

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

NUMBER

454

Interview with
Howard E. Riley
August 6, 1978

Place of Interview: Little Rock, Arkansas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

Terms of Use: OPEN

Approved: Howard E. Riley
(Signature)

Date: 8/6/78

COPYRIGHT © 1979 THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NORTH TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DENTON

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Coordinator of the Oral History Collection or the University Archivist, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203

Oral History Collection

Howard Riley

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Little Rock, Arkansas

Date: August 6, 1978

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Howard Riley for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on August 6, 1978, in Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm interviewing Mr. Riley in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Fort Shafter during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations on December 7, 1941. Mr. Riley was a member of the 64th Coast Artillery, Battery M, at the time of the attack.

Mr. Riley, to begin this interview, just very briefly tell me a little bit about 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. Riley: Well, I was born about ten miles south of Monticello--way back out in the sticks--on June 6, 1914. I lived there with my grandfather until . . . I was approximately fourteen years of age when he passed away. Then from there I moved to McGehee, Arkansas, in which my mother re-married, and I

moved there to my stepdaddy's home there in McGehee. I resided in McGehee until . . . I never went to school in McGehee. I didn't get much education at that time. I quit school in the eighth grade and went to work during the Depression in order to kind of help make a living.

Later on, in 1940, well, I came to Little Rock. I opened up a penny arcade in North Little Rock. I operated that for about a year, and from there "Uncle Sam" got me in 1941.

Marcello: In other words, you were drafted.

Riley: That's right. I was drafted.

Marcello: You were about twenty-seven years old at the time that you were drafted, were you not?

Riley: Twenty-seven years old, that's right. I was drafted on, oh, I would say, August . . . I'd say the last day of August, I think, is what it was.

Marcello: Okay, after you were drafted or inducted, what happened at that point?

Riley: Well, I was inducted at Camp Robinson, and I spent approximately ten days at Camp Robinson, and then I was put aboard a train. There was ten of us boys picked out to go into the Coast Artillery, and the Coast Artillery ended up in Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

Marcello: In other words, you did not take any basic training at all in the United States.

Riley: No, I did not.

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

Riley: Well, I thought it was great then. I said, "Boy, we're going over to Hawaii with the hula-hula girls, and we'll just have a great time over there!" (chuckle) And we sure did have a great time.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast with current events and world affairs at that particular time?

Riley: Well, I don't know exactly (chuckle). I know we left here-- we left the United States--on October 10, 1941, and we arrived in Honolulu on the 18th of October. We were eight days and nights crossing there.

Marcello: Did you go directly to Fort Shafter when you landed in the Hawaiian Islands?

Riley: Yes, we did. I went right to Fort Shafter.

Marcello: What happened when you got to Fort Shafter?

Riley: Well, when we first landed, we had a band and everything welcoming us to Hawaii out there. I don't remember when we got into Fort Shafter. I know we was confined until after recruit training out there.

Marcello: Where was Fort Shafter located?

Riley: About eight miles from Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Was it in Honolulu or was it outside Honolulu?

Riley: Just outside. Just outside Honolulu,

Marcello: Describe what Fort Shafter looked like from a physical standpoint in terms of the buildings and the grounds and so on.

Riley: Well, I don't know. It is pretty hard to describe right now. I do know our parade field was more or less the center of the fort in there. My outfit was way back up on the hill in there. During this recruit training, I couldn't never . . . we would have to double-time that hill, but I never made it up there.

 Come the morning of the attack, I was on post guard down there, and the sergeant-of-the-guard asked me to go back to the outfit to get helmets and gas masks and ammunition--if I could get it--and I double-timed that hill there that morning and got back down to the guardhouse before I realized what was taking place (chuckle).

Marcello: Let's back up here a minute. You mentioned a band met you when you got off the ship there in Honolulu. I would assume that there was an entire troopship of personnel that made that journey across that time.

Riley: Well, we had a band . . . well, I don't know just where it was from, but it was already in Honolulu. In fact, where we landed at was right--if I'm not mistaken--was right downtown in Honolulu. I never will forget this band was playing "Daddy" whenever I got off.

Marcello: Was this a military band?

Riley: Yes, it was. It was a military band.

Marcello: Describe what your basic training was like there at Fort Shafter?

Riley: Well, we went through infantry drill with more or less the 1903 rifle at that time. That's about all that had taken place. Naturally, we had the operation of the gas mask and everything. I think we probably went through about six weeks of it there.

Marcello: Did they seem to be rushing you through basic training? Was there an urgency in your training?

Riley: It seemed at that time that they were rushing us through there, because usually you would get about eight or ten weeks of basic training, and I think we got about six. I was turned to duty on December 5, 1941.

Marcello: In other words, that's when your basic training was completed?

Riley: It was completed, and then they picked--I don't know just how many of the men out of that group was picked--for post guard, and I was one of them picked for post guard.

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like there at Fort Shafter.

Riley: Well, we had the tents in my outfit. Some of them, I think, had the barracks in there, but we had the tents.

Marcello: What were you sleeping on, cots?

Riley: Oh, yes. We had the regular old Army cots.

Marcello: How comfortable or uncomfortable were your sleeping quarters?

Riley: Well, I thought it was pretty comfortable right there. In fact, I got into a whole lot more areas that was a whole lot more uncomfortable than what that was (chuckle). It was pretty comfortable.

Marcello: What was the food like there at Fort Shafter while you were going through basic training?

Riley: The food was good. Yes, it was. It was very good. Of course, there was some people who griped. Naturally, with GI's you got that all the way through.

Marcello: Now, am I to assume that just about everybody who went through boot camp with you was a draftee?

Riley: Yes, they were. They sure were.

Marcello: What was the morale like among the troops that went through basic training with you?

Riley: Well, it was real good over there at that time. It was good. Everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves, because they had been sent to Hawaii. They were expecting to have a real good time over there.

Marcello: Did you receive any leave at all while you were going through basic training? Now, you mentioned that you didn't get out of basic training until December 5th, and I was wondering if you got any leave in Honolulu or anything like that the whole time that you were there.

Riley: Yes, we had . . . of course, I kind of worked it in, but we

wasn't supposed to have any leave, but I did get into Honolulu.

Marcello: What did you do when you went on leave?

Riley: Well, mostly what any GI will do. Of course, we kind of toured the island around and then had quite a few drinks and everything else in there. We got pretty well acquainted.

Marcello: Did you go into Honolulu on a weekend?

Riley: Oh, yes.

Marcello: How crowded was Honolulu on a weekend?

Riley: Well, right at that present time, it wasn't very crowded. But just a few months after this happened over there, I think it was pretty crowded. I mean, you couldn't hardly walk down the streets in there. I think they estimated that there was 175 men to every one woman over there.

Marcello: Now, if you got out of basic training on December 5, 1941, you probably did not have any training at all in becoming a Coast Artilleryman, did you?

Riley: No, we didn't--not at that time. Of course, we had a little training, like I said, on the rifle and the .30-caliber machine gun. Later, we got training on the .50-calibers, and that's what I got stuck into, was a .30 and .50-caliber machine gun outfit.

Marcello: Did there seem to be any tenseness or urgency there at Fort Shafter during that period that you were going through boot camp? In other words, was there any indication that the base was getting ready for a wartime footing or anything of that nature?

- Riley: Well, I think on the night of December 6th, whenever I was walking my guard post . . . we knew that there was something in the air there, because they ordered all of the guards doubled and for us to be on the lookout for sabotage and everything like that. We figured that night before the attack that something was in the air. We knew something, but we couldn't figure out just exactly what it was.
- Marcello: When you were going through basic training, did you or any of your buddies in any of your bull sessions ever talk about the possibility of a Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?
- Riley: No, we didn't--not right at that time. It never crossed our minds.
- Marcello: Did the subject of the Japanese ever come up?
- Riley: No, it didn't--not in our outfit, it didn't, not that I know of.
- Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind at that time? Did you have a stereotype of what a Japanese was like?
- Riley: Well, naturally, we had been around them there in Honolulu. We could usually tell the difference between them right in there. We didn't have too much contact. In other words, what we met there in Honolulu was pretty nice.
- Marcello: I guess you probably wouldn't have had an opportunity to meet too many of them, because you didn't have too much liberty at that time.

Riley: Not at that time because we didn't have all that much liberty.

Marcello: Was there anything to do on the post in terms of entertainment and activities?

Riley: Well, not too much. Of course, they had the hula shows in there and one thing or another. You could go down to the PX or the beer garden. But they was usually putting on a show in there on the weekend.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned that when you got out of boot camp, you were put on guard duty there at Fort Shafter. When did this occur?

Riley: Well, I went on formal guard mount at twelve o'clock, and that was on December 6th.

Marcello: Was that the first time you went on formal guard mount?

Riley: Yes, it was.

Marcello: Okay, when you went on formal guard mount at twelve o'clock noon on December 6th, what did this involve?

Riley: Well, as I said, it took place on the parade grounds. In other words, I served as color guard on that flag that day. I had taken the first relief on there; I went right on duty as I left there.

Marcello: When you went out for formal guard mount, is that where you got your assignment as to what sector you were to guard?

Riley: No, not right at the parade field. It was after we got back to the guardhouse. We got our assignments there.

Marcello: Where were you assigned?

Riley: I was assigned to post number three, and that ended up within a half a block from the guardhouse.

Marcello: Was that right on the edge of Fort Shafter?

Riley: Oh, yes. It would be coming around and not too awful far from the guardhouse. Of course, we had quite a few blocks right around there to walk.

Marcello: Now, was this area the sight of a lot of buildings and so on, or was it out in the open?

Riley: Oh, yes. There was tents and barracks of boys living in there around that particular post that I had.

Marcello: What sort of arms and equipment did you have to stand guard duty?

Riley: A 1903 Springfield rifle.

Marcello: Did you have any live ammunition?

Riley: I had one clip--five rounds.

Marcello: Now, perhaps you don't know the answer to my next question, but I'll ask it anyhow. Was it standard procedure to give you live ammunition in order to stand guard duty?

Riley: Oh, yes. Over there on post guard, you carried live ammunition.

Marcello: All the time?

Riley: All the time. As far as I know, they did that.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned awhile ago that they had doubled the guard. Was there more than one individual in this sector where you were guarding?

Riley: Yes. In other words, later on that night--whenever I came back on at six o'clock that night--I had a buddy to walk with me then.

Marcello: Okay, now you went on formal guard mount at twelve o'clock noon on December 6th. How long did you stand guard on that first tour?

Riley: Two hours.

Marcello: From twelve o'clock until two o'clock?

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: What happened at two o'clock?

Riley: Then the second relief came in at two o'clock.

Marcello: What did you do at two o'clock then?

Riley: Well, we went back to the guardhouse and more or less just relaxed and rested.

Marcello: And then when did you go back on duty again?

Riley: We went back on at six o'clock.

Marcello: Okay, when did your second tour end?

Riley: The second tour ended at eight o'clock.

Marcello: So you were two hours on and four hours off.

Riley: That's right--two on and four off.

Marcello: Would you be going back on duty at twelve o'clock midnight again?

Riley: That's right--twelve o'clock midnight.

Marcello: Until two o'clock in the morning?

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: And this would keep up all day?

Riley: And then back on at six o'clock and then off at eight.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Now, were you given any special instructions when you were standing guard that particular night?

Riley: Well, we had special instructions there to be on special lookout for sabotage.

Marcello: How seriously were they taking the threat of sabotage at that time?

Riley: Well, I think they were taking it pretty serious that night, because all of our guards were doubled then.

Marcello: Evidently, they held the local Japanese population as a potential threat in terms of sabotage of fifth columnist activity.

Riley: I do think that they did. I do know that the next morning there they found several radios, guns, and everything else underneath bridges and everything in there.

Marcello: Suppose you had detected any suspicious activity or individuals that night of December 6th. What were you instructed to do?

Riley: I was instructed to hold them and, you know, get the information to the guardhouse and hold them.

Marcello: Now, when you say that the guard was doubled, was somebody walking right with you on the post or on your beat, so to speak?

Riley: Yes, we were walking together.

Marcello: Describe your activities that night. Did anything out of the ordinary happen?

- Riley: No, it didn't. There wasn't a thing that happened that night, that is, on my post; and I don't know if it did on any others, but there wasn't any on mine.
- Marcello: What did you do that evening after you had put in another two hours? You mentioned that you worked from twelve until two o'clock; you were off until six o'clock; then you worked from six until eight o'clock; and then you wouldn't go back on duty again until midnight. What did you do between eight o'clock p.m. and midnight of December 6th?
- Riley: Well, we got a little bit of a nap--sleep--in there.
- Marcello: Did you go back to your tent or back to your barracks, so to speak?
- Riley: No. No, we stayed there at the guardhouse. No, we stayed in the guardhouse.
- Marcello: Were they bringing in very many drunks at all that night while you were there and so on?
- Riley: No, not too many. We had, oh, I would say, about fifteen or sixteen prisoners in the guardhouse there.
- Marcello: But had most of those prisoners been in there for some time?
- Riley: Yes, they had been in there for getting out and getting drunk and everything, and they were just minor things.
- Marcello: I assume that you did not detect too much carousing or partying or drinking that night while you were walking your beat?
- Riley: Not there on the post, we didn't. I understand there was quite

a bit on the island all right. On the post there wasn't too much.

Marcello: What sort of a night was it in terms of weather and climate? Was it a pleasant night to walk your post?

Riley: It was a very beautiful night; there was no question about that.

Marcello: So as far as you were concerned, then, it was a rather uneventful night.

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you would have gotten off duty at midnight, and then I assume you got some more rest from twelve until four o'clock a.m.

Riley: Yes, we was up at the next morning about 5:30, had breakfast and everything, and then on duty again at six o'clock.

Marcello: Oh, okay, you didn't have to go back on at four o'clock a.m.

Riley: Well, no, I went on at twelve o'clock and off at two o'clock, you see, and then I was off from two o'clock until six.

Marcello: I see; that's correct. Okay, so you went over and got some breakfast. Do you remember what you had for breakfast that morning?

Riley: Oh, we had scrambled eggs and bacon, toast, cereal, and juice. Of course, that's one thing over there; we had plenty of juices. There was no question about that.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do after breakfast?

Riley: Well, we went from breakfast right on to guard duty, right on post again.

Marcello: Incidentally, where did you keep your rifle? Was it in the barracks or tent, or did you pick it up at the guardhouse?

Riley: You kept your rifle with you. In other words, whenever you were in the guardhouse, you had a rifle before you could go in there. Naturally, it stayed in there while you wasn't out there on duty.

Marcello: So the rifle and the ammunition was right there at the guardhouse.

Riley: Right.

Marcello: When you got off duty, you turned in your rifle and ammunition?

Riley: Well, at that time I couldn't say, because I kept that loaded ammunition I had that morning.

Marcello: Okay, so you finished breakfast, and you would be going back on duty then at six o'clock?

Riley: Six o'clock.

Marcello: Now, normally on a Sunday people could sleep in late if they didn't have the duty, couldn't they?

Riley: Oh, yes, they sure could.

Marcello: It was a day of leisure.

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: Were there very many people up and stirring at six o'clock in the morning?

Riley: Well, there were quite a few stirring around at six o'clock.

Marcello: Were these mostly the people that had the duty that day?

Riley: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: Okay, so you're getting ready to go back on duty again at six o'clock. So pick up the story at that point.

Riley: I went back on duty, and then, naturally, whenever they would start relieving the guards, they always started out about fifteen minutes early, you know. Of course, I would make it a point that I'd be up on that end within about a half a block of the guardhouse, and therefore I would get relieved about fifteen minutes before eight o'clock. I had done got relieved and came back to the guardhouse, and I said, "I've got it made now. I can go back to the guardhouse and lay down on my bunk and sleep until noon; and whenever they hold the formal guard mount, well, I'll be ready then."

Marcello: Did you have a bunk and so on right back at the guardhouse?

Riley: Oh, yes. Every relief had a certain bunk to sleep in down there. I had gotten back to the guardhouse, and I thought I would lay down and get me some rest until twelve o'clock. I just got laid down in the bunk until I heard the first bomb drop on Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Now, how far was Fort Shafter from Pearl Harbor?

Riley: About eight miles.

Marcello: But you could hear the explosions from Fort Shafter?

Riley: Oh, yes, we heard the explosions. We were scheduled to go on an island maneuver that morning, and it was all called off the day before that. I made a remark . . . the sergeant came through

there, and I says, "It looks like we're going to have those maneuvers anyhow." By that time, we heard the planes go over us, so we jumped up and went outside and started looking up at the airplanes. We couldn't detect then if they were our planes or who they were at that time.

Marcello: Were these planes flying high or low?

Riley: They were flying pretty low at that time.

Marcello: I assume from what you said, then, that you could not, however, distinguish the Rising Sun insignia on these planes.

Riley: No, we didn't at that time, but we did later on.

Marcello: Okay, so you see these low-flying planes come over. What happens at that point?

Riley: Well, we figured that they were going ahead with these maneuvers, you see, and we knew it was supposed to involve the entire island--the Air Force and all--on maneuvers down there.

There was a lieutenant who came through in his automobile hollering that Japan was attacking Pearl Harbor. We got the real word on it then, so the sergeant-of-the-guard there asked me to go to my outfit and pick up helmets, gas masks, and everything that I could get and bring it back down there for the guards. That's the reason he told me to double-time there and get them and come back.

Marcello: Now, why would you go to your outfit to get the helmets and gas masks and so so for the guardhouse? Was the guardhouse in some

way associated with your particular unit? Were they part of the same unit or what?

Riley: Well, we was naturally part of the same unit, and we were more or less in the center of Fort Shafter there--just across from the Tripler General Hospital.

Marcello: Again, describe what happened at that point.

Riley: Well, in other words, I made that hill and back that day before I realized what I was doing. As I said, I never had doubled-timed it before, but I went up there.

Marcello: How far away was the area from the guardhouse?

Riley: I would say it was something about . . . oh, I would say about fourteen or fifteen blocks from there.

Marcello: In the meantime, what sort of activity was stirring back at your barracks?

Riley: They were trying . . . in other words, they were trying to get the guns out and everything else, but they had no ammunition--that was a fact. They had the guns there, but I think each gun had one belt of ammunition that they used to practice with.

Marcello: Now, at that time, were you carrying your rifle and so on as you were heading back to your area?

Riley: Oh, yes, I was carrying my rifle. When I got back, I couldn't get no ammunition, so I got helmets and gas masks.

Marcello: How many helmets and gas masks were you carrying?

Riley: Oh, I don't know. I was carrying about six helmets and about

six gas masks that I was able to get up there.

I came back and got back to the guardhouse, and just as I came in . . . see, the number one post, you don't ever quit that post at any time; you have to keep walking that regardless of what happens. There was a buddy of mine on number one post there, and as I came in the guardhouse steps, there was a large bulletin board up ahead of me there. As I got to just about the top step, I heard a shell whistle, and I fell on the guardhouse steps there and threw these gas masks and helmets down in front of me, and the shell exploded. When all the shrapnel and everything hit the bulletin board up over me, the glass fell down on me but nothing cut me.

I didn't get any of the shrapnel, but as I turned around, my buddy that was walking number one post . . . I seen his gun laying on the ground, and he was about ten feet away from the gun and laying on his stomach. I thought to myself, I says, "He must be hit or he wouldn't throw his gun down, and I'm over here after having fallen down ten feet away from him!" So I jumped up and ran up there to him, and I turned him over, and this shell had hit him in his stomach. I would say that he was blown nearly in half.

Marcello: Did you at that time . . . well, what was your reaction when you saw this?

Riley: Well, I seen this, and I hollered for the sergeant-of-the-guard.

He had been taking cover just like me, and he ran out there. We had a stretcher just in front of the guardhouse there, and he ran in and grabbed the stretcher, and we loaded the man on the stretcher and took him--which was right across the street--to the Tripler General Hospital. In other words, he was dead, but he was blowed near in half.

Marcello: Now, was this a bomb that had been dropped there at Fort Shafter?

Riley: I don't know for sure whether it was a small bomb or one of our delayed action shells or not.

Marcello: In other words, this may have been a shell from the antiaircraft fire that was going up.

Riley: Yes, that's right. They had got some of the antiaircraft fire in at that time. It could have been a shell from that.

Marcello: Was there any antiaircraft fire being thrown up there at Fort Shafter?

Riley: Just a small amount of it. It wasn't much because they couldn't get that ammunition.

Marcello: Could you distinctively hear this shell, and is that why you hit the ground?

Riley: Oh, yes, I sure did! I heard it before . . . I heard it whistle before it ever exploded.

Marcello: It's interesting that you would have known that it was an artillery shell of some sort, because after all you hadn't been in the Army that long.

Riley: I was having my training at that time on it.

Marcello: So what did you do after you and the sergeant-of-the-guard took this man over to Tripler General Hospital? What was going on over at Tripler?

Riley: They were bringing casualties in there as fast as they could get them. We got him inside in there. Of course, naturally, he was dead. By the time I got back over there . . . we had prisoners in the guardhouse.

Marcello: I was going to ask you what you did with the prisoners in the guardhouse.

Riley: Well, the first thing was that I took them all up and had them squat down a little bit in there, and then I took them out to eat.

Marcello: The prisoners?

Riley: Yes, I was taking the prisoners out to eat and brought them back, and they were released. Boy! These boys were begging to get out of there, and they were all released and sent back to their outfits.

Marcello: Now, when you came back from Tripler General Hospital, were the gas masks and the helmets and so on still laying there on the steps?

Riley: No, they got picked up pretty well; everybody grabbed them one.

Marcello: You mentioned that you took these prisoners to breakfast. That must have been a rather hurried breakfast, was it not?

Riley: Yes, it was. They hurried up their breakfast, and then they got back down to the guardhouse, and they were released and sent back to their outfits.

In the meantime, the hospital was filling up so fast with casualties there. Until I came by the hospital, and they had men absolutely laying there and crying there and begging me to kill them. They wanted me to get them out of their misery.

Marcello: How come you went back down to the hospital?

Riley: Well, we was just across the street from it.

Marcello: In other words, you were not ordered, however, to go to the hospital?

Riley: No.

Marcello: Was anybody giving any orders that day?

Riley: Well, they was giving a few of them out, yes--as fast as they could. It took me nearly two weeks before I caught up with my outfit again.

Marcello: What did you do when you went over to Tripler General Hospital?

Riley: Well, we came back into the hospital, and . . .let's see . . .I can't remember now just what I did do in there. But in other words, some of the guards from all around the post and everything else were in there until we finally caught up with our outfit again. It took about two weeks before I got back to my outfit.

Marcello: So you never did help with the casualties, then, there at Tripler?

Riley: Well, we helped all we could. We kept getting them in there, and, like I said, I seen boys laying there just crying and begging you to kill them and to get them out of their misery. There was nothing they could do for them; they couldn't get to them fast enough.

Marcello: Did the medical personnel seem to have things fairly well organized, however, there at Tripler?

Riley: They wasn't too much organized, but they were doing all they possibly could do. Of course, naturally, every doctor and nurse and everything else was called in there that they could possibly get hold of.

In the meantime, they filled the guardhouse up with Japanese civilians in there.

Marcello: That is, the guardhouse where you had had your military prisoners?

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: Did you have anything to do with rounding up these Japanese civilians?

Riley: I didn't have anything to do with rounding them up, but I did in keeping them in there afterwards.

Marcello: How were these civilians treated?

Riley: Well, we treated them as nice as we could, but some of them wouldn't let you treat them nice. There ain't no way they could.

Marcello: What do you mean by that? Were they simply angry because they were put in this jail?

- Riley: Yes, they were angry because they were taken in there as a prisoner and everything, and they didn't want to obey orders and everything else. They wanted to make so doggone much racket that you couldn't hear anything.
- Marcello: About how many of these Japanese civilians did you have in there?
- Riley: The complete guardhouse was full. We just packed them in there like sardines. We probably had around five or six hundred in there. We filled the place completely full.
- Marcello: How did they know which Japanese civilians to pick up? Do you know anything about that?
- Riley: They didn't know for sure, except unless they caught them with things or working with things.
- Marcello: How long did they keep those Japanese civilians in the jail?
- Riley: I don't know. There was quite a few of them kept there in Fort Shafter for quite some time. As I left out of there, well, I don't know just when they did release them.
- Marcello: But they were still in the guardhouse whenever you left there?
- Riley: Yes.
- Marcello: When did they start rounding them up in the first place?
- Riley: Well, they started . . . I'd say the attack came in at eight o'clock, and they started rounding those civilians up between nine and ten o'clock.
- Marcello: Were there both men and women in the guardhouse?

Riley: Oh, yes. Yes, there were.

Marcello: How did you go about feeding all of those people?

Riley: Well, I don't know just exactly how they did go about feeding those people.

Marcello: Now, for the most part, however, did these Japanese seem to be cooperative in terms of following orders that were given to them?

Riley: Some were and some weren't, I'll tell you.

Marcello: How about the majority of them?

Riley: I'd say the majority wasn't.

Marcello: Were not cooperative?

Riley: No, they sure wasn't cooperative at all. In other words, right at that present time, they were so sure that Japan was going to take Hawaii. I know that if they would have landed there that morning, they wouldn't have had too much trouble taking it.

Marcello: Now, I assume that Fort Shafter itself had not received very much damage from the attack.

Riley: No, it didn't receive very much from it.

Marcello: What was the attitude of you and your buddies toward these Japanese civilians that were incarcerated there at the jail?

Riley: We were pretty angry at them at that time, I'll tell you! Seeing what had taken place, well, you just didn't have no mercy on them.

Marcello: Did you look upon any Japanese as being an enemy or a potential

enemy at that time?

Riley: Oh, yes, we did them! We sure did! We figured all of them was.

Marcello: Were these civilians roughed up in any way?

Riley: No, not too much; that is, I didn't see any that was. Except I do know this, that we had an officer-of-the-guard that particular night . . . after the attack there--on the eighth--we had a guardhouse completely full in there, and he was trying to get his work done and everything, and they was making so much racket that he couldn't do anything. He had walked into the big area in there and asked them to quiet it down, and they wouldn't quiet down but for just a few minutes. When he left out, they started back again.

He came in there about three times, I think it was, to ask them to quiet down. The fourth time he came in there, he come in and pulled his .45 out and shot three times right straight up through the ceiling in there, and he said, "I want you to quiet down, and if you don't, I'll turn it on you the next time!" They quieted down for the rest of the night. You could hear a pin drop in there.

Marcello: Now, I would assume the night of December 7th and for the next two weeks you were standing guard duty?

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: Describe what it was like standing guard duty that night.

Riley: Well, I'll tell you . . . in other words, there was nobody out

roaming around. In Fort Shafter, you wouldn't see anybody moving at all. If they did move, it better be known what you were doing because a lot of these guards shot and then they hollered "halt" later. They were pretty trigger-happy.

Marcello: Could you hear scattered gunfire all night?

Riley: Oh, yes, you sure could.

Marcello: Were you on guard duty that night?

Riley: Yes, I was.

Marcello: Did you fire at all?

Riley: No, I never fired any, but I heard shots all over the island.

Marcello: What post were you walking that night?

Riley: Well, I don't remember just now what post it was. It wasn't number one, because number one was right at the guardhouse. It was either number three or four.

Marcello: Were you walking with another buddy again?

Riley: Oh, yes. Yes, we was. We always had a buddy then.

Marcello: What did you and your buddy talk about when you were walking your post?

Riley: A little of everything as far as that goes (chuckle). In other words, we wasn't talking about having a very good time at that time.

Marcello: Were you scared?

Riley: Oh, naturally. I never seen anybody over there yet that wasn't scared, I'll tell you.

Marcello: Had you been given any more ammunition?

Riley: Oh, yes, we got plenty of ammunition after that. In other words, I didn't get any on the morning of the attack, but the next morning I got all the ammunition I could carry. I had these bandoleers swung around me. I think there was about a hundred in a bandoleer there, and I had about fifteen or twenty of them scattered around my neck.

Marcello: That ammunition was pretty heavy, too, wasn't it?

Riley: Yes, it was. But we didn't mind carrying it then (chuckle).

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

Riley: Well, I didn't hear too awful much on there. In other words, only just what had taken place out there on the island, was all. As far as anything else, we just didn't know too much about it at that time.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the rumors that the Japanese had already landed?

Riley: No, I never did. The only thing I heard was that there was a Japanese plane that was hid on the island somewhere and was taking off from someplace. That was shot down. That lasted for about--oh, I don't know--for three or four days . . . somewhere or another he was hid on a private landing strip and was taking off, and the plane was finally shot down. Outside of that, well, we didn't hear too awful much. It started raining

right after that.

Marcello: It started raining that night of December 7th?

Riley: I guess it was the morning of the 8th, and it started in raining. I'm telling you, I never seen it rain so much in my life.

Marcello: Were you on guard duty when it was raining?

Riley: Oh, yes. Later on, after I moved out of there and caught up with my outfit on Wheeler Field, I slept in mud and water for about four weeks, I guess.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Riley, is there anything else relative to the Pearl Harbor attack that you think we need to talk about? It sounds like you had some very interesting experiences there at Fort Shafter during the attack itself.

Riley: Well, after the attack in there . . . my outfit . . . I caught up with them on Wheeler Field, and then we had . . . at that time we didn't have nothing but the .30 and .50-caliber machine guns, and, of course, naturally we would set up gun pits on the runways there. I forget now, but it was somewheres in February, I believe it was, that we were still at Wheeler Field. I was in the gun pit on guard then. Naturally, the man that was on guard stood up in the back there with the machine guns. I'm telling you, after dark you better not move too much, or you might get fired on.

Marcello: I'm still a little bit curious about those Japanese civilians.

You mentioned that there were about five or six hundred of them in the guardhouse.

Riley: Yes.

Marcello: About how many prisoners was that guardhouse actually equipped to handle?

Riley: I don't know just how many it was, but naturally we just . . . when we put those civilians in there, we just put them in there whether they had anyplace to lay down or rest or what. We didn't particularly care; we just locked them up in there.

Marcello: In other words, there were more civilians in there than that guardhouse was equipped to hold?

Riley: Oh, yes, a whole lot more. I would say maybe several hundred more than what the guardhouse was equipped to take care of.

Marcello: Now, were they put into individual cells?

Riley: No.

Marcello: What did you have--just one big room or what?

Riley: Just put them in one big room.

Marcello: Were they behind bars?

Riley: Well, no . . . yes, they were behind bars. Yes, they were. They sure was. They had a big steel door on the room.

Marcello: How did you go about feeding them?

Riley: Well, I don't know too much. In other words, whenever I left the guardhouse that next night, I don't know if any meals had been served to them or not. They was putting them through a

questionnaire and everything else in there and releasing them as fast as they could in there.

Marcello: Did you witness the interrogation of these Japanese civilians?

Riley: No, I sure didn't.

Marcello: But when you left to catch up with your unit two weeks later, those Japanese civilians were still in that jail?

Riley: Oh, yes, some of them were. They released some of them within the next day there, but there were a lot of them still in there yet.

Marcello: Would you say that there were still several hundred in the jail?

Riley: Oh, yes, there were still several hundred of them in there. There sure was.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Riley, I have no further questions. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You've said a lot of interesting and important things, and I'm sure scholars will find your comments most valuable when they use them to write about this in the future.

Riley: There is only one other thing that did happen there at Wheeler Field. Of course, I was on guard there, and I was in gun section number six--I think it was--and we were down pretty close to the end of the runway, and this Japanese civilian came across and climbed the fence there. I halted him, which, you know, you're supposed to holler "halt" three times, which I don't know whether I did or not.

Anyhow, it was moonlight, and the man was wearing a white shirt. So he didn't stop. He was trying to get across to the B-17's we had parked on the other side of the runway there. The man didn't stop, and I fired on him and killed him.

Marcello: Now, when did this occur?

Riley: That occurred . . . oh, that was in February of 1942. I stopped him, in other words. The only thing he had on him . . . he didn't have any gun or ammunition on him, but he had about four or five boxes of penny matches--these penny boxes of matches. Naturally, that's all he needed to get around one of those airplanes at that time. That's the only actual one that I could say I actually killed myself out there.

Marcello: Was there any inquiry or anything as a result of this procedure?

Riley: Oh, yes, there sure was.

Marcello: Describe this inquiry.

Riley: An inquiry by General Short.

Marcello: By General Short personally?

Riley: That's right.

Marcello: Did you have to go before General Short?

Riley: Oh, yes, I went before him.

Marcello: What sort of questions were asked to you during the inquiry?

Riley: Naturally, they asked how many shots were fired and this thing and that. I think I fired . . . I fired four rounds.

Marcello: In other words, when you hollered at that individual to stop, he did not stop?

Riley: No, he didn't.

Marcello: Did he start running or what?

Riley: He started running faster, I think (chuckle). The only questions they asked me was how many times I hollered "halt" and everything. So they asked me how many shots was fired, which I had fired four. I think I done pretty good. I fired four and they counted that he was hit three times. They gave me . . . well, they charged me , , . I think it was . . . oh, I believe it was a dollar that they fined me.

Marcello: They fined you a dollar?

Riley: One dollar.

Marcello: Why did they fine you a dollar?

Riley: Like they said, in order to protect me from the civilian courts, you see, because this man was a civilian.

Marcello: But he was on military property, was he not?

Riley: Yes, that's right. Then they turned around and gave me two cartons of cigarettes. Cigarettes were selling over there at that particular time for a dollar-and-a-quarter a carton. So they gave me two cartons of Camels, and then I stayed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel for a leave of absence, which didn't cost me anything during the time I was staying there. I stayed there over the weekend. The inquiry, I believe, was about twelve

officers, including General Short.

Marcello: How long did the inquiry last?

Riley: It didn't last awful long.

Marcello: Did it last more than a half-hour?

Riley: About half an hour, something like that.

Marcello: Did there seem to be any hostility among the officers and so on during this board of inquiry?

Riley: No, no, there wasn't.

Marcello: Did they ever ascertain who this civilian was or what he was doing there?

Riley: They told me his name there, but I have forgotten just what it was.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned that he had been hit three times. Were you still using the Springfield?

Riley: Oh, yes. Yes, I was. And I was working that bolt action pretty fast (chuckle).

Marcello: I was wondering how you managed to hit him three times. It seems to me that the first time you would have hit him, he would have gone down.

Riley: I might have shot a couple of shots after he was down (chuckle). But anyhow, I was going to be sure that he was stopped.

Marcello: You never heard any more about this matter then?

Riley: No, I sure didn't. I didn't hear any more about it.

Marcello: Were there ever any other incidents there at Wheeler similar

to this?

Riley: No, we didn't have any more.

Marcello: Was there anybody with you at the time you fired at this Japanese civilian?

Riley: Well, I was in the gun pit, and there were about four other men which were sleeping in there. Of course, naturally, I woke them up.

Marcello: Did you wake them up before you fired, or did your firing wake them up?

Riley: My firing woke them up. They were just like me; they were so tired and everything, and any time that you could get a little rest, you were going to get it. At that particular time, it wasn't raining, but we had been sleeping in that mud and water and everything else.

Marcello: As you mentioned, this occurred about two months after December 7th.

Riley: Yes, in February.

Marcello: How far away from you was that Japanese civilian?

Riley: Oh, I would say . . . we was on the end of the runway, and I would say he was probably about twenty or thirty yards from me--something like that.

Marcello: He must have been some sort of an amateur if he had on a white shirt. It seems to me that if he were going to do any damage that night, he would not of had on a white shirt.

Riley: I couldn't figure that out either, because white shows up out where it's a complete blackout, which that was.

Marcello: As you mentioned, he actually climbed the fence.

Riley: Yes, he climbed the fence. I had discovered him as he had climbed the fence and had jumped over.

Marcello: How high a fence was this?

Riley: Oh, I would say it was probably about a five-foot fence.

Marcello: Was it a chain-link fence?

Riley: I won't say it was a chain-link fence, but it was a wire fence. I know that.

Marcello: At the time that you fired at him, I assume that you did not know whether he was a Japanese or an American or whatever he was. He just didn't stop when you hollered "halt."

Riley: Yes, that's right. I didn't know who he was. I knew one thing-- a soldier wouldn't be wearing a white shirt (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, again, that's a rather interesting experience, and it's the sort of thing that we like to have in the record. Once more, I want to thank you very much for having participated in our project, Mr. Riley.

Riley: I'm glad that I done it.