They'd be on the deck.

CC: It must have been a pretty amazing experience to do that.

JG: Kind of spooky. Couldn't see the nose in front of you underwater, inside the ship. In fact, we used lamps. And if you wanted to see anything closer, you'd have to put the lamp about six to eight inches from what you were looking at. The lamps weren't really well or effective at that time, for underwater use.

CC: So basically, sort of groping on . . .

JG: Yeah, all done by feel.

CC: Do you have any other specific questions about salvage operations that you might want to match with some of the things you have pictures of already?

(Taping stops, then resumes)

CC: So evidently the Park Service has a lot of documentation of the salvage work and so we're trying to get descriptions from people who were actually involved, so that when we show people the pictures and things, you can get a better understanding of what . . .

JG: Well, we had to dive in the channel. We had to dive --- any high projections sticking up so in case the ship wouldn't hit it when it went over that part. Because at the widest part of the *OKLAHOMA*, I dove on. There's nothing --- we dove on and the fire was there, that came from the *ARIZONA*. That was from the *OKLAHOMA* that we checked the channel.

CC: But, in terms of the superstructure of the *ARIZONA*, did you have to help remove that or . . .

JG: No. No. I had nothing to do with the superstructure. We went aboard the third day and see -- no, wait, when was it? They said a bomb went down the stack in reading books. The screen on top the stack was still intact. There's no holes in the side of the stack, so the bomb did not go down the stack. In fact, I talked to -- who's that, Wentworth -- in 1962 at the dedication. And I think, a guy by the name of Baum was the narrator on that memorial, and that was what their talk was to the public, that the bomb went down the stack and they changed it. They didn't say that the bomb went down the stack.

Jake Pacitti and I, we volunteered together as divers. He was my gun captain, I was his trade man. We went and saw this -- I think his name was Wentworth, that time, '62.

CC: Yeah.

JG: Commandant, was it, commander or . . . .

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Yeah, maybe you could say what parts of the ship you actually were diving on when you were diving on the *ARIZONA.*

JG: Well, we did some diving. We opened a turret, turret two, that picture you have in that book out there shows that some attended that too. And we went inside and we cut into one side of the turret, where the powder man pushed through the door to the gun, and all we found in the turret two was ashes. I assume that they were human ashes.

CC: That's all that was left.

JG: That's all that was left, yes.

CC: Any other parts of the ship you remember diving on?

JG: Well, we go down to see where turret one was. We supposedly dropped twenty feet. We just dove on this, just to go take a look. That's all we did on it.

CC: What did you find there?

JG: That the turret was where it was supposed to be. In fact, I saw a picture somebody brought back when we were out here that they had a drawing where this -- must be a big hole up there, on the *ARIZONA*. I think they have a survey report of that available?

CC: I don't know, maybe . . .

JG: I'm kind of curious of how that . . . . And we had a report that the ship was falling apart at one armor plate section, was supposed to have broke loose from the ship.

CC: You didn't observe that, though, when you were diving?

JG: No. No, I read that in the paper.

CC: Maybe it's happened since. I want to get back to something a little different that goes back to before the attack. One of the things that's been mentioned, of course, is the *ARIZONA*'s band had been in a . . .

JG: Had a band . . .

CC: . . . had a contest the night before.

JG: Best band in the fleet.

CC: Were you part --- did you observe that . . .

JG: No, I didn't go to that one. I just went by their record, the best band in the fleet.

CC: And what kinds of things would you have done that day if there hadn't been an attack? What kinds of things would you ordinarily have done on a Sun-- what were you looking forward to doing that Sunday?

JG: Well, that's why I was sitting on my cot, I was just trying to figure out what to do. I had the watch, 'cause I already stood the twelve to four watch, so I was on the fort watch, and then fort watch had the duty that day, so I had to stay aboard ship. So I just was sitting there and debating what to do.

CC: What was Sunday duty usually like?

JG: Day of leisure.

CC: And . . .

JG: You'd have to watch, you can't go on liberty.

CC: But what kinds of things would you do on board?

JG: Oh, play acey-deucey or poker. It was the right place to have a poker game.

CC: And were some of your shipmates getting ready to go on liberty at the same time?

JG: Mm hm.

CC: Did you spend the --- did you, in terms of your later duty in the war, as in the salvage work, did you spend all of it based in Pearl, or did you get out in the rest of the Pacific theater?

JG: I left Pearl Harbor in December of '43 and went to Washington D.C. and qualified as a deep sea diver. I was a salvage diver in Pearl. I could only dive up to ninety feet. I couldn't dive lower than ninety feet. So Jake Pacitti, who was sort of my buddy, he also went to deep sea diving school. But he stayed there, in experimental. I qualified as deep sea diver and I put in for the east coast. Naturally in the Navy, you put in for something, you get the opposite, so they sent me off to the Philippines. I was out in the Philippines.

CC: When you look back at it all from forty-five year vantage point, how do you feel about the whole incident?

JG: I don't get it. I mean, how I feel about it? You mean . . .

CC: Well, how do you think about it? I mean, do you put it in any different perspective now as you look back?

JG: Oh yeah. I can put in two or three of 'em now, when I read the books and read papers on it.

CC: Yeah. Well, what's changed in the way you think about it? Have you changed the way you think about that?

JG: Yeah. Especially when I see, look at the economy today. I hate to say this to people but, like, I wouldn't buy a Japanese car. And I've argued with several neighbors that have had Japanese cars, and I told him, "While you're doing that, directly or indirectly, you're shafting your parents, or your brothers, or sister, your friends, of employment." They don't -- none of them would say anything about it, they didn't want to argue.

CC: How about young people? Do you think young people have any understanding of what you went through in that?

JG: No, I don't think. They, they don't care what happens. Some people don't even know there's a December 7, 1941.

CC: When you run across somebody like that, how does that make you feel?

JG: Well, I can't blame them because of their age, you know. I remember when I got out of the service, my dad was in World War I, and he never did talk much

about it or say anything. I think it's a little different now, due to the economy, the way the economy's going. I watched a movie the other night about these Japs on the west coast and they put 'em in the internment camps. And I say, well, that's tough luck. I said, "That's war. That was war." You want to give 'em $60,000 apiece, reparation, pay money? And people out here screaming about Nagasaki, if they hadn't dropped a bomb on Pearl Harbor, there wouldn't have been no Nagasaki or Hiroshima. I guess a lot of people lost their lives over there in two atomic bombs.

CC: So that's, you see that as part of what war means?

JG: That's war. People suffer.

CC: Okay.

JG: I know a lot of guys even in the latter part of the war, they got killed, due to the fact of the kamikaze attacks. Bunch of fanatics to use suicide, it's crazy.

CC: Okay. Do you have any other . . .

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Okay, that's great. Good, very good. You've been very helpful.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

CC: Okay, so starting on the left of that picture, who's that handsome character standing up?

JG: Oh, that's supposed to me. I'm tending a diver, and I believe it was either Jake Pacitti, or Dover. I don't --- forgot his first name.

CC: And then the next fellow?

JG: And the one in the far, in the flesh suit is Oliphant. I forgot his first name. I remember Oliphant.

CC: And the other two, then?

JG: The other two, he was a gunnery officer, but he wasn't aboard the ship at the time. He was in charge of the diving operation.

CC: And where is this?

JG: This is on the top of turret two.

CC: And what are you trying to ascertain here at this time?

JG: Well, we wanted to see what was inside, if there was anything. No, I wasn't trying to find any rings or jewelry, or watches, but it was all metal.

CC: And you said you found basically that full of ashes.

JG: Ashes, probably human ashes.

CC: Let me ask you this, you told me a story before when you were diving, you went back to your old locker. Tell me that one.

JG: Well, we were taking out the ammunition in the hamming room there, and my locker was -- I knew where my locker was -- so I went to it and I pried it open with a crowbar, 'cause I didn't have a key. And I took out my clothes and they just fell apart. I found my electric razor and it was no good, so I just tossed it aside. And then I looked in my wallet, it had a five dollar bill. And I can't remember if I got paid shortly before then, but I -- during them days, you usually borrowed five dollars, and that dollar could be worth ten dollars, could be worth seven dollars, 'cause I borrowed it and had to pay ten dollars back for a five dollar bill to go on liberty. So I still got the five dollar bill.

CC: Oh, I see, so you'd have to give ten for five?

JG: Yeah, ten-something. Yeah, if I wanted to go to shore bad enough, I had, I knew a guy who I could get it, and sometimes he'd charge me six, sometimes he'd charge me seven. It was as high as ten sometimes for a five dollar bill. You wanted to go ashore, you wanted to go ashore. You want to get it.

CC: What kinds of things would you do when you got to shore? What was a good liberty? What was a good time?

JG: Good liberty? Well, liberty wasn't too good out there in them days. Not then. Why? I didn't drink, I didn't smoke. This was before Pearl Harbor. And even after the war started, they were pretty strict on -- you had to be twenty-one years of age to drink out here.

CC: So all these myths about sailors having a great time in the . . .

JG: No, not necessarily so in Hawaii at that time.

CC: But the war got you started drinking and smoking, is that . . .

JG: Oh yeah, it -- I would say I was so scared on December 7, in the afternoon, that I started smoking.

CC: How long did you keep that up?

JG: Well, forty-five years today, or well, this Sunday, forty-five years exactly.

CC: Take a drink occasionally now?

JG: Always drink, yeah, always had a drink.

--: Could you read the caption, Chris, out loud?

CC: Okay. This slate? Divers emerge from water-filled compartments of USS *ARIZONA* in May 1943. Some salvage work was done, but it was considered too dangerous to try and recover the bodies of the men who went down with the ship, the US Navy.

END OF INTERVIEW