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Interview with
Phillip L. Daifron
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Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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(Signature)
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Oral History Collection

Phillip Daffron

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: February 9, 1977

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Phillip Daffron for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 9, 1977, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Daffron in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. Actually, Mr. Daffron was in the Army and stationed at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack.

Now Mr. Daffron, to begin this interview would you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Daffron: Okay, I was born in Plano, Texas, actually not twelve miles from where we're sitting right now--up on Preston Road. I was born there in 1915. I went to eleven years of school in Plano and then went to Texas A & M and then graduated from Texas A & M in 1937. Incidentally, that's where I got a reserve officer's commission--at A & M.

Marcello: When did you actually go to the Hawaiian Islands?

Daffron: Well, I was living in Corpus Christi at the time. The Army called us up for--called the reserve officers--for six months' active duty, which was in June, 1940. Within a few months--this was in Fort Sam Houston, Texas--they asked if I would accept an assignment overseas. I said, "Yes, I would." I ended up in going to Hawaii in December of 1940.

Marcello: Now did you have your choice of stations other than Hawaii, or was this simply where you were sent overseas?

Daffron: I had a choice. Rather, they said, "Name three choices," and I named . . . I don't know how I got by with this, but I said that I would accept . . . they said you could either go to Alaska, the Philippines, or Hawaii. I said, "I will go to Hawaii only--will not accept anything else." How I got by with that, I don't know; but that's where they sent me.

Marcello: Why did you decide that you wanted to go to Hawaii rather than the other two foreign stations?

Daffron: It just appealed to me.

Marcello: At that particular time, how closely were you keeping abreast with current events and world affairs?

Daffron: Real closely. I knew what was going on in Europe, and I thought maybe Hawaii might be a safe place.

Marcello: Now you mention that you were keeping abreast with affairs that were happening in Europe. How about the Far East?

Daffron: Well, for some reason, I didn't particularly pay any attention to it.

Marcello: I think this is probably a standard observation that most of the people who went to the service at that particular time had. All eyes were turned toward Europe, and I don't think too many people gave much thought to the possibility of war with Japan.

Daffron: That's right. That's right.

Marcello: Now when you got to the Hawaiian Islands, did you undergo any sort of an orientation program there or anything else, or were you actually ready to serve in the Army at that time?

Daffron: Oh, I was in the Army. I was called to active duty. In fact, when I went to Fort Sam Houston, I was called to active duty.

Marcello: How long were you at Fort Sam Houston before you actually went to the Hawaiian Islands?

Daffron: From June until December.

Marcello: And what sort of a program did you undergo there at Fort Sam Houston?

Daffron: That was just a training for . . . in other words, to give the reserve officers training. I was a second lieutenant when I was called in. In a month or so, of course, I was made a first lieutenant. That's strictly from just length of service rather than, you know, anything you did. I mean, I got my reserve officer's commission in '37; normally in three years, you get a promotion.

Marcello: In other words, your promotion was a matter of longevity more than anything else.

Daffron: Right. Right.

Marcello: Okay, so when you got to the Hawaiian Islands, were you sent directly to Schofield Barracks?

Daffron: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Describe what Schofield Barracks looked like at the time you got there from a physical standpoint.

Daffron: Well, it was a very good-looking barracks, if I must use that word. What I'm trying to say is that it kind of reminded you of nice apartments. Of course, they were wooden, but it was a permanent base. In other words, the barracks weren't thrown up. Actually, I never. . . of course, the enlisted men lived in the barracks. I lived in the BOQ, which is, well, sort of a duplex where I lived.

Marcello: You might describe what your quarters were like there at the BOQ.

Daffron: Well, like I said, it was like a duplex. You had a bedroom, a sitting room, of course, a bath. There were just two of them. I had one side by myself, and it was very comfortable.

Marcello: Was this unusual to have had one by yourself, or was this standard procedure at that time?

Daffron: This was standard procedure.

Marcello: What particular specialization did you have at the time that

you went to Schofield Barracks? In other words, in what area of the Army were you participating?

Daffron: Field artillery. I was in the field artillery at A & M and got a reserve commission in the field artillery.

Marcello: Okay, why don't you describe what sort of training and routine you were to undergo after you got settled in at Schofield Barracks. I'm referring to that period prior to the actual Pearl Harbor attack itself.

Daffron: We trained, of course, the men as well as yourself. Of course, we had gunnery practice with live ammunition. We shot into the sea and also into the desert parts--you know, regular gun practice.

The training there at that time when I got there. . . I'll never forget the first day I went to work. They gave you two weeks to start with to get you acclimated to the climate, but I had to go to work earlier because there was a shortage of artillery officers. But anyway, the first day I went to work, we had our morning training. That afternoon I showed up at the barracks, and the sergeant asked me, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, this is a normal day, isn't it? I'm supposed to be here." He said, "Well, don't you know no officers ever show up in the afternoon?"

So it was pretty good duty as far as that's concerned. You just worked in the morning and had the afternoon off--until

things got a little more critical. So then we started working all day.

Marcello: Why was it that the work schedule was limited to strictly the mornings?

Daffron: That's just the way they did it in Hawaii.

Marcello: I gather that life in the Army in the Hawaiian Islands during that pre-Pearl Harbor period was a rather casual sort of life.

Daffron: Yes, it was. We had all kinds of beaches to go to. They had quite an athletic program. You had baseball, football, and all the athletics of the different seasons.

Marcello: You brought up an interesting point. From everything that I've heard, sports--athletics--did play a very important part in the life of that peacetime Army in the Hawaiian islands.

Daffron: Right. Yes, it did. One reason is because you felt confined, especially being from Texas. You know, you might drive a couple hundred miles, and it doesn't mean anything. In Hawaii the farthest you could go would be about twenty or twenty-five miles, and you'd hit the ocean. Of course, you could drive all the way around the island, which was about ninety miles. But I felt rather confined. I think the other people did, too, and so this was something more of a diversion.

Marcello: Let's get back to your training routine once again. You mentioned that you were in the field artillery. Was the training a constant

thing? In other words, was it performed on daily basis, or just how did the training routine work?

Daffron: Yes, it was a daily basis, except you had gun practice. . . when I say gun practice, I mean you fired actual live ammunition probably once a week. But otherwise, you had your drills on the guns, and that was every day, as well as your different map readings, communications, and all that that goes with it.

Marcello: What sort of artillery pieces are you using here?

Daffron: We had 105-millimeter howitzers. They took the place of the old 75-millimeter howitzers.

Marcello: Now that was a French gun, was it not?

Daffron: French 75-millimeter, yes.

Marcello: Now were you in charge of a particular group of men here during this particular period?

Daffron: I was. . .you know, it's been so long ago, and I'm trying to think of what they called the first lieutenant in the battery-- executive officer. You had the captain who was in charge of all of it. The first lieutenant was, you might say, second in command. I was called the executive officer.

Marcello: Okay, and what was your function as an executive officer?

Daffron: Well, as I said, you're second in command to the captain; you're kind of over all of it. The main thing that an executive officer did was to fire the guns. In other words, he was in command of the guns.

Marcello: Now how did your training routine change as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate? Or maybe I should ask first of all--did it change any?

Daffron: It changed some. As I said while ago, we were required to stay longer. As far as the training is concerned, it didn't change any. We just did more of it.

Marcello: Were there any alerts or maneuvers or anything of that nature prior to the actual attack itself on December 7th?

Daffron: Very much so. That's what was confusing about the attack. We had. . . oh, I'd say we would have an alert once a week--different types of alerts. We had what we called our wartime positions, and we would go to that.

Marcello: You mention that you would have these alerts about once a week. Approximately how far before the actual attack had these alerts begun?

Daffron: I would say within four to six months.

Marcello: This brings up another interesting point. How often can you keep calling alerts and not having anything happen? In other words, I guess what I'm saying is how would this affect your training routine?

Daffron: They got to be routine. In other words, the alert would just, you might say, be something like a fire drill.

Marcello: In other words, they really aren't taken too seriously after awhile.

Daffron: That's right. But you know what you're supposed to do, so you do it.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit more about these alerts. You mentioned that you had pre-arranged positions to which you usually would go. Describe how one of these alerts would take place and what you would do.

Daffron: Well, that's going to be hard to do (chuckle) because I don't remember. See, all I can remember is that. . . how you got this alert, I don't remember. But then you called your men together, and you got in your transportation, and you immediately went to your wartime position. You set up camp or whatever you set up, and you're ready for supposedly anything that might happen.

Marcello: Approximately how long would one of these alerts last?

Daffron: Oh, they wouldn't last. . . a lot of alerts wouldn't last but a couple of hours. Mostly they were for training purposes.

Marcello: What was the longest that an alert might last?

Daffron: Oh, I would say half a day, as I remember.

Marcello: In other words, in most cases, they didn't actually last overnight.

Daffron: No.

Marcello: Now let's talk about another subject. What was the social life

like for a young officer in the Hawaiian Islands during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Daffron: Pretty bad. There were very, very few girls--eligible--that they could go out with. The only ones would be . . . they'd be your higher-ranking officers' daughters or someone who might come to visit. As far as local girls, at that time there just weren't too many people there. That was really the dullest part about being in Hawaii. Of course, as far as your social life, there was always cocktail parties and things that happened quite frequently. But you had no one to escort.

Marcello: I gather that there was a great deal of entertaining among the officer corps in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army.

Daffron: Yes.

Marcello: And it was a very formal affair, was it not?

Daffron: Oh, yes. You wore your tux, your formal clothes.

Marcello: What would you do when you went on leave or liberty?

Daffron: The main thing you did was just go to Honolulu for dinner or to the bars or a show. . . and nightclubs. That's about all there was to do.

Marcello: About how often would you, as a first lieutenant, get liberty?

Daffron: I don't even remember having any because you had so much time off anyway that. . . now I do know this--another officer and myself had planned to go to the other islands in January.

Marcello: Of 1942?

Daffron: Of 1942. The main reason is that I had an automobile, and I was making payments, and by that time the payments would have been . . . or rather, it would have been paid for, and I would have had the money to go. Of course, we didn't get to go.

Marcello: Now that pre-Pearl Harbor period, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Daffron: Well. . . I can't . . . all of them were very, very. . . from what I could see of them, they were very respectful and very nice to you. I didn't have anything. . . they seemed all right to me.

Marcello: How much contact did you have with the Japanese civilians who might possibly have worked on the base?

Daffron: I had none.

Marcello: Do you recall what sort of jobs that they would usually have held on the base?

Daffron: I don't remember any being on the base.

Marcello: Suppose war did break out between the United States and Japan. How much talk was there about the possibility of these Japanese on the Hawaiian Islands acting as fifth columnists or saboteurs? Did this sort of thinking ever enter the conversations that you and your fellow officers may have had?

Daffron: No. No, I could tell you some stories on it, but not at this point because no one ever brought it. . . in the first place, no one ever thought that the Japanese would attack Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Are you saying in effect, then, that most people felt fairly safe and secure in the Hawaiian Islands even if war did come between the two countries?

Daffron: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Why was it that there was this sense of security?

Daffron: Well, the thinking was that maybe that wasn't, you know, worth them taking; that something maybe on the West Coast would be more desirable for the Japanese than the Hawaiian Islands.

Marcello: Also, at the same time, the Hawaiian Islands are a long way from Japan, and distance alone may have given one this feeling of security.

Daffron: That's right.

Marcello: Okay, I think this more or less brings us up to the events immediately prior to the actual attack itself. What I want you to do at this point is to talk about the weekend of December 7, 1941. In doing so, where would it be best to start? Would it be best to start on a Friday, or did you have a particular alert that week that we need to talk about?

Daffron: No. No, not that I remember.

Marcello: Okay, let's start, then, with your routine on Friday of December 5, 1941. Do you remember what you did that particular day?

Daffron: Not on Friday, I don't.

Marcello: How about Saturday?

Daffron: Okay, on Saturday normally we had an inspection. As I said before, we had 105-millimeter howitzers. Well, about three weeks prior to this time, they took those away from us and sent them to the Philippines. In their place, they gave us 175-millimeter howitzers, which had been stored and were full of cosmoline, which is a grease that preserves them. But we had an inspection, so we had to clean these up. Sure enough, that Saturday we had the inspection, and we had our 175-millimeter howitzers.

Marcello: You mentioned an interesting point here, and maybe you might comment on this. You mentioned that they had taken away your 105-millimeters and had sent them to the Philippine Islands. Evidently, if some sort of hostilities did break out between the two countries, the military thought the Philippines were going to be a prime target.

Daffron: Right. Absolutely. That's why they sent the guns there.

Marcello: Were they stripping a lot of other equipment from the units there on the Hawaiian Islands and sending it over to the Philippines?

Daffron: Not that I know of. This is the only thing that I'm conscious of.

Marcello: Okay, when was this inspection, now? On Saturday morning?

Daffron: It was on Saturday.

Marcello: Saturday morning?

Daffron: Saturday morning.

Marcello: Do you remember what time it was over?

Daffron: Oh, it was always over by noon.

Marcello: And what did you do that point?

Daffron: Well, I don't remember what happened in the afternoon, but I do know that I went to Honolulu with my commanding officer--captain--and his wife. I don't even remember what we did in Honolulu, but we probably went to a nightclub. But I do remember coming home, and the moon was shining so bright that you could just turn the lights off in the car--just drive without lights. This was, oh, twelve or one o'clock in the morning.

We noticed one thing that night. Normally, the radio stations go off at twelve o'clock, and this was after twelve--probably one o'clock--and they were still on. We said, "Well, that's peculiar. I wonder why that's happening?" Of course, the reason it was happening was that they were flying some B-17's from the States. They left the radio station on for a beam for them to come into Honolulu.

Marcello: In other words, this was their long-range aid to navigation.

Daffron: Right. I guess you've heard that before. We found this out later; we didn't know at the time.

Marcello: You mentioned that you and your commanding officer and his wife had visited some nightclubs that night in Honolulu. The next question that I'm going to ask you is kind of an important one, and I want you to think carefully before you answer. Many people like to say that if the Japanese or anybody else were going to attack the military installations on the Hawaiian Islands, the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. Now what these people assert is that Saturday nights were a time of partying, hell-raising, things of that nature, and consequently, the military personnel would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you answer that particular assertion from your observations?

Daffron: I would say that you're right in what you're saying. I don't know how to expand on that because I agree with you.

Marcello: Well, let's talk about the officers since you would have had obviously more contact with this particular group of people. What would typical Saturday nights be like for the officers--whether they were married or single?

Daffron: Well, you'd go either to the officers' club or go to town to a nightclub, and, of course, drinking--I wouldn't say it's that heavy. It's true that that happened, but I wouldn't say that it was to the point that you were unable to do your duty the next day.

Marcello: Okay, this was the point that I was hoping that you would bring out.

Daffron: There were some pretty tough people in the Army, you know (chuckle).

Marcello: Yes.

Daffron: I don't mean I'm that tough, but I've seen some of them that I don't know how they operate, but they do.

Marcello: Well, in your own particular case, what time did you get to bed on that Saturday night?

Daffron: Oh, I'd say 1:30.

Marcello: Were you in pretty good shape when you went to bed?

Daffron: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Marcello: Other than the bright moonlight and the fact that the radio station was still playing after midnight, you saw nothing eventful that particular night?

Daffron: No. No.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into Sunday morning, then, of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do at this point is to describe for me in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was from the time you got up until all hell broke loose that day.

Daffron: Well, I got up when all hell broke loose (laughter).

Marcello: In other words, here again, Sunday was a day of leisure, was it not?

Daffron: Right. My BOQ was only about two blocks from Wheeler Air Force Base, which is a fighter field.

Marcello: And it was to provide fighter protection for Schofield Barracks.

Daffron: Right. Right. I woke up with all this noise. The noise woke me up. The first thing I did was look at the clock, and I'll never forget it. It was five minutes until eight. So I said, "I wonder what's going on?" So I immediately put on a robe and went outside.

Marcello: Did you have an unobstructed view of Wheeler Field?

Daffron: No. Even though it was only about three or four blocks, there were some buildings that kept me from . . . I could see planes and the smoke; I could see the top of the buildings; I couldn't actually see the planes on the ground.

But the first thing that I saw was this airplane with the rising sun on it and coming up, you know, now. . . oh, he wasn't three or four hundred feet high. The first thing I thought of, "Well, this is an alert, and the Marines are really putting one on this time. They've even decorated their plane!"

Marcello: In other words, you saw the rising sun, but it really didn't register that it was a Japanese plane?

Daffron: That's right. So my BOQ is right across the street from a drill field, which is, you know, a big block long--nothing there--and it's where you drill. This plane came down--and I ran out and was in the street--and he came down and he strafed the building next door to my BOQ. Why he didn't shoot at me, I don't know.

But as he. . . my car was setting there on the street, and as he would shoot his machine guns, the empty shells would come out and they went "ping, ping, ping" right across my car. So, of course, that. . . I said, "There's something unusual going on," so I went back and turned my radio on.

Marcello: In the meantime, what were other people doing in the same area where you were?

Daffron: I didn't see anybody (chuckle). As far as I know, I was the only one that went out as far as my BOQ was concerned.

Marcello: Were you able to distinguish this pilot?

Daffron: I could see his head, yes. I couldn't tell you . . . you know, he had his goggles on, so I couldn't tell you . . . I could not distinguish that he might be a Japanese. That's what I'm trying to say.

Marcello: Was he coming in at a rather high rate of speed, or was it more or less like a glide?

Daffron: Well, he wasn't gliding, but he really wasn't flying that fast. But he did not glide.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you went back into your quarters and turned on the radio.

Daffron: I turned on the radio, and this announcer said that we were being attacked by the Japanese. He said, "Repeat! This is not a drill! This is not an alert! This is the real thing!" So I

immediately got dressed because. . . something was going to happen. So it wasn't long until I got a phone call to report to my battery.

Marcello: About how much time had expired from the time you heard the initial explosions or noises until the phone rang telling you to report to your unit?

Daffron: Oh, fifteen minutes.

Marcello: How far was it from your quarters to your unit?

Daffron: Oh, about three blocks.

Marcello: Okay, describe the trip over that three-block distance. Was there anything eventful that happened?

Daffron: No, I can't remember anything.

Marcello: Did you use your car, or did you go on foot?

Daffron: No, I went on foot.

Marcello: Did you go at a fast rate of speed?

Daffron: (Chuckle) I guess I did. Like I say, I don't even remember. All I remember is being in my BOQ, and the next thing I remember is being at our battery. And it was confusing. Everybody. . . no one knew what to do.

Marcello: I was just going to ask you--what sort of an atmosphere did you find when you arrived at your battery?

Daffron: Everybody was confused because, you see, in the meantime, some of our planes had gotten up. I guess that's the first time in my life I ever saw an airplane fall because the Japanese knocked

him down. We really didn't know what to do. We kind of waited for word to come from the top. I will tell you this, though, in . . . I don't know whether you saw the movie "From Here to Eternity" or not--did you see that?

Marcello: Yes, I sure did.

Daffron: There was a sergeant that would not give the people any ammunition--that actually happened in my battery.

Marcello: You might describe this particular incident because I think it is an important one.

Daffron: Well, of course, you know, you don't get live ammunition unless you have some kind of target practice. So everybody went to the supply sergeant to get live ammunition. He says, "I have no orders to give it to you," and he wouldn't give it to you--which he was right in a way. But he finally got word (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so how long did you remain with the battery before the confusion subsided and common sense began to take over or discipline began to assert itself?

Daffron: Okay, by twelve o'clock, we had our guns hooked up to our prime movers, and we were leaving for our gun position, which was in the Punch Bowl of Hawaii.

Marcello: Now you reported to your battery very shortly after eight o'clock, and you remained there until twelve and actually did nothing during that particular period?

Daffron: Well. . . that's right.

Marcello: How long would it have taken you to get your guns and so on ready to take them out into the field?

Daffron: Well, it would have taken about an hour.

Marcello: And in the meantime, you were just more or less waiting around for orders and that sort of thing?

Daffron: Right. Right.

Marcello: Did your particular group come under any strafing or attack during this period?

Daffron: No. The closest thing we had was when this man strafed the building next door to where I was standing, and I mean that wasn't ten yards away. As I said awhile ago, why he didn't aim at me, I don't know, because I was the only one standing there.

Marcello: What sort of damage was done at Schofield?

Daffron: Not a whole lot except bullet holes. Did we see the bullet holes when we went back? I think we did.

Mrs. Daffron: No, but you showed me where your car was.

Daffron: Just strafing there. Of course, they did their damage at the air fields. . . bombings. That was torn up. I understand that there was only five airplanes that could fly when this was over.

Marcello: I gather, then, that just about everything that occurred at Schofield was mainly strafing.

Daffron: Just harassment, right.

Marcello: In other words, they had dropped their bombs at. . .

Daffron: Well, they did this while they were dropping the bombs.

Marcello: Yes, well, they dropped their bombs at Wheeler, and then as an afterthought, they strafed Schofield Barracks, you might say.

Daffron: Right. Yes.

Marcello: Okay, now you mentioned that you went out into the field sometime around noon on December 7th. What happened when you got to your pre-arranged positions?

Daffron: Well, in the meantime, I'll tell you this. We passed right by Pearl Harbor, and we saw all the damage. There was only one ship that was afloat, which was the hospital ship. Everything else had been hit, was smoking, or sunk or half-way under the water.

Marcello: Did you have time to think about the damage you saw? What sort of emotions did you have when you saw this?

Daffron: Well, you couldn't. . . the main thing was that you couldn't believe it. It was just all . . . you see it there, but you just don't believe it. "It just couldn't happen here!" Other than that, I can't remember anything else, as far as your emotions were. That's a long time ago, you know.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do then when you finally got out to the Punch Bowl?

Daffron: Well, we set our guns up and zeroed them in, which means that we "true" them up. We shot over the city of Honolulu and zeroed

our guns in and got ready. If there was any landing, we could fire on them. We had an observation post in the top of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, which at that time was the tallest point on the beach. Of course, now it's dwarfed by all the big buildings.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors that you heard in the aftermath of the attack?

Daffron: Well, of course, as I say, we had a gun position in the Punch Bowl, which is now the national cemetery. We got a call there just right after dark that Japanese were on the way up to the Punch Bowl--there was only one road--so we sent out a detail to meet them. Of course, they never did. We had rumors that they had landed on the north part of the island. We had all kinds of rumors. You'd just hear one thing after the other. But, of course. . . there was something else that was kind of funny. I've forgotten now what it was. . . about these rumors.

Marcello: And I'm sure you believed just about every one of these rumors.

Daffron: Oh, yes (chuckle)! After what had happened.

Marcello: I gather that there were a lot of trigger-happy GI's around that night, also.

Daffron: Well, yes. Of course, at that time, the Punch Bowl was just an open old crater with cactus growing. The next morning there wasn't any cactus standing (laughter). It had all been shot down. Everytime they'd move, somebody'd shoot it.

Marcello: In other words, you did hear sporadic gun fire all night?

Daffron: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: I'd gather it'd be pretty . . . the smart thing to do would be to have stayed in one position or one place and not move around at all.

Daffron: We did, yes.

Marcello: Did you establish passwords and things of that nature at that time?

Daffron: Oh, yes. We had . . . what do you call it? They didn't call it password, but it meant the same thing. What do you call that?

Marcello: Not call signs or recognition signals?

Daffron: No. I guess they did use passwords. Oh, yes, we had them. Don't ask me what they were--I don't remember.

Marcello: How long did you stay out there at the Punch Bowl?

Daffron: Oh, that was our position, and we stayed there, I'd say, about three months. We never did go back to Schofield Barracks. We eventually set up another gun position right in the city, not too far from this place, which was much. . . in other words, we took over an old school where we had barracks for our men. It was much more comfortable than just living on the ground there. But we did have our gun positions.

Incidentally, I do want to tell you this. In preparing our gun positions and so forth before the attack, we started in

October to build a gun position for my particular battery in Honolulu. What we did--we'd dig out a place for the gun and place them there or get them ready for places to be there. We had it in a "V" shape. A battery of artillery consists of four guns. But we had this in a "V" shape which was seven guns, so we could shoot, oh, 180 degrees, see, from one side of the island to the other. So we started that in October, and we finished it. . . because I was in charge of it, and I went down in every day to oversee the building of this. We finished it in November. You asked about espionage awhile ago. They knocked the plane down--a Japanese plane--and in this plane they found a map that pointed out the exact location of this gun position, and it said, "This is more than a battery." So that's how fast this information got back to Japan.

Marcello: Did you actually see that map yourself?

Daffron: I actually saw that, yes. Of course, I don't have it, but I saw it. It said, "More than a battery."

Marcello: So evidently, then, the Japanese intelligence on the island was rather thorough.

Daffron: Right. That's right.

Marcello: And they had the battery pinpointed exactly.

Daffron: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Did you notice anything else on that map that was accurate?

Daffron: They had ships located. They missed. . . you know, some of the ships had gone, but they had them all located and located where they would normally be.

Marcello: I guess this kind of shook you up and made you a little bit apprehensive of the Japanese civilians on the island.

Daffron: Right. Right. Yes. But within thirty days, I went to a barber shop and got a shave--I hadn't shaved in a long time--and a Japanese woman shaved me. (Chuckle) I just kept wondering what she was going to do with that razor (laughter).

Marcello: In our pre-interview conference, you were talking about another incident that I think we really need to get as a part of the record. You were mentioning a lone Japanese plane that came over. . . did you say this occurred several months after the actual attack on December 7th?

Daffron: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Talk about this incident, because I think it's kind of interesting, if nothing else.

Daffron: Well, that happened several times. You could hear these planes. You know, believe it or not, you can finally learn that you can sleep through your own airplanes, but if a foreign plane comes by, and it'll wake you up. Now that's happened all through my experience. Sure enough, this woke us up. All of a sudden, we heard all this bombing. Of course, you know, we stayed put. You don't go running around to see what's happening until daylight.

Marcello: Are you back at Schofield by this time, or are you still at the Punch Bowl?

Daffron: Oh, no. After we left Schofield, we never did go back. We stayed at our gun position. This was not at the Punch Bowl, but this was this other gun position that we had by this little school--a sort of a little elementary school. It just had little small buildings and enough places for our men to sleep in and a place for the officers. So the next morning we went up in the hills to where we heard this bomb--or this noise--which turned out to be a bomb--and that's where we found this shrapnel. They did that several times. In fact, on December 7th, they came back that night. . . not in a big raid, but just a few planes as a harassment.

Marcello: Were these probably float planes off a submarine or something of that nature? You perhaps probably wouldn't know.

Daffron: I wouldn't know. We couldn't see them. I don't know. It could have been that, or it could have been, you know. . .no, as I understand it, I think they came from carriers. As soon as they got back, they left. Now where they came from, I don't know.

Marcello: You know, in a situation like this--as serious as it is--there are often-times funny things that happen. Can you remember any funny things that happened during the attack? I'm referring to

something that somebody either said or did. . . as maybe a way of relieving tension, if nothing else.

Daffron: Well, I know that it happened, but I can't remember any incident right now. The only thing that I remember that was funny is the men that shot all the cactus down because everytime one would move, they'd shoot it. With every little breeze that would happen. I can't remember anything off-hand right now.

Marcello: Whatever happened to your car?

Daffron: Well, I finally sold it. I didn't really have any use for it; I couldn't use it. So we were getting ready to leave. . . we didn't know when we were going to leave, and I sold it to some family there in Honolulu.

Marcello: I gather that it had not been damaged at all, except for the chipped paint when those spent shell hulls fell on it.

Daffron: Yes, but that didn't hurt it. No, it wasn't damaged. But I sure did like the car. It was a Dodge--green Dodge (chuckle).

Marcello: What year was it?

Daffron: It was a 1940 model.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Daffron, is there anything else you think we need to talk about and get as a part of the record? Is there anything that I haven't covered?

Daffron: Well, one interesting thing is that. . . of course, the attack happened on December 7, 1941. On December 7, 1942, is when we

left. We got on a boat. . . didn't know where we were going; we thought we were going to . . . we originally were supposed to have gone to Brisbane, Australia, but they diverted us to Guadalcanal.

Marcello: And, of course, that makes another story in itself.

Daffron: That's another story in itself, yes.

Marcello: Someday I'd like to pursue the events that took place on Guadalcanal.

Daffron: You know, they had the Doolittle Raids, you know, in April of '41--sometime in there.

Marcello: Of '42.

Daffron: I mean '42.

Marcello: Yes.

Daffron: I've been trying to remember the aircraft carrier that they flew on.

Marcello: The Hornet.

Daffron: Was it the Hornet?

Marcello: Yes.

Daffron: Okay. When they got back to Hawaii, my captain and I were invited aboard the Hornet. Of course, we tried to talk about the raids, and no one said a thing to us (chuckle). Of course, they knew we knew, but they wouldn't discuss it at all. But, of course, it was finally sunk. Well, I'm glad you told me. I've been trying ever since I talked to you to remember the name of that aircraft carrier.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Daffron, I want to thank you very much for taking time to talk with me. You've said some very interesting and, I think, important things. Scholars are going to find this quite valuable when they use the information to write about Pearl Harbor.

Daffron: I hope so. I think this has been a lot of fun.

Marcello: Thank you.