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Interview with  
EDDIE L. HORNSBY  
November 8, 1979

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas  
Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello  
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Oral History Collection

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Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Eddie Hornsby for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on November 7, 1979, in Fort Worth, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Hornsby in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the cruiser USS San Francisco during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations on December 6, 1941.

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

Mr. Hornsby: Well, I was born in Parker County, Weatherford, Texas, in 1916.

Dr. Marcello: Did you grow up in Parker County and around Weatherford?

Hornsby: No, we left there when I was about four years old, and we went to Comanche County, where I was there approximately four years. From there we went to Coleman County, where I spent the rest of my career up to 1935. I went to Arizona and California and was there off and on until

the early part of 1940.

Marcello: You mentioned you went to Arizona and California in 1935. Did the Depression have anything to do with this?

Hornsby: Yes, but I was checking into a death of a cousin of mine who died there, and I couldn't go along with the way they said he died. So I was out there to check on this to satisfy my own self as a kid.

Marcello: Was this a pretty close relative--this cousin?

Hornsby: Yes, first cousin. He was my daddy's brother's son. After I got there, work was good--wages were good--so I remained in and out of Arizona and California from 1935 to 1940, when I had signed up for the draft for the Army.

Marcello: What made the work so good in that particular area in 1935?

Hornsby: Well, it was just the small Yuma Valley, is where it was. It was lettuce and cantaloupe and vegetable farming; it was a lot of cotton and alfalfa farming. The people who lived there didn't have that many children . . . or there wasn't that much population. The people that was doing the work there were made up of people just like myself--from just about every state in the Union. It almost seemed like being in the service, with kids from all over the United States there.

Marcello: In other words, people had more or less come to the Yuma Valley in search of work because of the Depression.

Hornsby: Right, yes. For instance, here, if you got a dollar or a dollar-and-a-half a day . . . when I left here and went there,

you were doing good. Well, I went right off to work out there for not less than two-and-a-half dollars a day. Once in a while I made less, but most of the time I made that much or more.

Marcello: Did you come from a farming background here in Texas?

Hornsby: Yes. My father was an engineerman of various descriptions, from a paid construction crew for the railroad company to engineerman aboard a train. He also was an engineerman and worked on dredges and barges, dredging canals from Mobile, Alabama, to Biloxi, Mississippi, and to New Orleans and on like that. He dredged out channels and stuff like that. He did this before he was on the railroad. He quit the railroad and went home on his Christmas vacation. My grandfather had got killed in this cotton gin that he owned on his plantation there. Most of my people had moved to Texas. So my grandmother . . . my dad seen that she was very unhappy and wanted to know if she wanted to come to Texas, and she said, "Yes." So Dad moved her to Texas and saw that everything was well-- forty-cent cotton. He was having good years at that time. So he never went back to the railroad. He farmed from then on until he retired in about 1965. We finally got him off of the farm and back into town again.

Marcello: This was in 1965?

Hornsby: Yes. That's when we finally got him off the farm and back into . . . where he couldn't be lifting and stooping due to

his health and everything. It was due to double hernia, so he didn't have no business being on a farm lifting everything like that. So we finally got him off and got him back into Fort Worth, where he for years had worked on commodity markets anyway, buying and selling cotton and grain and different materials of the commodity market,

Marcello: Getting back to your own particular case, you had mentioned awhile ago that while you were in California doing this agricultural labor that you volunteered for the draft. When did this occur? What year?

Hornsby: Well, from 1936 up until the early part of 1940, because I worked for him. My brothers that were working for him had been drafted into the service. When I returned to home, I had to change my draft board. They weren't going to let me change. Now, I had been on a job after I had signed up for the draft, and I didn't do like most people. They quit their jobs and run off, and they left all these people "holding the bag." They had nobody to work for them. Well, I couldn't do that to my boss. I thought too much of him. I liked my work too well, and I stayed on until he got proper help to help him before I came home.

Marcello: So you actually volunteered for the draft in California,

Hornsby: Now, this was being drafted in. It was voluntary all right, but this was when we had to sign up for the draft whether we wanted to or not.

Marcello: I see. You signed up for the draft.

Hornsby: So when I started to return home, they said, "No, you're up for the draft in ten days. You can't go home." I said, "Look, I'm going home to see my parents whether you like it or not!" So he says, "You've had all this four or five months or three or four months or whatever to have done this thing. How come you haven't did it before?" I told him just exactly what I told you awhile ago. I could not leave the job I was on because it needed to be fulfilled. I stayed with my job until my place was fulfilled to where I could do this thing,

Marcello: So when did you then sign up for the draft? In what year?

Hornsby: Well, that was in . . . whenever they first started signing up. I think it was in 1940. In fact . . . I don't know . . . sometime kind of in the fall of 1940, when we signed up for this draft, well, I came on home. Well, when I came home, I gave him my name and address.

Marcello: That is, your boss?

Hornsby: No, the draft board. I went to the draft board before I came home and told them I was coming to Texas and wanted to change my address. My draft board refused to do it, so there was three or four men in there that give me their name and address in case I needed them for witnesses. They all told me, "You go on home, son, and see your parents," after they had heard why I had not went home.

Marcello: Now, where was this in California?

Hornsby: This was near Modesto, California, at a small village in Stanislaus County--Riverbank. This guy refused to take my name and address for a change-of-address, so these guys . . . I gave them my name and address and where I was going to. I gave them my address, and they gave me theirs where if I needed a witness. So I came on home and got home on Friday. Well, on Monday I went to the draft board there and told what I did. After I had seen my parents, I said that if I had to go back, I would. They said, "No, you don't have to. They sent this thing here." Well, the guy was mad about it and knew he couldn't do anything about it, but it was almost four months before he sent my draft change-of-address to Coleman County.

So in the meantime my brothers that was working for my dad had already gone into the service, so I worked for him up to the date that I went in the service. Well, the day that I had taken all the Army examinations and passed A-1, well, I got my card to report to duty in ten days. I told my father, I says, "Well, I always thought I'd rather be in the Navy, anyway." As a kid you thought, well, kind of that a sailor was kind of a novelty to you. He tried to talk me out of it. He said, "No, don't go in the Navy."

But that's what I decided to do, so I went straight to Abilene and went to the draft board. They said it would take about fifteen or twenty days to get in. I said, "That's too



long," and I dropped this card in front of them. They said, "Well, according to the case of that, we can have you in in about two or three days." So they gave me mental and physical tests, which was a severe one, that day, I went home and the next day they gave me a call to come back. Well, I went back to Abilene and was reexamined physically. I had already had the mental test. There was approximately eight or nine of us that had taken the examination.

They sent us to Dallas that Friday afternoon. We arrived in Dallas at approximately nine or ten o'clock Friday night. On Saturday morning we was in a little hotel right across from the post office, the Federal Building, in Dallas. We went straight there at eight o'clock. There was approximately thirty characters there to be interviewed and examined for the Navy. All of us but one passed. They examined us from eight o'clock until 11:30. At 11:30 they swore us in and says, "Well, you're in the Navy now," We was taken into the City of Dallas for the rest of the afternoon until nine o'clock that night. We caught the train which left out of here for San Antonio and had a three- or four-hour layover in San Antonio, so we was taken into San Antonio. From there we went to El Paso. We had a two-or three-hour layover in El Paso. Well, they had a big Mexican band there at the station. We enjoyed that. We looked around town a little bit but not much, because we didn't have time. From there we went to Yuma. Well, I showed some of the

characters around within the one-hour layover we had there, which wasn't far downtown. We just walked down to where we could see Main Street and then went back up. We just got a little exercise off the train. Then from there we went on into San Diego and into boot camp.

Marcello: Let me back up just a minute here. When did all this take place? In what year?

Hornsby: In June of 1941.

Marcello: June of 1941. Even though you had received your draft notice, it was still relatively easy to transfer over into the Navy.

Hornsby: Right. I asked them, I said, "Well, what can we do about this," when I showed him the card to report to duty in ten days. He says, "Oh, you don't have to worry about that." Of course, after all, it's all military. He said, "We'll take care of that."

Marcello: I guess you could probably get into the Navy just so long as you had not been sworn in or anything like that.

Hornsby: No, I hadn't been sworn in. I just passed all examinations, and I got the card to report to duty within ten days. I would go be sworn in and be in the Army then. So I wouldn't be that way until the ten days was up, until I reported. So the Navy, after they saw the card, and after I passed the physical test and the mental test, which was 150 questions, pretty rough . . . I made about 82 percent on that, so that was good. So they hauled me right in. I didn't have to say nothing to the Army

because they assured me that they would take care of this thing. It had to be done properly for my part because I wouldn't have it any other way, and I told them so before I decided. They said, "You don't have to worry about that, We'll take care of it." Well, they did evidently because it was the last I heard of it. I had quite an examination, taking all of that Army tests for the Army, and then I turned around and repeated it for going into the Navy. They was rough. Then after taking the test in Abilene--two tests there--then we was tested all of one morning in Dallas and sworn into the Navy.

We went into boot camp in San Diego, and we went into what they call the "bull pen" for the first four or five days, getting our clothes and everything issued to us, getting assigned to our companies, which mine turned out to be Company 4175. All of the between times, we were being examined by the Navy in what they call the "bull pen" there. So it turned out that I had one terrific amount of examining before I ever got into the service.

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen in boot camp that you think we need to get for the record, or was it the normal Navy boot camp for the most part?

Hornsby: No, I guess was normal--most of it--with exceptions of the training period. The normal Navy boot camp training period is four months, but we only received six weeks of training.

We completed the full course and the full Navy training in six weeks. We won Navy "E's" and stuff like that for efficiency through parade marches and just parade field activities.

Marcello: You just mentioned a fairly important point. Evidently, the country by this time was in a real state of national emergency. If they had cut back on boot camp from four months to six weeks, they evidently were in a hurry to get you guys out into the fleet.

Hornsby: That's right because we had six weeks of boot camp, and they give us a ten-day boot leave, which I spent in Los Angeles. I had a cousin who lived there by the name of Maurice and Geraldine Sweden. So I spent my boot leave there with them. We had an enjoyable time, and I even worked a couple of days while I was there (chuckle) for a change. We were going around there griping about that twenty-one dollars a month to live on. Well, I had a little bank account, but I was pretty particular about going into my bank account. So I would just decide that, well, while I was there . . . and my cousin Maurice had to work, and they needed some help there, so I went out and worked with him in an orange grove for a couple of days and made about thirty dollars, which was pretty good.

I returned to boot camp within after the ten days' boot leave and approximately . . . now I have to guess at this. In approximately five to eight days--I'd say around five days--

we were drafted out. We got up and I don't know where they all went. The whole camp left that morning . . . the whole company, I should say. We caught the train for San Pedro. I thought to my soul that we'd never get through Los Angeles. We got there about 8:30 that morning, and it was a good eleven or twelve o'clock before we got through Los Angeles and down to San Pedro and went aboard the USS San Francisco. There was a boat there waiting for us when we got there. I think there was five of us that went aboard my ship.

Marcello: Let me ask you a few more general questions at this point. How closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs at that particular time?

Hornsby: As much as possible to the point where it wouldn't interfere with my boot training because it was all new to me, and there was a lot to learn, whether you believe it or not, I devoted most of my time to this learning--and most of us did this thing--and that's why we succeeded so well and so quick in completing this boot training. For instance, like, in parade drill they called the cadence for the first two weeks. We learned this thing so well that all they would call was cadence to change a maneuver. We did everything by the beat of the drum. We marched by the band, and everything was done to the beat of the band. You were marching forward, and on about face, why, the leader would say, "Company, about face!" Well, you about-faced, you know, and you did the same thing

for the right oblique or left oblique or whichever it might be, whatever command he gave. That was the only commands he gave all through. We went through all of the semaphore and all of the exercises with the guns--butts, muzzles, and all this stuff. We did all of this by the beat of the drum with exceptions of change in the formation.

Marcello: When you thought of the country getting into war at this time, were your eyes turned mainly toward Europe or toward the Far East?

Hornsby: I didn't rightfully know about that, but, being in the Pacific, well, you just had to take it from there that someone had to . . . my opinion was that somebody would have to guard the West Coast; and being in the Pacific and being sent to Pearl Harbor, we would probably remain there at least for a time.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you get when you went aboard the USS San Francisco. After all, you were still basically a "boot."

Hornsby: I was just an apprentice seaman. See, I went aboard as an apprentice seaman. On December 7, 1941, when the thing broke out, I was still . . . I had just passed . . . after four months you're automatically a seaman second class. After that, you worked for it. You have to pass examinations for every rate you get after that. I was just a "boot" seaman second class when the war did break out. As much as maybe we might have griped a little bit about training, when we . . . well, back to boot camp, we had one incident that was real good. A

president nominee running for president was . . .

Marcello: Was this Willkie?

Hornsby: Wendell Willkie came to boot camp and ate dinner with us one day while we were in boot camp.

Now then, back to go aboard ship, I was . . . it seemed all right. It was rough and everything leaving out of Long Beach the first day. The second day out, we woke up way out at sea and went to topside that morning, and that ocean was as slick as a window glass. It was the most beautiful thing you ever saw, but it was quite a letdown to me because I never thought that that's what it would be anything like out there or could be like that. I was really surprised. This was a lull before the storm we run into.

So the next day we start hitting rough waters again. Oh, it was very rough! It was one of the worst storms that I went through all through my Navy career, and the old chiefs and stuff who had been in for twenty years nearly said it was one of the worst storms they had ever went through. Now, the wind wasn't so severe. We were in other storms with heavier winds, but this wind . . . and it was eighty to 120 miles an hour winds, mostly between eighty and a hundred miles an hour, which wasn't great enough to keep the waves broke down. Now, I have heard many a time on radio and TV people talking about mountains of waves and how high they were out there. Well, I wouldn't begin to say how high those waves were, but

I'll tell you this much. They say that thirty-five to forty feet was the highest waves ever encountered. Well, that is for my money as wrong as it could be. When we hit this storm, there was a tramp steamer that left San Diego with a barge. Well, she broke loose from this tramp steamer, and she didn't have fuel enough to stand by, was the report we got. We were in quite a little fleet going across. So the government wired this fleet and had the USS San Francisco and the USS Portland--two heavy cruisers--to break convoy and go chase this barge down. We'll call it a barge, but it was a channel dredge, is what it amounted to. It had approximately twenty men aboard it, and they had a real small radio set, and we could pick them up enough that we could chase them. They were on their way from San Diego to Pearl Harbor when she broke loose. When we finally caught her, she was approximately . . . best to my knowledge, the report they gave us aboard ship was that we were approximately forty miles north of due west of Panama. That's how far that thing had floated before we caught it. That was due to the storm. Now, the San Francisco and the Portland were cruising about 3,000 yards apart.

I was standing on the bridge, which is approximately sixty feet from the waterline, and I'd stand a four-hour lookout--a starboard wing lookout. I'm to report anything I see, and more specifically the Portland. Well, I reported the Portland. I saw her and reported her four times in four hours. That's



how great the waves were out there. Now, when I first saw her, we were in the bottom of this wave, and she was up here (gesture). Now, she was far enough away that the two-inch stanchions--lifeline stanchions--around the bow of the ship . . . you couldn't see them. That's how far away she was now-- a relatively clear atmosphere even though it was rough and stormy. Now, that will show you how high the waves were,

Marcello: Where were you assigned when you went aboard the San Francisco,  
In other words, what was your job?

Hornsby: I applied for machinist's mate, and I got the deck force,

Marcello: This was standard procedure, though, was it not?

Hornsby: Right, right. I got the deck force, which was the first division--the bow of the ship and turret one--which I wouldn't have taken anything for that because I had a good gun station,

Marcello: In other words, your battle station was in turret one,

Hornsby: In turret one,

Marcello: What exactly were you doing there in turret one?

Hornsby: Well, when I was first assigned to it, I worked in nearly all stations up to the turret, and I was cradleman on the center gun in turret one,

Marcello: What does the cradleman do?

Hornsby: Well, when the gun captain opens the breach, I throw the cradle into the breach of the bow, and the projectile is in this cradle, It breaks down and goes into the breach of the bow, and then the rammerman rams this big, heavy chain and seats the bullet,

the projectile, in. As soon as that rammer comes out, the powderman throws his bag of powder in, and that's all he does. In the meantime, while he's doing that, I reach down and get my bag of powder and throw it in. The gun captain hits the base of it and seats it in, and in the meantime I grab the cradle and jerk it back out and step off the platform as it elevates and depresses, see. You have to get clear of that when the gun's elevated.

Marcello: I would assume that you started down in the powder room or the handling room and, like you say, worked your way up to these other stations.

Hornsby: Right, right. I worked every station from the powder room to the hoist feeding room, which is just outside of the powder room--it's separate--putting it into the elevator that takes it up to the turret itself. Then I worked in the shell deck, which was next, and from there I worked nearly all stations in the turret then and wound up in my permanent duty as cradleman.

Marcello: I would assume that when you went aboard the San Francisco that it was almost like going through boot camp once again to a certain extent.

Hornsby: Right. It sure was.

Marcello: I assume the "old salts" aboard there treated you like a "boot."

Hornsby: Right. They sure did. They were relatively good, though. Only myself went into . . . of the four or five of us who went

aboard, nearly every one of us went into a different division. Of course, I was the only one that came aboard . . . , was the newest one that was . . . that come aboard in a good little while, see. We had approximately . . . well, I just have to use a figure . . . , approximately 800 men and officers aboard when I went aboard. The first division consisted of, say, 130 men or a little more or a little less. It takes that many to operate the turret, man the turret mainly, and a few other little stations that had to be manned other than the turret. But it took them all to man the first division, in other words.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the San Francisco during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Hornsby: Well, it was fair. We had pretty fair food. There was, like, beans and cornbread for breakfast but mainly beans. That was kind of an oddball. It was kind of hard to get used to. Other than that, it was just relatively pretty good food. You had your gripes about it then, but as a whole it wasn't worth griping about. It was edible and good food.

Marcello: I assume that you also got mess cooking when you went aboard the San Francisco.

Hornsby: I almost didn't. Finally, on the way down the line, I finally had to go in, and at that time I went in as a overseer. I had to run the mess cook compartment. That was my main duty-- setting up the mess hall. See, we'd hang our tables up in

the ceiling in the daytime. We'd just go in and clean the mess halls and kind of swab them down. Then we'd set the tables down and get them ready for lunch--for early chow, in other words. You'd get everything set down for chow then. The benches fold and lay on top of the table, and you hang them up on these hangers in the ceiling or overhead.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned that when you had mess cooking duty, you were actually an overseer. Are you saying, in effect, that you did not actually have to serve the food or anything like that?

Hornsby: No, I helped. Really, I was to oversee the mess cooks and see that this work was did. Of course, I couldn't do that myself. I helped them as much as possible.

Marcello: Was the food being served cafeteria-style at that time aboard the San Francisco?

Hornsby: Right. Right. We had dumbwaiters from the cook shack, which was forwarded into the number one mess hall, and it came right down at the forward foot of the steam tables, and food just dropped out of there into the steam tables. The "artillery racks"--plates and knives and forks--was where you had two lines. You had two hatches to come into--one port and one starboard. Generally, port side was the firemen department gang, and the starboard side was normally the seaman-type line. They come down in between these two lines and down in, and that separated them and gave them a faster entry through

the chow line and everything.

Marcello: Everybody was served at tables. This was not cafeteria-style at this time yet.

Hornsby: No. You went through and picked up your knives and forks and spoon. You went through, and they dished it out to you on your tray, and then you'd take your tray and go to your table,

Marcello: Oh, okay. So you were being served cafeteria-style then.

Hornsby: Right. Right.

Marcello: They had converted over by the time you went aboard the San Francisco.

Hornsby: Yes, we were being served cafeteria-style.

Marcello: What were your quarters like aboard the San Francisco.

Hornsby: Well, they were good with the exception of one thing. You had no place to sit. You either sat on the deck or on your bunk. When your bunks are up, according to regulations, why, you got no place to sit but on the floor, and that included mess hall or any other place. You had no lounging place at all.

The main lounging place for enlisted seamen was the mess hall where they had the coffee urns. They kept them full of coffee most of the time, and you'd go up and have coffee. A few of you or a few of your buddies or what-have-you would sit down on the deck there--on the floor--and drink your coffee or go to the topside and lean on the rail or something like that.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what was the morale like aboard the San

Francisco during that pre-Pearl Harbor period? In other words, was it a happy ship?

Hornsby: Yes, it really was. Like I said awhile ago, there was quite a little bit of griping because as soon as we got into Pearl Harbor, well, we was supposed to be in ten days and out ten days on training. Well, a little bit contrary to that, we were, say, four to five days, and we'd be out the full ten to twelve days on training. Now, the only griping that I ever heard was this battle training we did when we was at sea, which was wonderful. Of course, I griped, too, a little bit about it, but I just wasn't much of a hand to gripe about nothing because I've always worked and liked my work. But I did gripe along with the rest of them. That was about the only gripes that I heard, was due to the so much battle training over and over and over.

Marcello: Incidentally, what did you think about the idea of being stationed on a more or less permanent basis in the Hawaiian Islands? Were you looking forward to the Hawaiian Islands?

Hornsby: Yes, but I was really disappointed after seeing all the movies and all of the beautiful pictures of beautiful Hawaii. I was, well, downright disappointed.

Marcello: In what way?

Hornsby: In the views of what I saw when we pulled in there because relatively it was just drab and ugly pulling into the channel going into the harbor. It was just relatively an ugly thing,

and I thought, "My goodness! This is not what I always seen or heard of," I thought, well, it'd probably just be that way in and out of this channel.

So we pulled in there , . . my division didn't rate liberty that day, so I had to tough it out a day. You would rate liberty every other day, so I had to wait until the second day (chuckle) before I got liberty. Well, it was relatively nice, but it just wasn't what I was expecting. I had let myself, from reading and seeing all of the beautiful pictures, into seeing nothing ugly about it at all until you got there and really eyeballed it. It wasn't quite that way. Now, after looking over Honolulu and kind of getting acquainted, why, a couple of days later I went to Waikiki Beach and stuff like that. Then when I got over in that area.. . . at the time the only large building there then was the Waikiki hotel.

Marcello: Was this the Royal Hawaiian Hotel?

Hornsby: Yes, Royal Hawaiian Hotel. That was the only big building out there. There were smaller buildings around. Then it was getting down to what like I figured that it would be. Then a few days later, why, we got to see the town, Waikiki. Well, we got to making little tours around over the island, and it was just, oh, about like stateside or something like that. It wasn't just what you had it built up in your mind as a kid, but all in all, well, it was pretty good.

Marcello: Okay, Let's talk a little bit about your training that the

San Francisco underwent after it got to Pearl Harbor. Now, you mentioned that you would go out on training exercises, and you would stay out for approximately ten to twelve days. Describe what one of these typical training exercises was like.

Hornsby: All right. We would go out on what we'd call maneuvers, and we went through descriptions of training,

Marcello: Were you part of a cruiser division?

Hornsby: Yes, Cruiser Division Six,

Marcello: Do you recall what other cruisers were in the division?

Hornsby: They switched on us some, but it would be sometimes, like, the San Francisco and the New Orleans, the Minneapolis, and sometimes the Portland and sometimes the Indianapolis. But generally there were four cruisers and a destroyer for each cruiser. At times the division consisted of one aircraft carrier, four heavy cruisers and one destroyer for each cruiser. It should have been two destroyers for each cruiser, and then two destroyers for each aircraft carrier. The four cruisers would normally surround the carrier. You would have some of the . . . , the two destroyers assigned to the carrier would be in and around between the cruisers and the carrier in the formation. The rest of the destroyers, they're screening out here for submarine sounds or anything like that. Then they're out scanning us then.

Now, on these training missions, we went out . . . we



trained heavily on our battle stations, and in my case it was gunnery. We didn't only train just on your one gun; we trained on all guns. We had a loading platform where the dummy ammunition and everything was just like the real thing. This loading platform was in between the two stacks on a platform above the gun platform. We would go up there and just have drill after drill.

Then we would have fire drills, nothing but fire drills, all over the ship. Well, you learned where all your fire equipment was located and how to handle this fire equipment. Of course, I had a lot of that in boot camp, too, so I was pretty acquainted with that. We learned where it was aboard ship and how to get to it and how to use it.

We learned how to maneuver on a gas attack and how to handle your gas masks and where to go and what to do and what procedures and precautions to take on just about anything that the Navy might come in contact with from an enemy.

Marcello: Did you also have antiaircraft drills?

Hornsby: Oh, yes. We had lots of antiaircraft drills. We had simulated bombing attacks on us, and we had simulated antiaircraft fire. For instance, they'd put up drones, and we'd fire at these drones with a 5-inch .25-caliber. Of course, now, I was on the 8-inch guns at that time, but we also went back and fired the 5-inch, too. Now, I didn't work on any of the smaller guns, except we did have drill on them.

Marcello: I guess during this period, that is, prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, you really didn't get any of the 20-millimeters or the 40-millimeters yet.

Hornsby: No, no. No, no.

Marcello: They come later.

Hornsby: We had 3-inch and .50-caliber machine guns.

Marcello: Both of which were not nearly so effective as what those 20-millimeters and those 40-millimeters are going to be later on.

Hornsby: No, no. Now, we was really due a shipyard treatment, so during this whole period, from the time I went aboard in June until, I'll say, August 1st . . . we got to Pearl Harbor around the eighteenth or twentieth of August. Now, from that day until the Pearl Harbor attack, it wasn't all this sea training and stuff because we entered the shipyard for our overhaul. During this storm, the Portland got a big hole knocked in it, and as soon as we found the barge, she had to leave and go on to Pearl Harbor due to the hole. Well, it loosened up a lot of seams, and we had a lot of little seepages here and there which had to be fixed. It was quite awhile . . . and we was doing all of this training while waiting our turn to get into the shipyard.

Marcello: When was it that you went into the shipyard?

Hornsby: Now, this was probably in the latter part of October or the first part of November.

- Marcello: So you would have probably been on no more than one or two of these training exercises before you went into the yards?
- Hornsby: Oh, no. We had dozens of them before we went into the yards, before they let us in. While we was waiting, why, we went on training mission after training mission.
- Marcello: Well, when I speak of a training mission, though, I think you were mentioning that these would usually last ten or twelve days.
- Hornsby: Right. Right. And there was just not as many maybe as it seemed like it was, but it seemed like enough. It was enough that I learned a whole lot. After the war broke out, after Pearl Harbor, seeing what happened, seeing what we was in for, now I wouldn't have taken a million dollars for that training. I got to thinking that in case my station was knocked out, I could go nearly anywhere aboard ship and do something without having to try to learn something or find out how to do something. I pretty well know how to do everything and knew about where everything was aboard ship. That was wonderful--being able to know your ship that well and what you could do and what you couldn't do.
- Marcello: Well, let me get some chronology straight here. You mentioned that you went aboard the ship in August of 1941.
- Hornsby: Right.
- Marcello: And the ship went into the yards when?
- Hornsby: I'd have to look at that book. I think it tells in there.

It was in October or November.

Marcello: Okay, October or November of 1941 that it went into the yards. It was in the yards at the time of the attack?

Hornsby: Right. We were at Pier Seventeen.

Marcello: So the training you would have participated in would have taken place between August and October.

Hornsby: Right. That would be a good guess.

Marcello: Now, when you were on these training exercises, how often would the guns actually be fired? I'm referring now to the main batteries.

Hornsby: Well, once to three times on an outing.

Marcello: It was rather expensive to fire those guns, was it not?

Hornsby: Right. It sure was. We'd fire at target ships towing at the small craft--a sea-going tug or something pulling a target two or three hundred yards behind him--and we'd fire at this target so many thousand yards out.

Marcello: Now, did you have opportunities to receive an "E" on these training exercises?

Hornsby: Right. Right. We carried the Navy "E." We went into the shipyard with the Navy "E" on just about every main battery and secondary battery.

Marcello: That was a pretty great honor at that time, was it not?

Hornsby: Right. That was a big honor. I had to wear the Navy "E" on my . . . we had to sew them on our uniforms.

Marcello: Did that mean anything in terms of a bonus or pay or anything?

Hornsby: Not at that time, no. It was just an honor, which was a good honor and which we were all proud of. That's one thing I can say . . . that's jumping a little bit ahead, though, I was proud of my crew. It was a crew that you , , . everybody seemed to be able to trust everybody, and to me that's what carried us through from Pearl Harbor to Korea. Now, the day they signed the peace treaty on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Harbor, we had taken 40,000 soldiers into the Yellow Sea and went into the Inchon Bay, which is right on the 38th parallel of Korea. Now, we were in there making this landing. You could only get into the Inchon Bay on high tide, and you only had time to get in there. You couldn't get out until high tide again. Well, this was the day before they signed the peace treaty, so we knew nothing about any peace treaty. Maybe our captain did, but we didn't. So it was quite a deal, and we went in there and landed 40,000 soldiers which in turn was going to Seoul and capture our prisoners-of-war. This is where they was supposed to have them. The main object of that was to capture General Wainwright, which was a kind of a funny situation.

So we pulled in there, and they started unloading that afternoon and unloaded all day and all night. Sometime along about ten or eleven o'clock the next morning--let's say around noon the next day--well, we got word that they had signed a peace treaty on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Harbor,

You talk about one happy bunch of characters! We were because Inchon Bay is pretty big. It's not that big in case of an air attack, which is what we were set for. We were primed and set for everything that was in it in case there was an air attack.

Marcello: Okay. Let's get back and talk some more about Pearl Harbor. Let's talk about the liberty routine for the San Francisco. How did the liberty routine work for you when the San Francisco came in?

Hornsby: Well, you rated liberty every other day.

Marcello: Port and starboard liberty, in other words.

Hornsby: Port and starboard liberty. Each port and starboard is set up in four sections. The first and third sections of the starboard section rates liberty one day; the second and fourth rates the next day. That goes for both port and starboard alike. You rate liberty every other day. It was relatively good because with the money we got we didn't have all that much money. Anyway, the main thing was just to get over and get a good plate of food.

Marcello: In other words, you've mentioned something that a lot of other people have told me. You wanted to get some food that was kind of different from what you got aboard the ship.

Hornsby: Right. Your food was good and all like that, but you'd get tired of it--routine stuff, routine stuff, you know. Sometimes it just wasn't good at all, but most of the time it was

edible. So it was all right. You did appreciate getting over on liberty, if for nothing else than just to get a good steak or something, you know. You'd generally sit for maybe an hour or two hours getting your meal ordered and generally four to six guys talking and enjoying yourself and just resting a period,

Marcello: What did you do once the San Francisco went into the yards? How did your routines change? What particularly were you doing when the San Francisco went into the yards?

Hornsby: Being a seaman second class, you have to know that I had the bedrock of just about anything--working parties. It didn't change relatively too much except . . .

Marcello: A lot of chipping paint and red leading?

Hornsby: We didn't have time to do too much of that. We did some of it, but due to so many shipyard workers aboard there, I would stand fire watches, like, during welding and changing the structure and stuff. Well, I would stand fire watches for yard workmen in case of a fire or anything like that to start fighting it. I had equipment and everything ready, and, of course, I knew how to handle it pretty good. We all did.

Marcello: I guess the reason I asked you that question about what you did once you went into the yards was to establish whether or not your liberty routine changed any once you went into the yards.

Hornsby: No,

Marcello: It stayed the same.

Hornsby: It stayed relatively the same.

Marcello: Other than to get a different meal, what would you do for recreation when you went into Honolulu?

Hornsby: Well, we just looked around mainly, just walked up and down the street and observed. Once in awhile we'd go to a show, but mainly it was window shopping.

Marcello: I gather Hotel Street was a rather interesting place.

Hornsby: Oh, well, yes, but my gang generally always went . . . we was window shopping. We was interested in . . . they had a lot of old antique things in windows, like, old chandeliers hanging. Sometimes the ceiling was full of every kind of chandelier you could think of and every kind of old gun. Just about every kind of old relic you could think of was in these antique joints. We spent much of our time just window shopping and going through these places and buying a souvenir now and then if you had the money.

Marcello: I guess during the weekend downtown Honolulu was crowded with servicemen.

Hornsby: Well, it was just about the same almost daily. One day to another, to me, I couldn't see much change.

Marcello: But would there be a lot of servicemen in Honolulu on a weekend when the fleet was in?

Hornsby: Yes. Yes, there were. When you would see a change is whenever a new fleet came in, or maybe a new bunch of Army men was



shipped in. Then you'd see quite a little change on your liberty in just surveying and the streets as a whole.

Marcello: Now, as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, could you detect any change at all in your routine? I mean, you were in the yards, and that would certainly limit the number of changes in your routine, but did you observe any?

Hornsby: No. You couldn't tell much difference because being in our condition as enlisted men, we knew nothing only except what we could read in the papers, which would have been no more than being at home and reading the paper. You just knew that it was to be expected. Now, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor . . . to me a lot of people get a lot of wrong misconceptions on that thing by blaming somebody. Well, maybe somebody there did have something to do with it, but other than that, it was just like . . . I don't know where you were at the time, but we didn't have no more ideas that . . . I didn't have no more idea that there was going to be a Jap attack that morning than you would have. None of us did. It was just solely a slip-up surprise. Now, to me your high officer personnel on down to lowest apprentice seaman . . . one was just surprised as the other one was unless some character had something to do with framing it up, which I don't think could have possibly happened at the time.

- Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around in bull sessions, did you ever talk about the possibility of a Japanese attack?
- Hornsby: Not really. We just ignored that. We just read the papers, and, oh, there might be a discussion here and there, but we thought that surely a little ol' place like Japan wouldn't try to attack the United States.
- Marcello: Well, you've kind of . . .
- Hornsby: So we kind of more or less ignored it.
- Marcello: You've kind of led up to my next question. When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually think about in your own mind?
- Hornsby: Well, more or less just like an Oriental--a Chinaman or a Filipino and Japs, too. I had been acquainted with Japs, being on the West Coast there from 1935 to 1940. Even in Arizona, there was Japanese there. Now, in 1935 to 1940, I quit my job and had taken a job which I thought would build up some prestige. I was driving a U.S. mail truck, and in doing so, why, in the afternoon, why, I made my last mail delivery. I was running what they call a star route, running from Yuma, Arizona, to Somerton, Arizona, Gadsden, Arizona, San Luis, Arizona and Old Mexico, which was quite a prestige. I had to go under a \$30,000-bond to handle this stuff. Well, in going into these stores in the afternoon, I'd pick up freight and express and haul it back to the valley to keep from going back empty. I was stationed way down in the valley

at a little place by the name of Gadsden. So I generally hauled freight and express from Yuma back to Somerton and Gadsden before I retired for the day. One of these stores in particular was a big . . . kind of a variety store, more or less furniture and dry goods, and I was always having to go in there and pick up a mattress or something and haul it back to the valley. These Japanese seemed . . . when you'd go in there, they seemed awful quiet, awful sneaky, like they'd . . . I don't know. They had a funny atmosphere. Now, why I say that is I came in contact with a lot of Filipinos there and a lot of Chinamen, which run their own business and stuff like that around there, little grocery stores and laundries and stuff like that, But they were friendly enough, and they didn't seem so sneaky, but those Japs was always sneaking around. It always seemed like when you'd go in that store it was a funny atmosphere, I always kind of hated to go in there because they just didn't seem quite right to me.

Marcello: This is the opinion you had of them when you were a sailor there in Honolulu.

Hornsby: Right. Now, the Japs that I knew there in Pearl Harbor . . . there were so many servicemen there. They had a little . . . they gave you a little bit different opinion because they seemed like a little bit more like any other Oriental. So I didn't really hold too much weight on this store back in Yuma,

I just assumed that that happened to be that particular little group there, you know. Being away from their people as much as they were, it made them that way. Over there in Honolulu, they acted more like a Chinaman or a . . . in other words, you couldn't hardly tell them apart.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into this weekend of December 7, 1941, and let's go into a little bit more detail on your routine here. What did you do that Saturday? This would be the Saturday of December 6, 1941. Do you remember what your routine was?

Hornsby: I had duty that day. I was aboard ship just carrying on routine duty.

Marcello: What sort of routine duty were you doing that day?

Hornsby: Well, I even stood fire watch. That was my main duty at that time, was standing fire watch. At that time we was overhauling the magazines for the 8-inch powder rooms and remodeling powder rooms and everything throughout.

Marcello: Now, the San Francisco was in a sense really out of commission. It was in no shape to fight.

Hornsby: Right. We had nothing aboard ship.

Marcello: When you're in the yard in that condition, all of the ammunition and powder is removed. Is that correct?

Hornsby: Yes. It was in the ammunition dump twenty or twenty-five miles away. Well, as the crow flies, it was twenty miles or twenty-five over to the ammunition dump.

Marcello: So as far as you were concerned, Saturday was just a routine day.

Hornsby: Just a routine day.

Marcello: How about Saturday night?

Hornsby: Well, it was the same thing.

Marcello: Did you watch a movie that night or anything of that nature?

Hornsby: No. It seems like late that afternoon, just about before dark, they had a little floor show. I think a bunch of little Hawaiian people come aboard and did a show aboard ship that afternoon for the personnel that was aboard ship.

Marcello: Now, on the Saturday night, would you have very many drunks coming back aboard ship?

Hornsby: Not really. They might be "tight" a little bit, but as far as I would say of being drunk, I never did see too many come back drunk. There were always a few. You just have to know there's going to be a few come back drunk, but relatively they would just be "tight" and a little happy but maneuverable and know right from wrong, in other words, see.

Marcello: Did you have any of the old Asiatic sailors aboard the San Francisco?

Hornsby: Oh, yes, we had plenty of those (chuckle).

Marcello: They were characters, were they not?

Hornsby: They were characters, yes. Their main deal was talking about the rough times they had in Norfolk.

Marcello: I'll bet they had a lot of sea stories to bring back from

China, too, did they not?

Hornsby: We had an awful lot of them there. Of the few that had had China duty, they sure did come in handy when we was offshore at China later on,

Marcello: Okay, so Saturday night, I gather, was rather routine. Nothing out of the ordinary happened.

Hornsby: Just a routine thing like anything else. The next morning we got up as usual, and, as you know, the Navy stresses cleanliness.

Marcello: Sunday morning is also a day of leisure, though, is it not?

Hornsby: Right. But no matter how much of leisure it is, the deck force gets up, and every other division, and they clean up their part of the ship. That's got to be done whether it's a liberty day or what it is. So we got up at the routine time, went up and swabbed down the bow of the ship, and that's about all we did that morning.

Marcello: What time would you get up on a Sunday to do this?

Hornsby: Oh, around six o'clock, I guess. Routine thing, is what it was.

Marcello: Did you go to breakfast that morning?

Hornsby: Oh, yes. What happened was that we swabbed down the deck, secured all the gear, and got our towel and cleaned up for breakfast. We lined up, had our breakfast just like any other day. When we got through, some few went to topside. Most of them went back to their quarters. Of course, the cleaning crew in the quarters had raised all of the bunks. Of course,

you secure your bunk when you get out of it, and all they do is just raise them up and then let them down on those chains. When you let them down, the passageway is relatively narrow, but when you let them up, you got a big, wide passageway.

So we'd all--myself and 60 percent of the crew--went back to the division, lowered our bunks and got in there. I was quite a reader. I was reading . . . well, in fact, I was studying my manual at the time, plus I'd always read my "Good Book," too. Generally, Sunday morning was the best time to . . . about the only time you had other than after you got off watch or secured in the afternoon to have a little reading time. I generally read my Sunday school lesson awhile, and then I'd study my Blue Jacket's Manual because out there, if I'm going to be part of this thing, I want to know everything about it.

Marcello: So this is what you're doing on that Sunday morning.

Hornsby: Yes. I just crawled into my rack, and they sounded general quarters. I thought, "My goodness! Why general quarters at a time like this?" Now, this is the first general quarters we'd had since we're in the shipyard.

Marcello: How was general quarters sounded? In other words, was there a gong or was there a bugle, or what was the routine aboard the San Francisco?

Hornsby: The boatswain blowed his whistle and piped attention.

Marcello: This came over the public address system.

Hornsby: Yes, over the loudspeaker throughout the ship. He blowed general alarm.

Marcello: But you heard nothing or felt nothing up until this point,

Hornsby: Up to that point, no. So, well, we jumped out of our racks. Of course, we were fully dressed, so . . . our quarters was about the last sleeping quarters forward. So at the forward bulkhead of our quarters, there was a hatch that entered into the chamber of turret one, and you could go in there and get into the chamber, which was at about the shell deck, and then you could go from there down to the powder room or from there up to into the turret. So knowing that there was no ammunition aboard--everything was tore up--well, we all just went over there where this hatch is. It was locked, but we just went around to this hatch and were standing there waiting for somebody to bring a key to unlock it if they wanted us to get in.

When they sound general quarters you set all watertight integrity. They had went about setting all watertight integrity, going to all the hatches and dogging them down. So we were dogged down in here. Now, our quarters from the deck to the ceiling was about four foot under water. I assume that the waterline was about four foot above our floor or deck.

So we went there and directly a bomb exploded, and being halfway under the waterline like that, you get a terrific concussion under there. You could hear it much greater--louder--



there than you would have if you'd been a deck up because, being at the waterline, that explosion was terrific. It was only being about 300 yards from us.

Marcello: Now, where were you located?

Hornsby: The ship?

Marcello: Yes.

Hornsby: The ship was in Pier Seventeen.

Marcello: What ships were around it? Do you know?

Hornsby: Well, there was some destroyers, and I can't recall their names. But there were three or four destroyers in front of us in the pier, and then some were tied up. We were tied up on the west side of the pier. Now, across the pier from us to our starboard was the USS New Orleans, heavy cruiser, which was just like our ship. We call it a sister ship; there was seven of us. Then to the port side . . . of course, there are some little ships anchored in our pier here. We're here and they're there (gesture). Then you cross the dock, and some little ships, destroyers and stuff are there. Then next to the other side of that pier, which would have been Pier Eighteen, was the USS Saint Louis, a light cruiser, and the USS Honolulu, and actually they could be classified as sister ships, too, only they were light cruisers. There was sixteen ships put in the building at that time, which was eight heavies (cruisers) and eight lights (cruisers). The Honolulu was tied into the pier, and then the Saint Louis was moored in alongside her.

Marcello: So there were quite a few ships in the vicinity of where the San Francisco was in the yard.

Hornsby: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, you're down within the ship, and this bomb explodes, and you can definitely feel the concussion. What are you and your shipmates talking about since you really can't see what's going on? What's going through your mind?

Hornsby: We were wondering why they sounded general quarters there with nothing aboard ship and the ship tore down like this. It was kind of a mystery to us as why they would sound general quarters. It wasn't like a routine thing.

Marcello: So you don't even know there is really an attack going on yet.

Hornsby: No, no. I had no idea nothing's going on. But while we're standing there waiting for someone to bring the key to open this hatch where we could get in and go to our station, someone . . . see, a big square hatch comes down and dogs down, and then they got a manhole in the center. If you know the Navy, you know what I'm talking about. Someone undogged this manhole, stuck his head down in there, and says, "Anybody who's in here, get out of here! War's broke out!"

Well, man, we all made a dash for that hatch, and we went up this hatch one man at a time--up that ladder and up through that manhole.

Marcello: How many of you are there down there in this compartment?

Hornsby: I assume there's thirty or forty of us waiting to get into our

station. So, anyway, we filed out of there one by one. A short distance from where I got out of our quarters, up to the next deck and probably forty or fifty feet up, there was a sickbay on the starboard side, and then across from there was the armory.

As we went by, why, one of the gunner's mates saw me and said, "Hey, Hornsby, come here and get a handful of rifles!" I says, "What's going on?" He says, "I don't know, but the Japs are attacking! That's all I know!" He throwed about every bandoleer that I could possibly carry around my neck--they was all loaded--and a handful of rifles. I don't to this day know how I got out and got to the topside and got to the fantail with them.

Marcello: How many rifles did you have? Do you recall?

Hornsby: Six or eight--just all I could carry in my arm like this (gesture).

Marcello: Plus ammunition,

Hornsby: Plus all this ammunition, which is in the bandoleers.

Marcello: How many decks down were you?

Hornsby: Well, that would have been one deck down from the main deck there. I went from there plumb on through to the mess hall. They said I was to carry them to the fantail, so I went on through. Of course, there was guys ahead of me undogging hatches, and there was guys coming behind me, so I just went on through with this handful of rifles. I got there and got up through that manhole, . . . well, they had one hatch open back there.

I remember that now.

Marcello: That must have been a pretty tough job, climbing up a set of ladders to get to the main deck.

Hornsby: It really was, especially with a handful of rifles like that and carrying them like this (gesture). I got up there, and they liked to tore me apart grabbing those rifles and those bandoleers off my neck. They liked to jerk my head off.

Marcello: Did you keep a rifle for yourself?

Hornsby: I hanged on to one rifle, and they grabbed all of the bandoleers but two. I had two left, and I hung on to them.

Marcello: Okay, what sort of a scene did you see when you came out on the deck?

Hornsby: Well, it was just about 300 yards across here to Battleship Row from us. They were moored alongside Ford Island there. It's only about 300 or 400 yards. I'd say 300 yards.

Marcello: So you had a pretty good view of Battleship Row.

Hornsby: Yes. They was already burning and exploding and continuing to do so. Mainly, you didn't see too much because you saw these planes in the air. So, man, I loaded my gun and started concentrating on airplanes in the air.

Marcello: So you didn't have time to really survey the damage that was done over at Battleship Row. You were mainly looking at those airplanes coming in.

Hornsby: Right. I don't know what other else's guns or ships or what-have-you might have hit these planes, but I'd say we shot

down three planes with rifles. One of them dropped a "fish," trying to get at the Saint Louis and the Honolulu. Well, this "fish" she dropped . . . the Honolulu has a round stern like this (gesture). Well, it hit right next to the dock on the stern of it as she was in bow forward and knocked a hole in her. Evidently, it was a dud; it didn't go off. It just knocked a big hole in her and went on through and buried up in the mud under that dock. They had to dig it out days later.

Marcello: Now, what kind of planes were coming in at this time?

Hornsby: Well, they was torpedo planes.

Marcello: So this must have been pretty early in the attack.

Hornsby: It was right at the start of the thing. It'd just been a few explosions before we got to topside.

Marcello: Describe your own activities in shooting at these planes.

Hornsby: Well, you was so mad that as scared as you were, your madness overtook the scaredness. All I could think of is shooting one down if he got in distance. So this one--the first one that come over--dropped a "fish," and it hit the Honolulu. And one had dropped a . . . one before this had dropped a bomb in trying to get those two ships there together, but it hit the dock. It exploded on the dock and loosened up a lot of seams in her pretty bad, but it didn't hit her personally. It hit the dock and exploded. Then this "fish" hit her. Well, we fired at this plane, and the thing went down. So we assumed

we shot it down with our rifles.

Marcello: About how many rounds do you think you fired at those planes-- you personally?

Hornsby: Well, I put a full clip into the first one when it dropped the bomb.

Marcello: Now, you were firing a bolt action Springfield '03?

Hornsby: An M-1 Marine rifle. We called it . . . it was the Marine rifles. We called it that. It was just an M-1 Army rifle, really, Marine rifle.

Marcello: Well, if it was the M-1, then it was semi-automatic. It was not the old bolt action Springfield '03.

Hornsby: Right. Oh, no, it wasn't the old Springfield. We only had relatively few of them aboard. We did have a bunch, but I didn't see any of them. I had all M-1's.

Marcello: How long were you firing at these planes altogether? For what length of time?

Hornsby: Oh, I'd say around thirty minutes . . . twenty or thirty minutes.

Marcello: Now, was this firing organized, or was it more or less every man for himself?

Hornsby: No, every man for himself. We just got up there, and something like this had never been drilled on us. It was just something that had to be did,

Marcello: Is there a lot of smoke and fire and so on and so forth?

Hornsby: Oh, yes, all over us. You'd glance off at things, but still

you know you got to protect your ship, and all we got to protect it with is these rifles,

So this thing had dropped the torpedo and hit the Honolulu and knocked a hole in her, that's all. It didn't explode. It was a dud, but it did knock a hole in her. Well, this thing was low enough and come right down over them, and I got three clips into her. From the time she got into range, I started firing, and I put three clips into her before she got out of range. She never raised up; she went down. I was almost as scared that she was going to hit our hospital.

Marcello: Were these planes flying so low that you could distinguish the pilots? Could you see them?

Hornsby: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Describe what they looked like.

Hornsby: Well, they're just a . . . they'd kind of be like looking at a toy. You couldn't tell much about them because he was looking forward, and he had his helmet on. He was just going like this (gesture). He was just a man sitting there going. Of course, we wasn't looking at him too much, anyway. What I was doing was concentrating on knocking that thing out of the air.

Marcello: How low were these planes coming in?

Hornsby: Well, they were a hundred or so feet, just about as low as they could get. Like, a torpedo plane, they get real low.

Marcello: And from where are you firing at these planes? Are you up

on the fantail yet?

Hornsby: Back on the fantail.

Marcello: Out in the open?

Hornsby: Out in the open. Back out to the port side of turret three.

Marcello: They evidently seemed to be ignoring the San Francisco, that is, these Japanese planes.

Hornsby: Well, those were, yes. They was after them, too, because they're actually , . . they look as big as we do. So there is a dock between us and the New Orleans, The Honolulu and the Saint Louis are as big in size nearly as we are, only they're a 6-inch emplacement, and we're an 8-inch emplacement. They was after them two together, see. They're after the bigger target,

Marcello: So you're firing at these Japanese planes for about a half-hour. What happens at that point? Incidentally, you mentioned using this M-1 rifle. Had you ever fired those before?

Hornsby: Yes, I fired it before but not very much,

Marcello: Probably in boot camp you had the Springfield '03.

Hornsby: Yes. But one time they let us fire the M-1. I assume they did it just to let us know what they were like. We fired the M-1 and the BAR. Now, we just were taking turns. When we fired the BAR, we only had about four or five, and we'd take turns firing, just to let us know that we had knew how to fire one of them.

Marcello: But this is something that you had done in boot camp.



- Hornsby: Yes, we had done this in boot camp when we was out on the firing range, which on our firing range we used the '03,
- Marcello: Did it take you long to get the hang of how to fire these M-1's aboard ship during the attack?
- Hornsby: No, because I had sat around in the armory quite a bit, and they were stationed in the armory, and there was generally one laying on the workbench. We would tinker with it after making sure it wasn't loaded and nothing like that. We learned the mechanism pretty good.
- Marcello: Okay, so what happens then after about a half-hour of firing at these Japanese planes?
- Hornsby: Well, everything more or less kind of gets settled down a little bit. Fear or madness kind of left you. You kind of come back halfway to normal, but just to look it was such a terrific deal still exploding and everything around those battleships. The planes quit coming over.
- Marcello: Is anybody giving any orders yet?
- Hornsby: No, not really. There was nothing to give orders for, it was just mainly to protect your ship, and that's all we had to do it with. So we just stood there and did what we had to do. Now, there was orders being given all over ship--you just have to know--but I wasn't at different stations to know what was going on at those places.
- Marcello: Do you recall the high-level bombers coming over later on?
- Hornsby: Yes, but they was little . . . we fired . . . I fired a clip

or two at them, but they was too high to really fire at,  
I fired just for . . .

Marcello: Just for your own satisfaction.

Hornsby: Yes, just for my own satisfaction.

Marcello: So by this time is the attack over?

Hornsby: It's over. What hurt was having to man your station, There was help being needed all over, especially out in Battleship Row and down around Ten-Ten Dock, the dry dock. The Pennsylvania, which was the fleet's flagship, she was in there. We would've been in dry dock the 5th of December, but the yard workmen didn't get far enough along with us, so she was going to have to be in dry dock another week, and she got hit. Two destroyers were completely destroyed in the dry dock we would've been in if they had got through with the Pennsylvania in time, but they didn't.

Marcello: Now, my notes indicate that workmen were actually trying to install the antiaircraft guns during the attack itself. Do you recall that?

Hornsby: Oh, yes. We had taken off the old 3-inch mounts, and we were installing what they called the old 1.1-inch or the old pom-pom, which was a real good little antiaircraft gun but nothing to compare with our 20-millimeters and 40-millimeters we had later on. We had two mounts being installed on the fantail and two mounts on the bridge.

Marcello: Do you remember seeing the yard of workmen trying to install

those antiaircraft weapons during the attack itself?

Hornsby: Well, no, not really . . . , yes and no, really, because during the air attack itself, when the planes were coming over, well, there was nothing like that going on--at least aboard our ship. There might have been a lot of workers . . . , well, it was just about the time they was to come to work. There would've been relatively few of them there. Maybe down in the engine room they had started to work, trying to get the engine room back together or maybe the forward ones on the bridge,

Marcello: I guess the boilers and everything were dismantled aboard the San Francisco.

Hornsby: Oh, yes. They had all the fire brick tore out and were redoing the boilers and everything . . . , new fire bricks and everything throughout. This was all tore out.

Marcello: What did you do during the aftermath of the attack? What did you do the rest of the morning and that afternoon?

Hornsby: Well, we just more or less was just in a daze. We was mainly just standing watch and making sure there was no sabotage.

Marcello: What did you talk about?

Hornsby: There wasn't much to talk about. You just didn't talk.

Marcello: What did you see going on over at Battleship Row?

Hornsby: Oh, it was just something that you wanted to get over and help with so bad, but you can't leave your station, see. So we would just stick with our ship.

Marcello: Did you have much of an appetite that afternoon?

Hornsby: Not much. I don't think they even served dinner.

Marcello: What was the surface of the water like?

Hornsby: Oh, it was terrible after all that oil got on the water because normally it was a clean harbor.

Marcello: I was going to ask you about that.

Hornsby: Even with the shipyard there and everything, they did a relatively good job of keeping the harbor clean, and it was nice blue water out there, clean-looking. You would almost want to go swimming in it.

Marcello: Even with all those ships and all the activity there?

Hornsby: Yes. They had everything channeled off where it kept the harbor just clean. It was a tight little harbor. It was small. It was large, but it was small. Ford Island took up a big lot of it, see, so it just made a run around. You come in from sea here (gesture), and you can go in around Ford Island, or you can come in and around the edge of the pier and in between Ford Island, which is 150 to 200 yards wide from the old coal docks, to the old Ten-Ten Dock, the dry dock, and what-have-you and on up to the finger piers. I don't know . . . I'd say there were fifteen to eighteen, I think. Then from there it was a straight dock that anything could dock along there about 200 or 300 yards up to what they called Merry's Point and went up into a "V"-like, and at this "V" was where the subs come in and anchored. That was their

anchorage when they came in. We called it the sub dock,

Marcello: What did you do that evening?

Hornsby: We stood watch and just watched for any sabotage or anything. You was watching over the side of the ship to make sure nobody come up out of the water trying to get aboard ship and sabotage it. You was watching any personnel walking up and down the dock that you didn't know.

Marcello: That wasn't too safe, was it, to walk up and down that dock?

Hornsby: No, it wasn't. It was a thing that people were having to do-- people going in and off of the ship taking care of business plus yard workmen coming in and out. By ten or eleven o'clock, why, they had everything they could rake, sdrape, beg, borrow, and steal coming aboard ship to do work. Even our yard workmen crew, before the day was over, I'd say, was increased 30 percent, so there was more personnel aboard there trying to get this thing back together and get us back in condition.

Marcello: Could you hear sporadic firing that night?

Hornsby: Oh, yes. That was when we shot down two or three of our own planes.

Marcello: Do you recall that incident when those planes were coming in?

Hornsby: I sure do.

Marcello: Describe it.

Hornsby: I was standing right out there watching, and they came over, but, now, the point was, they wouldn't give no recognition, and we didn't know who they were. No gunnery crew . . . I don't

know how they held their fire as long as they did. It was after dark, and no gunnery crew . . . a few gunnery crews might have got the word that was supposed to have been put out. Like aboard ship there, the ship itself might have knew it, but down on the deck there, being everything out of commission and everything, we had no JV phone set up. We had a few set up here and there, but they had passed no word to us. We just knew the planes were coming in, and they were lit up, and we thought, "Well, are they friendly or are they Japs?" Well, we couldn't take no chance. They wouldn't recognize themselves. Well, we didn't fire, but I had my ol' rifle. I was still hanging onto that thing; I wouldn't let go of that.

Marcello: You didn't squeeze any rounds off at those planes, did you?

Hornsby: No, No, we held on, They was too far out, and I had sense enough to know that I had to wait until they got in within range or I was just wasting ammunition, and they wasn't in my range yet.

Marcello: I guess the whole sky must have lit up with antiaircraft fire and tracers.

Hornsby: Despite the bad part of it, it was a beautiful sight, really. I was standing along about amidship on a 5-inch battery station. I was about gun five, which would've been on the starboard side. That's about where I was. There was . . . well, to not be any antiaircraft fire that morning hardly until things got . . .

they got a bunch opened up, It was surprising, From all over this whole harbor, you could see them going up, and you can see their tracers, you know, going up, They're just going just as straight up as they can.

So we were all standing out there in the open for a little while, and I says, "Hey, fellows, we better get under-cover." I says, "It's about time for that stuff to start falling, and we don't want no casualties if we can help it," So we all jumped back under our canopy there, and, you know, as straight up as that stuff was going, we stood out there and watched, I thought about it when it was going up; it was about to turn back down, I knew that that stuff had to come back down, but, you know, I don't know where that ammunition went to. If there was one slug of it that hit within range of that ship, we couldn't hear it. You could have heard it splash in the water because everything was quiet except the gunfire. Right at that particular time, it was quiet enough that you should have been able to hear a projectile fall and hit the dock or hit your ship or hit the water out there. I haven't heard one piece of that shrapnel hit there. It went on out someplace, I never did hear not even a small piece of that stuff hit,

Marcello; Were the ships and so on still burning that night yet?

Hornsby; Oh, yes, they were still smoking and burning. They had most of it out, but some of it was still smoltering and stuff.

Marcello: Did you get any sleep that night?

Hornsby: No, no. No, for days we didn't get no sleep. The next morning, Monday morning, we . . . well, I just stood watch all night. I never did even leave my station, and didn't want to. I couldn't have slept if I'd wanted to. So the next morning, when we was pretty well sure that everything was clear, we started every working party we could possibly rig up. We had nothing--no supplies, no ammunition, no nothing--aboard ship. We got a little ammunition back aboard ship Sunday afternoon. We had enough to fire, make a pretty good fire. By four o'clock that afternoon, we could've fired pretty good on some of the guns that wasn't tore down yet, but the occasion didn't come. So they just had all of the gun crews that could fire, But people like me, just being a second class seaman and being new aboard ship, all of us went on every working party we could get on, getting food and supplies and ammunition back aboard ship. Of course, I didn't go on many food supplies trips--I went on several while I was waiting--because mainly I was helping get the ammunition back aboard,

Being in the deck force is really a gunnery division, see. We were the first division getting as much ammunition as we could--5-inch and 8-inch ammunition--back aboard ship,

Marcello; That Sunday night, what were some of the rumors going around?

Hornsby; Well, the rumors you heard going around was terrible, which



is just more or less talk. It had to be. You just have to know that that is what it could be. There was some terrible talk that went on about what could happen.

Marcello: Did you hear the rumors that the Japanese had landed or were about to land?

Hornsby: No, we never heard that aboard our ship. There was nothing like that. We just knew that they hadn't because after the . . . well, like myself and any number of the crew, we were up there, and we didn't turn our rifles loose until the next morning. We hung on, and we was there watching. After these two waves come over and they got through with their attack and went on back to ships and left, well, we just had to know that was the end of the attack.

That night when our friendly planes come in, we thought maybe that could be them coming back then, but it turned out that they were friendly. Out of about six planes, I think they were off of the Enterprise. It came in, and they had kept Ford Island clear to where they could land and take off, but they had nothing to take off from. They just were depending that when they'd come in they could land. So they were going to go ahead and land on Ford Island to refuel and go back to their ship or stay there to when the ship came on in to anchorage.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get the San Francisco shipshape again?

Hornsby: Well, from December 7th, I would say . . . now, this is a

rough guess, but it was somewhere around December 15th or 18th because we got underway, and we headed for Wake. We was going to go in and protect Wake. Now, we went and crossed the International Date Line at midnight on Christmas Eve, so when we got over there it was another day. So we went twelve hours toward Wake, and the government turned us back. They said we were outnumbered too much, and they wouldn't let us go on to Wake. You never seen such a bad, mad bunch of characters in all your life. I believe that's the maddest . . . I believe the crew was in worst shape there than they were during the Pearl Harbor attack.

Marcello: So when you turned around, where did you go then?

Hornsby: We headed back for Pearl Harbor. So in twelve hours we went back. We had two Christmas Eves and no Christmas Day. Approximately, we crossed the International Date Line anywhere from ten to thirty minutes until midnight. It just really gave us two Christmas Eves and no Christmas Day.

Marcello; Well, Mr. Hornsby, that's probably a pretty good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much. You said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure the scholars are going to find your comments valuable.

Hornsby: There's one thing I'd like to put into this for the benefit of civilians and everything about it. That morning after I got to topside and we started firing at these planes . . . as you know it takes a ship, a heavy ship from a light cruiser

up, at least an hour to get up a head of steam . . . it takes a destroyer about an hour to get up a head of steam to get underway, and from a light cruiser up, it takes approximately two hours. Well, they had their head of steam already up.

Now, the Saint Louis started to taking her lines loose from the Honolulu to get underway that morning, but she got her head of steam up, and they didn't get to finish on time. She busted loose. She threwed that thing full speed astern and backed out of there and headed for sea.

Now, of all of the bad things, the funny thing was that there was a yard workman already working, and he was on the forward yardarm hanging on a boatswain's chair out here putting up a new running light on that thing. This yard workman there is hanging on this thing. They opened up--they had ammunition and everything--their 6-inch guns. The planes come over the mountain way out there. They was throwing every 6-inch shell they could at them. Well, here was this poor yard workman up there, sitting up there hanging onto that yardarm on a boatswain's chair out there fixing that light. They backed out of there with all guns firing and firing all over that harbor. They headed out and up through here--the 300 yards up there--and headed out where we couldn't see them. That guy still was hanging on that yardarm for dear life. Now, that's one civilian, I'd say, who rated his share of whatever

you call it. He got his taste of war right there, and if anybody should have had any medal or anything, I think that guy deserved it--hanging out there on that yardarm. That was funny. It was just one of the funny things of the day.

You've always got to have something funny after you stop and think about it, even though everything was so severe and you're mad. But that's one good thing about madness--it had overtaken the fear. A lot of times I get mad, and I say, "Now, why did you get mad?" I think of Pearl Harbor since then, thinking, well, sometimes that madness comes in pretty handy.

Marcello: Well, again, I want to thank you very much for having participated. I'm sure that scholars are going to find your comments very valuable.

Hornsby: Well, I just hope that it'll be convenient enough to do some good. Of course, there's lots of little incidents that went on that haven't been discussed but which we can't hardly get them all in. I did want to get in the story of that guy hanging off the yardarm because that was really something in my memory, was that poor guy hanging on that yardarm and all that firing going on.

Marcello: Well, again, thank you very much.