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John Kuhn
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Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

John Kuhn

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Lewisville, Texas Date: October 25, 1976

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. John Kuhn for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 25, 1976, in Lewisville, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Kuhn in order to get his experiences, reminiscences, and impressions while he was stationed at Ford Island during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Kuhn, 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. Kuhn: Well, that will be very brief. I was born on September 5, 1919, in Minnesota. My hometown was named Winnebago, Minnesota. For education, I have an eighth grade education; my high school diploma was picked up during the service later on. That's been the extent of my education.

Dr. Marcello: When did you enter the service?

Kuhn: In 1940.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service?

Kuhn: Because I didn't want to go to the Army (chuckle).

Marcello: In other words, the national emergency was upon the country at that time, and you were looking the draft in the face?

Kuhn: At that time, the draft was not in yet, but I could see it coming. With the war in Europe and so on, I could see it coming, so I decided to take my own place to go.

Marcello: Now, why did you select the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?

Kuhn: No specific reason. I just figured I would have a clean place to eat and sleep until they shot it out from under me (chuckle).

Marcello: The reason I asked that question is because you mentioned that you were from Minnesota, and I was wondering why a boy from Minnesota would decide to enter the Navy.

Kuhn: No special reason. I just didn't want to go to the Army, and I was going to take my own place.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Kuhn: Great Lakes.

Marcello: How long was boot camp at that particular time?

Kuhn: I think it was about three months. I don't really remember. It's been so far back.

Marcello: In other words, if your boot camp lasted three months, or twelve weeks, that meant that the national emergency had not progressed to such an extent that boot camp had been cut back. I know that those guys went in the Navy later on actually had only about eight weeks of boot camp.

Kuhn: No, this was cut back later. At that time. . . I went into the Navy in 1940, May of 1940. This was the pre-draft period and all of that. It was strictly the peacetime Navy yet, then.

Marcello: Were you keeping very closely abreast with world events at that time?

Kuhn: Not really. But with the war going on in Europe, I knew then that we would be involved. That's the reason I decided I was going to take my place and go.

Marcello: You brought up an interesting point here. You mentioned that. . . you mentioned the war in Europe. I assume that you believed that if war did come, it was going to come in Europe rather than with Japan.

Kuhn: Yes. There was no indication that Japan would be involved at that time.

Marcello: Okay, was there anything that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as a part of the record? Or was it just the typical Navy boot camp?

Kuhn: Just typical Navy boot camp was all. Nothing really outstanding there at all.

Marcello: Where did you go from Great Lakes?

Kuhn: That will take a little thinking. From the Great Lakes, I went up to Bremerton, Washington. From there, I went aboard the Thornton, AVD-11, one of the seaplane tenders. Then from the Thornton, I went to Ford Island to Patrol Wing Two and went to radio school.

Marcello: Okay, let's just back up here a minute. I assume that the Thornton was strictly your transportation over to the Hawaiian Islands.

Kuhn: No, it was not. I was attached to the ship. I applied for and got radio school over there and then was transferred off of the Thornton.

Marcello: How did you get to the Hawaiian Islands? In other words, was this voluntary, or were you simply assigned to the Thornton, which, in turn, was going to the Hawaiian Islands? How did that operate?

Kuhn: It was just a routine assignment to the ship. It was in the Hawaiian Islands. I had a chance to go to radio school and accepted it.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going to the Hawaiian Islands?

Kuhn: At that time, it didn't impress me much (chuckle).

Marcello: Why was that?

Kuhn: I didn't know much about that. There was very little thoughts about going. To me, it was just another place.

Marcello: Okay, so approximately, when did you arrive in the Hawaiian Islands?

Kuhn: May of 1941.

Marcello: So you were there about seven months before the war actually broke out, then?

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, how shortly after you got to the Hawaiian Islands aboard the Thornton did you get into radio school?

Kuhn: I would say it was about a month or six weeks.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter radio school?

Kuhn: I didn't want to be in the deck force. I was lazy (chuckle). I didn't like working out in the . . . chipping paint and like that. . . and radio school come up, and I took a chance at it and come out on it.

Marcello: I assume that you got your full of the deck force during that period while you were on the Thornton.

Kuhn: Believe it or not, I was seasick all of the way over (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, I suppose that's to be expected from somebody from Minnesota who joins the Navy.

Kuhn: Furthermore, I still get seasick.

Marcello: Okay, describe what the radio school was like. In other words, do you feel that you were trained thoroughly, or

by this time was there a certain sense of urgency, and were they getting you through as quickly as possible? Talk about the training that you received in radio school.

Kuhn: This was very thorough. Of course, they taught us the International Code--that's the primary purpose--and the basic electronics of radio at that time. Of course, this was all pre-Pearl, so there was no rush. We were not pushed to go through or anything like that. In fact, it was a rough school to get through.

Marcello: How long did the radio school last?

Kuhn: We graduated in November of 1941--just a couple or three weeks prior to the attack.

Marcello: Now when you came out of radio school what sort of rank would you have, or ratings?

Kuhn: There was no change, but on the first of December, I made third class.

Marcello: Now that's a little bit different from the way the system works today. I think usually when one graduates from one of the technical schools, he almost automatically becomes a third class petty officer.

Kunn: In some cases, yes.

Marcello: I gather that rank was very, very slow. Well, promotion was very, very slow in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy.

Kuhn: Yes, it was. It took some first class petty officers twelve years in service before they made first class.

And with the help of Pearl Harbor--the Japanese attack --I made chief in five and a half years from the time I went in. Advancement had speeded up that much.

Marcello: I would assume that advancement in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy was very, very competitive, also, was it not?

Kuhn: Yes, it was.

Marcello: How did the system work?

Kuhn: Very much the same as it is today. They had what they called the "Blue Book of Examinations." For radioman, you wrote maybe the first fifty questions; and for second class radiomen, you wrote another ten or twenty; and first class, there were additional questions. Promotion was based on your grade.

Marcello: Not only did you have to pass the test with a certain grade, but there also had to be a slot open for you. Isn't that true?

Kuhn: There had to be a slot open, and in some cases it was competitive. If there were two or three people going up and only one opening, one man got it.

Marcello: Now I would assume that for the most part that your tenure on the Thornton was very, very limited or very short in duration. Is that correct?

Kuhn: Yes, just a matter of weeks--hardly two months. Long enough to get fitted out, get to Honolulu, and be transferred off.

Marcello: How would you describe the morale in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Kuhn: I'd say it was very good.

Marcello: Why was that?

Kuhn: Well, everybody was relaxed. At that time, you were there because you wanted to be, and that made quite a difference.

Marcello: I gather that what you're saying is that everybody was a volunteer.

Kuhn: At that time, yes.

Marcello: What was the food like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Kuhn: It was pretty plain, but good. Nobody starved to death.

Marcello: What were your living quarters like? Why don't you describe them first of all aboard the Thornton, and then talk about what your living quarters were like when you got to Ford Island?

Kuhn: Well, there's quite a difference there. Aboard the ship, we slept in bunks three tiers high. In the daytime your lockers were converted into seats and tables and like that. They were wooden boxes where you lifted the top off and put your storage in there. At the mess table, of course, you sat on a locker and ate off the top of the tables. Compared to Ford Island, we lived in the barracks where the bunks were two high and several to a dormitory,

with a large mess hall. On the ship, your meals were brought to the compartment in these round tureen jobs. Some people had mess cook, where they had to haul this down to you. Over on the base, you went to a regular mess hall. It was vastly different--more recreation and all of that.

Marcello: I gather the food was served family-style more or less on the Thornton, whereas at Ford Island it was cafeteria-style?

Kuhn: This is true, yes.

Marcello: I assume quarters were rather cramped, from what you've said, aboard that destroyer.

Kuhn: They are very cramped. The Thornton was a four-stack World War I destroyer, which was cut down to two stacks and two engine rooms, the others being made available for aviation gasoline. It was a floating bomb (chuckle).

Marcello: From what you've said, I gather that you weren't sorry to leave the Thornton.

Kuhn: No, I was not. I was not sorry to leave any ship (chuckle)!

Marcello: Okay, describe in more detail what Ford Island was like from a physical standpoint. Now we'll assume that at this point you've left the Thornton, and you've gotten out of radio school, and you're now more or less stationed at Ford Island. Describe what it was like from a physical standpoint as best you can remember.

- Kuhn: Well, Ford Island, as you know, was just an air station on a small island in the middle of the bay. And our quarters was a barracks right directly across the street from and Administration Building where we worked. And I don't recall now how many hangars were there. There were several hangars, several for assembly and repairs, and a landing strip where both seaplanes and land planes could take off. And that about covers what I remember of it.
- Marcello: Now the primary purpose of Ford Island, I assume, was to serve as a base for those PBV's that would go out on patrol. Is that correct?
- Kuhn: Naval Air Station.
- Marcello: And then, also, I gather that when the carriers would come in, a lot of the planes would land at Ford Island.
- Kuhn: Yes. They would unload planes, and they'd go in for a routine check--maybe overhaul, motor replacements, something like that--and then return to the carriers.
- Marcello: Okay, describe what a typical day might be like for you at Ford Island as a radioman.
- Kuhn: Eight hours of work between a set of headphones. For recreation, you'd either go over to town, or we had tennis courts and skating rinks there on the island. In those days, we didn't have money enough to go very far or do very much. We stayed aboard and played cards, went

skating, played tennis, and like that. We didn't go to town too much.

Marcello: What sort of radio traffic would you be monitoring and taking care of? Was most of it routine, or what sort of traffic would it be?

Kuhn: Well, most of it generally was just plain language and routine stuff. At that time, I was transferred to Patrol Wing Two, flag unit. And we were in control of the different squadrons based around there.

Marcello: What does the flag unit mean? I've never heard that expression used before.

Kuhn: It's the admiral's private staff. He has a yeoman, radio-man, personnel, like that, that service all of his paperwork, communications, and like that.

Marcello: About how many people would be in this flag unit?

Kuhn: In some cases sixty, seventy, or more.

Marcello: Was it considered an honor, or did you have to be rather highly qualified to become a member of the flag unit?

Kuhn: We thought it was because if you weren't good, you didn't stay there long. You were shipped out to some other unit.

Marcello: Now did your routine change any as one gets closer and closer to Pearl Harbor, that is, the type of work you were doing, your radio procedures, or anything of this nature?

Kuhn: No. Everything was straight peacetime operating, right up to the day it happened.

Marcello: Okay, you talked about this a little while ago. I think we probably need to go into a little more detail on it. How did the liberty routine work here at Ford Island for you? First of all, let me be a little bit more specific. How much liberty would you receive?

Kuhn: Well, we were free to go ashore anytime we were off watch. And you knew when your next watch was--your next tour coming up to work--and you were to be back then. There were no restrictions as far as leaving the island. Anytime that you felt like it and you were not on watch, you could get on the ferry and leave the island.

Marcello: Now how often would you usually have liberty in a week's time?

Kuhn: It was available to you everyday. But we didn't go over but maybe once or twice a week. And then a lot of times it would be to go to somebody's house for a party or something like that--somebody we knew. Or maybe we'd go just to get off of the island.

Marcello: How would the ferry work? You mentioned that you would board the ferry to go over to Honolulu.

Kuhn: The ferry docked about where what we called Battleship Row is, and from there over to the . . . the sub base. . . they've got another base there over close to where the

dry dock area was--over in there. And then you'd take the bus into town.

Marcello: How often would the ferry run?

Kuhn: Quite a number of times a day because we had numerous civilians working on the island in assembly and repair and like that. There would be several hundred people, and I imagine it would run at least once an hour, and during the peak transfer time for the civilians, it probably ran two or three times an hour.

Marcello: Now when you had liberty, did you have to be back aboard the island at midnight or anything of this nature?

Kuhn: No, we didn't.

Marcello: Now this was unusual.

Kuhn: Not until the attack. After that, why, it was pretty restricted. But before then, we could go out and be gone overnight.

Marcello: That was unusual, that is, as compared to the people that were aboard the ships. I'm pretty sure that most of those guys had to be back aboard by midnight.

Kuhn: They had hours they had to be back. But if we had a place to go, we could go and be gone overnight.

Marcello: Do you have any idea why the guys aboard ship had to be back at midnight?

Kuhn: Operation readiness would be the only answer I could give on that.

- Marcello: I've also heard it said that there simply wasn't room for all of the sailors in Honolulu to stay overnight. In other words, there weren't enough hotels and things of this nature.
- Kuhn: This is true. They would be very crowded if they stayed over.
- Marcello: And I understand they didn't particularly want those guys sleeping on the beach or in the parks or anything of that nature.
- Kuhn: No. They'd get picked up if they'd done that. Now we could go, but we had to have a place to go and not be seen. If you had friends over there, you could go and stay with them and spend the night if you wanted to.
- Marcello: When you went on liberty, did you have to go in uniform, or could you go in civilian clothes?
- Kuhn: We could go in civilian clothes. I'll not say you could leave the island in civilian clothes, but once you got over to town, you could change into civilian clothes and keep them in a locker over there. You could change into "civvies."
- Marcello: When you went on liberty off of the island, what sort of activities would you usually partake in?
- Kuhn: Mostly wander around. Sometimes picture-taking, a few beers, out to the zoo, Waikiki Beach, and places like

that. Most of it was just the usual stuff that a sailor done--get out and get away.

Marcello: How about when you had liberty and chose to remain on Ford Island? What did you usually do there?

Kuhn: Lay around and wrote letters. We had a skating rink down there, so I'd go skating. I'd play cards. We played quite a few cards.

Marcello: What sort of pay were you receiving at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack?

Kuhn: I don't remember exactly. It was around sixty-some dollars a month. The initial pay when I went in was twenty-one dollars a month.

Marcello: But as a third-class radioman, you were up to sixty-some-odd dollars a month?

Kuhn: Around sixty. I believe it was sixty-seven dollars a month.

Marcello: How often was payday?

Kuhn: Every two weeks. No, wait a minute. The first and fifteenth of every month.

Marcello: Which would mean that around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, you might have had a little bit of money left yet.

Kuhn: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Let me ask you this question, and it's a kind of important one. I want to get your reaction to it. Many people

assume that the best time that the Japanese could have selected for an attack would have been on a Sunday morning. Now the reasoning of these people is that Saturday nights in Pearl Harbor and Honolulu and surrounding bases were a time of debaucheries, drunkenness and things of this nature. And, consequently, these military personnel would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. Now how would you answer that question? How would you answer that assertion, I should say.

Kuhn: I would say that had a large part to play in it. Also, Sunday morning would be a more relaxed time. People were at church and places like that. It would be one of the most unsuspecting times they could have picked for several reasons--all of them included.

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute. Are you saying, in effect, that you would find an extraordinarily large number of drunken sailors coming back to Ford Island on a Saturday night?

Kuhn: Yes, you would, because a lot of them didn't go ashore until the weekend. Then they went over just strictly to "raise the dickens" and get drunk. And they would be hungover, and some of them wouldn't make it back.

Marcello: But, again, let me try and be a little bit more specific. Would you say that this would be a small percentage of the

individuals at Ford Island or a large percentage of them?
You would have to estimate this, of course.

Kuhn: In our particular group there, I would say it would be a small percentage that stayed over and drank like that. We had friends that had a beach house out there, and a lot of our time was spent out at the beach house.

Marcello: Now let's dwell on another point that you brought up, and I think that it is very important. You implied that Sunday was a day of leisure.

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: How would the normal Sunday routine work in terms of getting up and "turning to" and things of that nature?

Kuhn: If you were assigned to a watch, you got up and stood your watch. Otherwise, if you wanted to sleep during the day, you could. There was no reveille or anything like that. If you wanted to sleep through the day, you were entitled to do so. That's why I say it was a more relaxed day. Or the relaxation for some was that they get out and get "loaded," or somebody else would sit down and write a few letters. That's the way it is. And I participated in a little of both (chuckle).

Marcello: Now as relations between the United States and Japan continued to worsen, and as one gets closer and closer to Pearl Harbor, did you ever think very much about the possibility of an attack at Pearl Harbor?

- Kuhn: No, I did not. We were, of course, watching the conflicts in Europe, but the possibility of the Japanese coming in . . . until that morning, I never even thought about it.
- Marcello: This will probably show my ignorance, but at Ford Island were you in a position where you were monitoring any Japanese radio traffic or anything of this nature? Or would this be a function more of Naval Intelligence rather than sort of operations that you were engaged in?
- Kuhn: At that time, that would be normal Naval Intelligence work. We were engaged strictly in the routine operations. As far as we were concerned, the Japanese didn't even exist.
- Marcello: As relations between the United States and Japan continued to worsen, did the amount of radio traffic in which you were engaged increase any?
- Kuhn: No, it did not. This was normal operating communications that we were involved in.
- Marcello: Why was it that you never thought that the Japanese would attack Pearl Harbor?
- Kuhn: That would be a hard one to answer, and I really don't know how to do it.
- Marcello: Without putting words in your mouth, would distance have had something to do with it? In other words, Pearl Harbor is a pretty long way from the Japanese home islands.
- Kuhn: Distance? Yes. Of course, now we did not know the political conflict going on. That never reached people like me. We

were not even aware that there was anything brewing or anything like that. And I think the distance mainly . . . well, we were friends with them, and that was all. You just did not expect attack.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Kuhn: Well, at that time, there was all of the good-looking little girls running around over in Honolulu because there was a lot of Japanese there. We had seen Japanese and were friends with them over at town. They run the shops and stores and like that, and they was just another person.

Marcello: Were there very many civilian workers of Japanese origin working over at Ford Island?

Kuhn: There were numerous people there that were of Japanese origin. I would hesitate to say the number because in Honolulu at that time it was pretty hard to distinguish the background of anybody. And there were quite a few Japanese working there.

Marcello: I gather that the Hawaiian Islands were more or less a melting pot of several nationalities at that particular time.

Kuhn: Yes, they were.

Marcello: Did you ever regard these Japanese with any suspicion as relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate?

- Kuhn: No, we did not because we never met them on that level. We would just drop into their stores or would go by their place of business and have a beer or something like that or see them coming and going from the island.
- Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old salts talk about the prowess of the Japanese Navy? In other words, maybe from time to time, you ran into one of the sailors who had been in the Asiatic Fleet or something of that nature and had some sort of direct or indirect contact with the Japanese in that theatre?
- Kuhn: No, I had not run into any of those people and had not talked to anybody about it or anything like that.
- Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us up to the days immediately prior to the attack. 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 on Saturday, December 6, 1941, from the time you got up until the time you went to bed. This is Saturday, December 6, 1941, the day before the actual attack.
- Kuhn: On Saturday, December 6, we spent mostly in writing letters, and if I remember correctly, I went over to town for a few hours.
- Marcello: In other words, you had liberty?
- Kuhn: Yes.
- Marcello: You did not have the duty?

Kuhn: Well, yes, I had duty, but when we did not have duty, we were available to go ashore. At that particular time, I was standing mid-watches--twelve to six in the morning or something like that--and then we got off.

Marcello: In other words, you'd probably get off at six o'clock, and did have time to grab some sleep before you went on liberty, or how did it work?

Kuhn: If you wanted to, you could get some sleep before you went or just go. I am not sure. It seems like I was over in town shopping for books that day. Now that's a funny thing to say, but it's true. I came back and spent the evening writing letters and like that and then went to sleep early.

Marcello: Do you recall approximately what time you got to bed that night?

Kuhn: I went to bed around six o'clock that evening. Of course, I was up at midnight and worked until six o'clock the next morning.

Marcello: So Saturday was a rather routine day for you, and your activities would have been limited because of the fact that you had a watch at midnight.

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so I assume you stood your watch that night. Did you notice anything extraordinary that night? In other

words, was there the usual amount of drunks that came in? Or what did you observe that night?

Kuhn: Nothing different because I would not see any of them until six o'clock the next morning anyhow.

Marcello: Where would you be standing your watch?

Kuhn: In the Communications Center at the Administration Building there on Ford Island.

Marcello: In other words, you wouldn't have been anywhere around the barracks?

Kuhn: No. The barracks have been across the street from us over there, but I was not in the barracks from midnight until around six o'clock the next morning.

Marcello: What sort of traffic would you have been monitoring that night? Or what sort of radio work would you have been engaged in?

Kuhn: I was operating on an aircraft-to-ground circuit, talking to different airplanes that were out on patrol and like that. And, of course, that night it was very limited so. . . it was a slow night for me.

Marcello: Okay, this brings up an interesting question now. You mentioned the subject, and I'll pursue a little bit further. You mentioned that there were patrols that were sent out that particular night, and everynight. Now how did these patrols work?

Kuhn: This is not just a normal patrol. It was just a routine night flight for training and like that because I do not recall of them having night flights out on patrol at that time. There was a lot of flying, but it was all just routine flying and training. It was not a patrol as we would assume.

Marcello: In other words, the planes that were going out at night weren't necessarily looking for something.

Kuhn: No, they were not. It was just routine training flights.

Marcello: How far were these. . . well, let me back up here a minute. Did these routine training flights fall into a particular pattern? In other words, did they follow this certain flight pattern? How far out did they go and this sort of thing? In what directions did they go?

Kuhn: You have me on that. I really don't know because I flew once in a while. I'd go down and get a ride. And, of course, I didn't know what direction we went. We'd just go out and make a big circle and maybe patrol an area and come back in.

Marcello: But I assume you were going at daylight when this happened --during the day.

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: Would there be very many of these planes out at night, let's say, on a Saturday night like you were mentioning?

Kuhn: No. They became known as "black cats," the PBY's. They could run a twelve-hour patrol and still have plenty of gas left. So if you went out on one, you left in the morning and would come in about dusk. And I couldn't tell you where we went or how we went because we were just all over out there.

Marcello: But that particular Saturday night of December 6, and getting into Sunday morning of December 7th, was a relatively routine watch for you?

Kuhn: It was very, very routine. In fact, it was so routine, it was boring.

Marcello: Nobody reported any suspicious-looking vessels or anything of that nature?

Kuhn: Not a thing.

Marcello: If they had reported any, would that have come back into your particular station?

Kuhn: With the aircraft, yes. It would have come back to ours. And I did not see it, and I did not hear any talk about it.

Marcello: Now would you be monitoring any of the ship-to-ship traffic or any of the ship-to-shore traffic during this period?

Kuhn: No, we were concerned strictly with aircraft.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941. Again, I want you to describe your routine from the time you got off your watch until all hell broke loose.

Kuhn: That's very easy to describe. After getting off watch, I went over and had breakfast, washed up and laid down, and went to sleep. That was my routine (chuckle).

Marcello: Were there very many people at breakfast that morning?

Kuhn: Not too many, no. Being a Sunday morning, a lot of them were gone, and a lot of them slept in. And to get to the attack itself. . .

Marcello: Well, let's just back up. So you ate breakfast, and what time did you get over to your barracks and get to sleep?

Kuhn: It was, oh, right after 6:10 or something like that. Of course, the mess hall was in the barracks, so you could walk in and grab a tray and eat and go wash up and lay down. I would say at a quarter until seven, I had just laid down and was getting ready to go to sleep.

Marcello: Now where was your particular barracks with relation to the mess hall? In other words, how many floors up was it?

Kuhn: We were up on the second floor, I believe. The mess hall was on the first floor.

Marcello: What sort of a view of Battleship Row would you have had from your barracks?

Kuhn: A fairly good view. I'd say it was about six to eight hundred feet away from us.

Marcello: Did you have a clear view of the ships themselves?

- Kuhn: The only obstruction between us and the ships was our sickbay building, and it just did partially block it.
- Marcello: In other words, what particular ships would you probably have seen on that day of December 7th if you were to look out your barracks window toward Battleship Row?
- Kuhn: I could see all of the battleships, including the Arizona. I could look out the other window and see the Utah. Everything was tied up along Ford Island and could have been seen. Where the dry docks and like that were, you could look right out, and if a ship wasn't away, you could look over to the submarine base and the dry docks and all of that. You could see the whole thing from my barracks.
- Marcello: I assume that Battleship Row was a rather majestic sight during that pre-Pearl Harbor period.
- Kuhn: Yes, it was. When you see six or eight battleships sitting in there tied up, that was quite a sight.
- Marcello: Would that perhaps have been another reason why you felt relatively secure in the Hawaiian Islands?
- Kuhn: Well, looking back, I don't know if we felt secure. We just never even thought anything about it. It was a feeling of security to see them there. We said, "Why, nobody's going to take you on when that's around," you know. But they did (chuckle).
- Marcello: I would also assume that around that time that people really hadn't yet grasped the importance of the aircraft

carrier. When one thought of a fighting Navy, didn't one usually think of battleships rather than aircraft carriers?

Kuhn: At that time, yes. I think the trend was more to battleships and cruisers than it was to aircraft.

Marcello: Within a couple of hours, the Japanese were to teach us a very valuable lesson, I guess, as to what the future backbone of naval power was going to be.

Kuhn: They certainly set a trend for it (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so let's pick up the story from this point, then. You went to bed this day at approximately 6:30. What happened from this point?

Kuhn: It was about a quarter of seven when I laid down. Well, you lay down--you're tired--and you know how you are when you're just about ready to drop off. You can hear people talking and still remember what they said, and yet you're half asleep. Well, that's when this came.

Normally, on a Sunday morning, it was not unusual to have them come in and dive-bomb the place--our own planes--for practice. And we heard the first plane come over. I remember one of the guys saying, he said, "That guy came down awful low today, didn't he?" And about that time, we heard a bomb go off. Somebody else said, "Well, now look, they're setting charges out there to make this sound real!"

When the third man spoke was when I come out. He

says, "There goes one of them planes, and they've got red balls on the wings!" I knew then there was something wrong, and I got out of there.

Marcello: Now, when those bombs hit, were they the ones that were hitting the hangar on Ford Island?

Kuhn: No, they were the ones that were hitting the battleships.

Marcello: What sort of a sensation or repercussion were you able to feel here at your barracks?

Kuhn: We could feel the vibrations of it, concussions, but not so great because a lot of the explosions were internal --in the ship--and you did not feel it so much off at a distance.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do at that point when you heard the man talk about the red balls on the airplane. What was your reaction at that point?

Kuhn: To get out of the barracks because I knew something was wrong.

Marcello: Did you know they were Japanese planes?

Kuhn: Yes. Then I knew they were Japanese planes. Now we had not studied them, but I had seen pictures of them, and when they identified the red ball on the wings, it registered. And our main thought then was to get off from the upper levels of the barracks, which we did.

Marcello: Now at this particular point, how would you describe the reaction of you and the people around you? Was it one of

panic? Confusion? Professionalism? How would you describe it?

Kuhn: Surprisingly enough, our group was very calm. There was no panic. We also had no leaders.

Marcello: Now I assume when you went to bed, you were in your skivvies.

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, did you have enough sense or forethought. . . or did you put on your trousers and shoes and this sort of thing before you went out?

Kuhn: I was fully clothed when I left because I didn't know what was going to happen.

Marcello: How long do you think it took you to get outside the barracks from the time you realized they were Japanese planes?

Kuhn: I think that would be quite record-breaking. I would say it was hardly a minute to a minute and a half until we were down and gone.

Marcello: Now in a particular case like this, that is, an enemy attack, did you have a particular battle station? Now obviously the people aboard the ships did; they had a battle station. How about you, being based on land?

Kuhn: Our battle station was to go to the radio shack, which we did.

Marcello: In other words, you left the barracks and you headed right for that.

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: Now how far from the barracks was the radio shack?

Kuhn: Oh, I would say about 100 to 150 feet--just across the street.

Marcello: In the meantime, when you get outside the barracks, is Ford Island under attack at this point?

Kuhn: Yes, it is.

Marcello: Okay, describe what was happening.

Kuhn: Well, enroute from the barracks to the Communications Building, we could see the ships burning and see the planes coming down through there. And at that time, there wasn't much response because everybody was just beginning to really wake up and find out what was going on. And I guess it was four or five minutes before there was much counterattack at all.

Marcello: Now were you personally coming under any fire at this time, that is, in your trip from the barracks over to the radio shack?

Kuhn: No, not at that moment. They were still concentrating on the battleships and like that.

Marcello: What was the climate like that day?

Kuhn: Warm, sunshiney. It was nice.

Marcello: Good visibility?

Kuhn: Perfect day for the attack (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so what happens at this point? How would you describe your journey from the barracks to the radio shack? Was it deliberate? Speedy? How would you describe it?

Kuhn: Pretty fast (chuckle). No, we ran to get over to the radio shack. Of course, the circuits were all manned. Like I say, we lacked leadership, so our first thought then was to get guns, which there was an armory in the building. Of course, the man with the key to the armory was on the beach, so the door was broken down. The first gun they handed me was a Colt .45 automatic. I looked at that thing, and the cosmoline was still in the barrel. I said, "I'm supposed to shoot with this?" I threw it back on the bench, and we went and got rifles.

Marcello: Had you ever fired a .45 before?

Kuhn: No, I had not (chuckle).

Marcello: Had you ever fired the rifle before?

Kuhn: Yes, the rifle we had in boot camp. So we obtained rifles and ammunition and then made another run back to the barracks. That was the highest vantage point around there, so we got on top of the barracks and started shooting.

Marcello: Now you were up on the roof of the barracks?

Kuhn: Yes.

Marcello: About how many rounds of ammunition were you carrying with you?

Kuhn: Not very many. I don't think I had over twenty or thirty rounds at the most.

Marcello: What sort of rifle did you have? Was this the old Springfield 03?

Kuhn: 03, yes.

Marcello: Okay, how did you get into the armory? Did they have to take a fire ax or something, or how was it done? Do you recall?

Kuhn: Somebody broke the door down, and I don't recall how they done that. Whether they just got a bar or something and forced the lock. . . things like that, I look back and I cannot remember. But I remember them breaking that door to get in--breaking into the place.

Marcello: Okay, about how many of you were there up on that barracks roof?

Kuhn: I'd say there was about ten or twelve of us up there.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, had that big hangar at Ford Island been hit?

Kuhn: Yes, it had. There was a couple or three of them hit, and a lot of planes were burning, and one of the battleships

right there. . . all six of them had been hit. Over in the dry dock, ships had been hit and turned over. And the Curtiss, which was sitting up in front of us, had been hit. The Oglala had rolled over. The Arizona was on fire. The Utah had turned over. You could see all of that from up there.

Marcello: Now with all of these ships hit, what sort of visibility did you have?

Kuhn: There was quite a bit of black smoke, and you could see just through it. If you seen a plane coming through an area that was not smokey, why, you'd get a crack at him. Otherwise, he was in and on you before you knew it.

Marcello: Describe the resistance that the ten or twelve of you up on the roof were putting up against these Japanese planes. How did it operate?

Kuhn: It was mostly talk. We shot at anything that flew (chuckle).

Marcello: About how many rounds do you think you fired?

Kuhn: Not very many. I don't think I got off over ten or fifteen rounds because with those rifles, you'd get one or maybe two shots at a plane, and he'd be gone. And at that time, there was no mass of waves coming over; it was just a stray drifting through every now and then.

Marcello: How low were these planes flying?

Kuhn: You could have hit them with a potato. They were that low.

Marcello: Could you distinguish the pilot?

Kuhn: Not his exact features, no, because it was too fast.

Marcello: Did your imagination play tricks on you? In other words, how many planes did you think you shot down?

Kuhn: I don't think I hit any. I just felt better shooting (chuckle).

Marcello: You know, I think that's an important point because I believe everybody had that sense of frustration. You had to do something, and if you really thought about it, you would have realized that the rifle would not have been very effective against those planes. But at least you were doing something.

Kuhn: You were at least doing something, and the satisfaction of feeling that recoil on your shoulders made you say, "Well, there was another chance!" That was all it amounted to. As far as hitting any planes, there was only one that I might have come close to. I have no idea how many people were shooting at him or anything. He came over the sub base, towards the battleships again. I got in one shot, and I know other people were shooting, and all at once he just disintegrated. They got the warhead on his torpedo. Who got it, I have no idea. It doesn't make any difference. We just. . . one second he was there, and the next second he was gone.

Marcello: What sort of a feeling did that give you?

Kuhn: We cheered and that's about it (chuckle). Like I say, most of ours was talk. We'd see one go down off in the distance, and we'd laugh and holler. The reaction didn't set in until much longer after it was over with.

Marcello: How long were you up on that roof altogether?

Kuhn: I'd say about an hour and a half.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, can you describe any of the particular action that was taking place around you? In other words, did you actually see the Arizona blow up? Or the Oklahoma turn over? Or the Utah go to the bottom or anything of this nature?

Kuhn: I seen the Arizona sit there and burn.

Marcello: Describe it, first of all.

Kuhn: It was nothing but a big ship sitting there and a column of black smoke. And it got so hot that the whole superstructure just melted and crumbled.

Marcello: You actually saw that?

Kuhn: Yes, I sat there and watched it.

Marcello: About how long did this take?

Kuhn: Well, it burnt for several hours before it went to the bottom, before it got down far enough to sink it.

Marcello: But you could actually observe the superstructure melting from where you were?

Kuhn: Yes. I watched the Oklahoma roll over and watched the California go down.

Marcello: Describe the Oklahoma rolling over.

Kuhn: It went just slow and easy like somebody pushed it over like that. It didn't go faster than that--real slow and easy. That's the way it looked to me. I don't know. Somebody else, they might have thought it turned pretty fast.

Marcello: How about the California? You mentioned that you saw it sink on the bottom.

Kuhn: Yes. She had hits and started down at the bow and started to roll. I don't know whether they flooded compartments or whether she took another hit or what, but she went straight down.

Marcello: They counterflooded.

Kuhn: Yes. She went straight down; she sank upright.

Marcello: And from what I gather, the California was still putting up resistance even while it was sitting on the bottom. Isn't that correct?

Kuhn: Yes. They still had antiaircraft guns up on the super-structure operating.

Marcello: Did you see any of the other ships being hit and so on and so forth?

Kuhn: No. I didn't see the Nevada get hit, but I seen her steam out across the bay and beach itself over at the

entrance of the harbor there.

Marcello: Describe that particular incident.

Kuhn: It was just another ship steaming out there and smoking. It was moving slow, and I thought she was going out. But all at once, she just made a slow turn and beached herself to keep from sinking.

Marcello: Was it under attack while it was moving out?

Kuhn: Yes, it was.

Marcello: What would have happened if the Nevada had been sunk on its way out of the harbor?

Kuhn: If it had sunk right in the middle of the channel, there would have been probably a far greater loss of life on it, and it would have blocked the shipping channel. And they did have destroyers and like that running around there. They cut loose and got underway and got moving. And had she had sunk in the channel, it would have been quite an obstruction. And if she had gone down on the submarine nets, that wouldn't have helped us any, either.

Marcello: Probably, if the Nevada had gone down in the channel, that harbor would have been bottled up for weeks and weeks.

Kuhn: For large ships, yes. Destroyers and like that could have got around it. But the battleships and like that, carriers, could not have. . . I don't think they could have got around it.

Marcello: One of the most spectacular photographs that I've ever seen is the one where the destroyer Shaw exploded. Do you recall the Shaw exploding?

Kuhn: Yes, but it was just one of so many things that it didn't have no great significance to me.

Marcello: Well, you probably wouldn't have known what ship it was.

Kuhn: No, at that time, I wouldn't.

Marcello: But it was a rather spectacular explosion from the photographs that I've seen.

Kuhn: This is true. But there were so many of those going on around there that one more didn't make much difference!

Marcello: Something else that just comes to mind at this point. You mentioned that you were up here on the roof for over an hour, and, of course, in the meantime, ships are beginning to put up some resistance. Was any of the flak falling down on the roof or anything of that nature?

Kuhn: Not that I know of. There was only one occasion where I am not sure whether we were strafed or whether it was shrapnel from a bomb burst or something that hit us. I never did find out. And I know the barracks was hit with something. I assumed at that time that it was being strafed.

Marcello: Okay, now later in the attack, high-level bombers came over. Now were you up on the barracks roof at that time, or had you moved to some other place?

Kuhn: No, I was still up there at that time. There was nothing to do but stand there and watch. Well, they hit the sickbay, which was halfway between us and the battle-ships--about 300 feet away. They dropped one. The sickbay was a square building with an open center, with a little patio-type in the center of it. They dropped one right smack in the middle of it. It didn't even hurt us. I think one guy got cut with fine glass and that's all because they were small bombs. They were only 100-pound bombs.

Marcello: Could you actually tell when one wave stopped and the second wave began?

Kuhn: No, I couldn't. There was so much confusion that when the first group come over, it was for about ten or fifteen minutes, and it was pretty hot. Then it quieted down. And then it was almost an hour before the next group come over.

Marcello: But you were up on the roof just about the entire time?

Kuhn: While all of the action was going on, yes, I was on the roof.

Marcello: Did you expend all of your ammunition?

Kuhn: No, I still had eight or ten rounds of it left. With high-level bombers, there was no use in shooting at them because they wouldn't carry that far, although we did bust a couple just for the spirit of it, I guess (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, what did you do from that point, then? You mentioned that you were up on the barracks for about an hour. Why did you decide to leave the barracks roof? Let's start from that point.

Kuhn: Well, about an hour to an hour and a half after it was over, we still. . . we didn't go anywhere. We still hung around the barracks. Then we began to get our leadership back, and things started to get a little organized--getting the injured and wounded to the sick-bay and stuff like that.

Marcello: What did you personally do after you came off of that barracks roof?

Kuhn: We stayed around right at the barracks, oh, I would say, for another hour or so. And then we went to the radio shack because there was no wounded or nothing right in our immediate area except the battleships. Then we went out and tried to pull people out of the water and like that.

Marcello: In other words, you went over to the radio shack, and I assume that this is where you received your orders to go down to the shore to assist with the injured and the wounded off of the battleships?

Kuhn: Yes, we got pointedly told that the circuits were manned and to get out of there. That was all (chuckle).

Marcello: Now on a weekend of this nature, would the number of officer personnel in the radio shack have been at a bare minimum?

Kuhn: Yes, it would. There'd been one radio officer and one or two flag officers, probably at the most a commander or captain.

Marcello: Is it safe to assume that most of your officers would have lived in town?

Kuhn: Yes, they did.

Marcello: So I guess by the time you went back to the radio shack that second time, these officers had returned from town, and order was being restored out of the chaos and confusion that had existed before.

Kuhn: They had not returned from town, but the ones that we had got settled down and started doing something. Like I say, the circuits were already manned, so there was nothing for us to do there.

Marcello: Okay, so you went down to the beaches and assisted with the wounded and injured off of the battleships. Describe what took place here. In other words, what sort of wounds and injuries and so on did you observe?

Kuhn: Mostly burns. There was oil on the water, and this oil was afire, and they had boats running out through there to make paths through it so that people could come up

in it and could breathe. And it just. . .most of the people were oil-burned and like that coming out of the water.

Marcello: What could you do for them once you got them out of the water?

Kuhn: Nothing. They just got them to the sickbay. There wasn't nothing we could do for them.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the oil sometimes was so thick on the water that one could throw a coke bottle, for example, in the that water, and it would just kind of stick on the top of the water.

Kuhn: It would because the oil that they burned in those ships was real heavy and black. It's kind of a gelatin-like, and when this starts to burn on water, it's rough.

Marcello: How thick do you think that oil was on the water?

Kuhn: Oh, in some places, like an area right next to a ship, it was probably three or four inches thick--right at the ship before it spread out, you know. And if you pulled somebody out of there, why, you've got a burnt man on your hands.

Marcello: How long did you assist in this particular operation?

Kuhn: I would say until somewhere. . . well, it would have started around ten o'clock. I'd say along until two or three o'clock in the afternoon, we did this.

Marcello: During this period, did you ever have any appetite or thirst or anything of that nature?

Kuhn: No, I did not. You didn't have time. You just couldn't get hungry or thirsty in a case like that. We still carried our rifles; we kept those. Our biggest worry at that time was whether they were going to put landing troops in there or not.

Marcello: I'm sure that this was a standard rumor that one heard all over the islands.

Kuhn: We did. They had landed at Aiea landing. Of course, Aiea is right close to us there. But we heard they landed here and there or somewhere else. We didn't know what was going on.

Marcello: I'm sure that the island was one big rumor mill.

Kuhn: It was--very much so.

Marcello: And I'll bet you believed most of the rumors that you heard.

Kuhn: You had no reason not to (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you were assisting here at the beach until around three o'clock in the afternoon. What did you do at that point?

Kuhn: I went back to the barracks and relaxed.

Marcello: In the meantime, are you cognizant of. . .had you been able to grasp the full extent of what has happened?

- Kuhn: No, you have not. You are still more or less in shock. You know what's happened, and you can remember and see a lot of it. It's still in front of you, but you don't realize the full impact of it--not until several hours later.
- Marcello: I gather what you're saying is that you really don't have a chance to see the "big picture." You know what your particular job was and what you did. You had a very, very narrow view of the attack.
- Kuhn: You do. You had not pieced it all together yet--the full extent of it, what it really amounts to.
- Marcello: You mentioned that you went back to the barracks to get some rest. Did the rest come easily?
- Kuhn: No. My rest there consisted mostly of sitting along the barracks with our guns, just waiting to see what was going to happen. At that time, we had no medical supplies, and there was nothing we could do but just sit and wait. All of the people there on the island had been taken to sickbay or places like that. You were just too shocked to do much of anything but to just sit and wait for something else to happen.
- Marcello: How long did you remain there at the barracks?
- Kuhn: Until later that night. Then we slept in the chapel, which is on the second floor of the Communications Building.

Marcello: Why did you sleep there as opposed to in your own barracks?

Kuhn: At that time, we had got the officers back in the. . . we had an officer in charge, and he said, "Well, we'll wait here until something happens." And that was it.

Marcello: Did you have to pull any guard duty or anything that night?

Kuhn: There was nothing to guard (chuckle).

Marcello: I'll bet you heard all sorts of sporadic shooting during the night, though.

Kuhn: Yes. I would have pitied a poor airplane that went out across there that night.

Marcello: You might want to describe this particular incident as best as you can either remember seeing it or hearing it.

Kuhn: No, I mean any airplane. I would have pitied him going out there.

Marcello: There was a couple of the Enterprise that came in that night.

Kuhn: Yes, all during the night, you'd just occasionally hear someone get trigger-happy and squeeze off a couple shots. It was a nervous reaction, is all it was.

But the one thing that stood out most in my mind was that night in the chapel when we were trying to sleep. We still had our rifles and everything. And some young ensign come in and sat down at the organ, and there was

a song played. That sounds crazy to do, but it helped us a lot. It was relaxing, you know.

Marcello: Do you recall what the song was he played?

Kuhn: Yes, I do. I can hear it yet today--"Nola." I can still remember that song.

Marcello: Is that the only song he played?

Kuhn: Yes. He played it through a couple of times, got up, walked away, and laid down and went to sleep.

Marcello: That's interesting. I'd never heard anybody relate that particular story. About how long did he play?

Kuhn: He went through a couple of numbers, and "Nola" was the one I remembered on it. I imagine there was twenty-five or thirty people up there, but Lord knows where you would find any of them people today. A lot of them would be dead from the war, and they'd be scattered all over. But that young ensign just sat there and played "Nola." I'll never forget it.

Marcello: And it did break the tension.

Kuhn: Yes, it did. I don't know if it was just the music or just the fact that somebody could do something like that at a time like that, but it helped considerable to take the tension off.

Marcello: I mentioned awhile ago those airplanes from the Enterprise that were unfortunate enough to come in that night. Do you remember the reception that they recieved when they came in?

Kuhn: They got fired upon, if I remember correctly; and they turned tail and got out of there (chuckle).

Marcello: Do you have any particular recall of that incident?

Kuhn: No. I knew there was firing going on, but I didn't know what the planes were or anything about it. I knew when they took off, and then it ended, and that was it. We just figured somebody got trigger-happy. That's all we thought of.

Marcello: Now what did you do the next day?

Kuhn: I just started cleaning up. And, of course, we maintained out watches over there and then run around and helped clean up, and that was it. There was no liberty for. . .I think it was nearly three weeks before we were allowed to shore again.

Marcello: Describe what the physical damage looked like at Ford Island. Is it safe to say that that huge seaplane hangar was the most heavily damaged structure on the island?

Kuhn: Yes, it was. It was just a mass of twisted metal. And most of our planes were destroyed, too. They got just about all of our planes. I don't know that there was over one or two that PBY's . . . that could still fly.

Marcello: Were the PBY's usually parked in nice, neat rows that made them sitting targets, or were they scattered? Or maybe you might not have too much of a recall about this.

- Kuhn: No, they were not scattered because, being an island like that, you did not have the room to scatter them. You weren't anticipating an attack, so there was no reason to scatter them.
- Marcello: So in other words, they were easy to hit?
- Kuhn: Very easy to hit.
- Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you really didn't have any animosity or think that much about the Japanese prior to the attack. How did your feelings change towards the Japanese in general as a result of this attack at Pearl Harbor?
- Kuhn: It didn't really change. I think a Japanese was still a Japanese. You didn't hate him because, if you stop and think on this war, it's all from the upper echelons. It's not from the individual himself. You don't hate the individual.
- Marcello: Now I don't want to dispute what you've saying, but is this really the feeling that you had at that time? Or are you relating to me a feeling that you have thirty-five years later as you look back on it from a perspective?
- Kuhn: No, I had it at that time. Now this is not to say that if I had come into personal contact in combat that I wouldn't have killed him, because I would have. But as far as hating them, I believe even at that time, I had smarts enough to know it wasn't the individual that was

responsible for that. He was there performing, yes, but he was just like me; he was there under orders. Over in town, there was quite a number of Japanese killed over in town. There was a spontaneous thing. As soon as they had figured out what had happened, they just cleaned out a lot of the Japanese at Honolulu. Of course, I didn't get to see none of that because we didn't get ashore. But as far as hating them as an individual, no, I never did.

Marcello: What sort of a lasting impression has the Pearl Harbor attack left in your mind over the years? For example, you mentioned that you were very active in establishing this local North Central Texas Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. Maybe I should begin by asking why you saw the need for such an organization.

Kuhn: I really don't know. I became a member when I was over in _____. Then I got the lifetime membership when I was in Norfolk. And for some reason or another, I inquired around here and could not find any chapter of it. I figured a place as big as Dallas and Fort Worth certainly should have one. And I got involved in trying to find out why. I made several calls to John Berlier and somebody down in Florida. I don't recall his name now. I got some names and finally got in contact with

Otto Horky down here and got things stirred up. I didn't accomplish much except to get somebody else involved in it.

And then about the time that they got this going, well, things happened to change my life considerable. If you want to know the truth, I found it more comfortable to be at home--the first home I'd ever had--and I just kind of dropped away from it.

As far as a need for it, I guess more curiosity as to why there wasn't one here. In my circumstances here, I was divorced and remarried. Had I not done this, I would have probably been quite active in it. But then, you pick up here, and you pick up what you've been looking for all of your life, and it changes the picture a little.

Marcello: I was wondering if you joined because of the camaraderie involved, that is, an opportunity to discuss the old times. Or on the other hand, I think of the motto of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, which is something to the effect of "Remember Pearl Harbor, Keep America Alert." Did you see some historic lesson to be learned as a result of the Pearl Harbor attack?

Kuhn: Yes, I learned there that you never know who your enemies are, and you should always be on guard. I don't know whether this will sound good on tape or not, but I was

beginning to understand just how corrupt our politicians were. Because as years went on, I could see a lot of it traced back to them. It just kind of makes you wonder.

Marcello: Are you referring to the fact that. . . is it your opinion that there were certain people who knew of the possibility of the Japanese attack on that day?

Kuhn: Very much so. I think it could have been avoided. I'll never be able to prove it, but I'll always have that belief that it was all for nothing.

Marcello: Is there anything else that you think we need to talk about in order to get as a part of this record? Is there anything that I have neglected to ask you?

Kuhn: No. But I would just like to remark on the remarkable comeback that the fleet made because I was there to see it happening. And the response the people gave when this happened, and the workmanship and so on. . . like I guess you might say how much it done to bind the people together, to draw them into unity where they were like a couple of Missouri mules before. And they were all working for one thing then, and they went after it and got it.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get Ford Island back into shape again, where it was operational? I am assuming that you remained at Ford Island.

Kuhn: Yes, I remained there until May of 1942. There was still a considerable amount of damage, but it was just a matter of

a day or two until there was planes taking off from there again.

Marcello: That is, from Ford Island?

Kuhn: Yes. There was holes in the landing pad out there. We went out and cemeted those shut, took bulldozers and shoved the wreckage back off to one side, and in just a matter of a few hours, they were back in operation and taking planes off again.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Kuhn, I want to thank you very much for taking time to talk with me. You've said a lot of interesting and, I think, important things. Scholars are going to find this information very valuable someday.

Kuhn: Well, to me it's kind of "old hat." This is one of the few times I've sat down and talked about it. And there is possibly some things that I have not told you, which I will not tell you. You just don't talk about them, that's all. There are things which you wish to remain . . . there's no glory in it.

Marcello: Well, again, I want to thank you very much for participating.

Kuhn: Thank you for inviting me.