

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER
227

Interview with
Frank A. Luciano
July 7, 1974

Place of Interview: El Paso, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
Terms of Use: OPEN
Approved: Frank A. Luciano
Date: 7 Jul 1974

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Oral History Collection

Frank Luciano

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: El Paso, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Frank Luciano for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 7, 1974, in El Paso, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Luciano in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was at Fort Kamehameha during the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941.

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

Mr. Luciano: Okay, I was born in Everett, Massachusetts, on June 10, 1921. I was brought up through Italian circumstances, you know, since you're Italian. I had a fairly good childhood, I think, because both mother and father were very sensitive and nice. I had three sisters and one

brother, and we all lived in the one place and enjoyed it most of the time. The Depression, of course, took a toll a little bit, like it did on everybody else. I worked, oh, like everybody else, I guess--whenever you could and whenever you can--as a child and as a boy growing up. I guess I did almost everything that you could do, as far as that was concerned. I went through high school and that's it. Of course, since the Depression was still on, I had to get something else. Well, my father couldn't afford to send me to college. In those days we were lucky if we went through high school. But I did graduate and tried to get something, but everytime you'd go someplace, well, naturally they needed experienced men. When you get out of high school this is always the same way, you know, "I need experienced men." So I turned towards the service. So in 1939 I joined the service.

Marcello: You know, this is a standard reason that a great many people of your particular generation give for entering the military. It was mainly a matter of economics in a great many cases.

Luciano: Yes, not only that, but I wanted an education. The only place I could see it coming or getting it was through the

service because they did, at that time, teach you something just like they do now. Of course, they had some schools, but not the schools that they have today. They have such beautiful and scientific schools today that I wish I were a young boy now to start off again. I'd probably be better off.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were born in Everett, Massachusetts.

Luciano: Right.

Marcello: Is it a suburb of Boston?

Luciano: Right. It's about six miles outside of Boston. You can go to Boston in no time at all. We used to have a little elevated train in those days--go to the elevated train and then down the subway and go right into Boston.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Army as opposed to one of the other branches of service?

Luciano: Well, it's funny. The Marines in those days were taking anybody that was perfectly normal. I was perfectly normal except I had two teeth that were bad. So they didn't want me (chuckle).

Marcello: The service that . . . most of the other services were that selective in those days?

Luciano: That selective. That was selective. The Navy said my tooth went a long way--which wasn't right. I mean, I had it smashed with an iron pipe when I was a kid, but those are the things that happen to children, you know. But it didn't bother me any. I never noticed it.

Oh, the Coast Guard . . . I was a quarter of an inch too short. Now can you imagine! My cousin got in the Coast Guard, and that's the first place I went. He was in. I was driving a truck at the time, and I said, "Well, driving a truck and making three dollars a day isn't much for me or for anybody." So I said, "Well, I better try the Coast Guard," but I was a quarter of an inch too short at that station. But they said, "But if you want to pay your way into New York and try it there, they might take you." I said, "Well, I don't have no money to pay my way."

I usually gave all of the money that I got . . . and I was even old enough to go out with girls, you know, and drive my car, my father's car--him and I bought it together--so I said, "No I haven't got the money to go down there." When I gave my mother the money she used to give me fifty cents to go out with

a girl, and I'd take her to an ice cream stand or some-
place else (chuckle) like a parking spot. Those are
the things we had to do in those days, but I didn't
mind it. I enjoyed it.

So I went into the Army, and they checked me over,
and they said, "No, you're alright. We'll take care of
you." I said, "Well, I want to do this and do this in
the service." "Fine." Well, I got in the infantry
first. Then I saw a spot to go in the Coast Artillery.
Well, Coast Artillery was better because they would
teach you. They had schools to go through. So I trans-
ferred to the Coast Artillery.

Marcello: Now where did you go through all of this? Did this
occur after you got to the Hawaiian Islands, or did you
transfer to the Coast Artillery back in the States?

Luciano: No, no, back in the States. Yes, when I was in Fort
Plattsburg, New York.

Marcello: Is that where you took your basic training?

Luciano: Well, yes. In those days they called it recruit training,
yes. Then I turned around and went down to Fort Hancock,
New Jersey, and stayed there and waited for my assignment.
I had asked for Hawaii.

Marcello: Why did you want to go to the Hawaiian Islands?

Luciano: I don't know.

Marcello: Did you conjure up visions of a tropical paradise or something of this nature?

Luciano: In a way that's true. I think that every young boy in those days, I don't know . . . if you've sort of seen pictures of Hawaii and all those Hula girls . . . not true, not true. It was just one of those things, I guess. I just wanted to get away somewhere and to settle down and see if I could learn something. That was just a good spot. They showed me what they had over there at that time. So I did. I went over there, and I . . .

Marcello: When did you arrive in the Hawaiian Islands? Can you estimate this?

Luciano: I knew exactly. In fact, I took a boat from Brooklyn, New York, on the Chateau-Thierry. It was the first maiden voyage of the Chateau-Thierry since they took it out of moth balls. It dated back to the First World War. We went down to Charleston, and then from there we stopped in . . . I don't know where we were. I don't know because I don't know whether it was Puerto Rico or whether it was Havana, Cuba. Then we went through the Panama Canal, and we stopped at Balboa and went all the way through. We had a good time all the way. Then we

went from there straight across to Hawaii--nineteen days straight. That little old ship with seven or eight high--guys, you know, in there. But I guess we all slept on deck most of the time anyway. We couldn't sleep down there. But it was a good experience. I think it was one of the best experiences I've had--going through the Panama Canal and enjoying it that way.

Marcello: So anyhow, when did you arrive in the Hawaiian Islands?

Luciano: I think it was May 4, 1940.

Marcello: In other words, you were there about a year and a half, approximately, before the attack actually took place.

Luciano: Yes. At the time we arrived . . . in fact, we were in boot camp about three weeks. See, over there you have to go back to boot camp again. They gave you what they called a refresher course of four weeks.

Marcello: Where'd you have to take this?

Luciano: At Fort Kamehameha.

Marcello: In other words, you were assigned to Fort Kamehameha, and you stayed there.

Luciano: Yes, I stayed right there. Well, they had a little experience at that time. Like I say, I got there in May, and during the first week of June they couldn't find the Japanese fleet. Now why they were worrying

in 1940 about the Japanese fleet, I will never know, but this is just what happened. We were put on alert, given live ammunition, and everything else. Of course, the experience of soldiers . . . they knew I was already in the infantry. Experienced soldiers were the guys used for guards and everything else, and the rest of them went out on maneuvers. That lasted for just about six days, and they came back and they started all over. Since I was in the infantry, I had to take less basic training, really.

Marcello: What sort of coast artillery training did you receive here at Fort Kamehameha?

Luciano: Well, Coast Artillery . . . they showed you all different types of guns.

Marcello: Would you consider your training to have been thorough?

Luciano: Oh, yes. In those days it was more than just thorough. I mean, you had to get it right, or you didn't get it at all.

Marcello: Was there plenty of time to train you? In other words, when you got to the Hawaiian Islands, I assume there wasn't really a sense of urgency at that particular time. There was plenty of time to train you.

Luciano: Yes. They took their time in there. You only got out of there when you could do your left-face and your right-face and your about-face in a perfect manner.

Marcello: And I assume the same would be true so far as the coast artillery training was concerned.

Luciano: Coast artillery training and searchlight training. They gave you searchlight training, coast artillery as far as guns are concerned, all weapons with . . . every weapon they had. You went through each one. That was your advanced training, you know, after your basic training.

Marcello: I would assume that your noncoms had a great deal of time in the Army, did they not?

Luciano: I'll tell you. Most of them corporals had twelve to fifteen years of service, and if they were a sergeant, boy, they must have had fifteen years of service in those days.

Marcello: In other words, rank was very, very slow.

Luciano: You had to wait till someone died, I think (chuckle). That's what literally happened, or either somebody got busted. You'd be surprised the number of guys that would try to get a guy drunk and get him busted (chuckle). But they loved each other. Now don't misunderstand me. If somebody from another unit said something to somebody else and they got in a fight, the whole unit took care of it, you know? But if someone

from another camp came in, say, from DeRussey, and came down to our place in camp, we'd fight them whether we didn't like the guy next to us at all. It was just . . . you know. I think there was more esprit de corps than they ever had before.

Marcello: Now was Fort Kamehameha basically a coast artillery site?

Luciano: Right, completely. Now it wasn't a site. Let's put it this way. Fort Kamehameha was not a site itself. It did have a certain number of guns on it and only one battery, as we used to call it at that time. But they were old fourteen-inch mortars. One battery was down at Hauula Point with Selfridge, which was a twelve-inch battery. Selfridge was what we called a disappearing gun.

Marcello: Why was it given that name? Was that a brand name?

Luciano: I don't know. It's not a brand name because . . . I think they probably named them in those days for people that had passed on in the Coast Artillery.

Marcello: I see.

Luciano: Selfridge was the disappearing weapons. Then we had one down on the other end of Hauula Point, which was Closson, which is a twelve-inch standard gun. That

was just plain . . . of course, they had the dungeons where they kept all of the projectiles and the powder magazines and so forth in the back underneath the ground.

Marcello: How large a complement of men was there at Fort Kamehameha?

Luciano: Fort "Kam"? Well, let's see. We had the 15th, 41st, and the 55th Coast Artillery. Those were the three battalions we had, and you figure that a battalion had around 700 men. Then we had our Quartermaster Corps, Signal Corps, what have you

Marcello: It was a fairly large post then.

Luciano: Yes, Fort "Kam" was a pretty good post. It was bigger than . . . in fact, it was one of the biggest Coast Artillery posts now. In fact, I think it was the biggest Coast Artillery post. I'm trying to think of any other Coast Artillery post that was any bigger. We had all the searchlights on the island. We had sixty positions. We were the only ones that had the searchlights, so we had to put them all around.

Marcello: In other words, they were all around the island. They weren't simply around Fort "Kam."

Luciano: Right. Oh, no. All the way around Oahu in sixty positions. Then we had alternate positions in case we were

to get knocked out of them somehow. We also had what we called at that time 155's--guns--and some of them were on barbette mounts. Now barbette mounts--I don't know if . . . maybe somebody else told you about them, but they had a concrete center and a concrete ring. Around the ring we had a rail. We just put that gun on the rail and just moved it around, and it was moved mechanically.

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

Luciano: Wonderful, just wonderful! I don't know if you'd ever get morale like that again.

Marcello: How do you account for the high morale?

Luciano: The discipline, the respect for each and every soldier that was a soldier, a soldier that made himself to be a soldier. If he didn't want to be a soldier, he was kicked out. The same with the Marines. I think we had just as good morale in those days as the Marines. That's why the Marines still have their morale today--because of their discipline. Of course, they go overboard a little bit, maybe, on certain cases. But I think 90 per cent of it was the respect that we had for each other as being a soldier because we could do our job and know it

was going to be done. I didn't have to worry about the man next to me, you see? That's the reason that we respected each other, and that's the reason that we had so much esprit de corps and pride in ourselves, and we could see this. Well, then, naturally, when the draft started and we got men in . . . but, you see, it didn't hurt us at that time because we had more regular Army personnel than we had draftees. We could teach them in a manner as we were taught. That's why they were better soldiers--the first ones that came in.

Marcello: In other words, you weren't completely overwhelmed with draftees. The regular Army was still in a majority.

Luciano: Right. Right, and we still kept on teaching each and every person the same way as we had been taught when we came in.

Marcello: This more or less leads me into my next question. Now how did your routine begin to change as relations between the United States and Japan grew steadily worse? In other words, as we get closer and closer to Pearl Harbor, did your routine change any so far as maneuvers or alerts or anything of that nature were concerned?

Luciano: Yes, we had a normal number of alerts like anyone else did. I was trained to be a master gunner, what we called

a master gunner in the Army. I had to do all the data, surveying, and making of maps and putting all of the firing batteries into position. Now we have not only, as I told you, the 155's, but we also had what we called railway guns. I think, probably, Colonel Spangler has told you about those. Well, he had one battery . . . after he moved from our battery . . . we were a searchlight battery. Headquarters is always a searchlight battery, by the way. The rest are all gun batteries until you had headquarters, also, who was your supply and other things. The 55th was a railway battery, and it also had the sixteen-inch barbette. So that we knew which battery had which. We could tell, see, which ones we had. The 15th had other guns--155's--and they had mortars and so forth, and Battery Selfridge. So we knew which ones were which.

Well, they'd go out on maneuvers, and we'd just train to see if we could go ahead and fire and so forth. Well, as a master gunner, I had to go out on the ship. We towed the target. Whenever they fired the 155's, the sixteen-inch battery, or anything, we had to go out there, and we had what we called a splash camera. As

their projectile came right by the target, we'd go ahead and snap the picture. We'd take that picture back and make the negative. On the negative we'd measure how far that splash was from the target. Then we could tell if they had a hit or a no hit. Each battery would compete.

Marcello: About how often would this sort of training take place?

Luciano: Oh, each battery had to fire within a three-month period. We had to have it within a three-month period. Then we'd start all over again.

Marcello: I guess you really couldn't do this much more often than that because of the expense involved, among other things.

Luciano: I don't think so because, as far as the expense was concerned, there was no worry about it. There was only the powder and the projectile--no sweat, no trouble at all. It didn't cost us much to fire. I think it's better to use a little stuff like that than to have the men just sit around and just think, "Well, we can do it. We can." But when you had it and they did it and they did right, it's pretty hard to figure who was the best battery.

Marcello: Again, I think it gets back to that morale factor again. This sort of thing, I'm sure, would be helpful to morale.

Luciano: This is the problem. This is the thing that we probably don't have today. We don't have that service competition that we always had. I enjoyed that part, but at the same time you've got to remember that all these men that we were getting back into the service now, they were learning. I think it helped us--that draft. If it hadn't started at that time . . . to bring the men in after the war had started would have been even worse.

Marcello: I'm sure it would have been.

Luciano: So it was good then. To me, as far as I was concerned, I thought we were ready for anything. Well, the last maneuver we went on was six days prior to Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Was there anything particularly special or outstanding about that maneuver?

Luciano: We were on maneuvers with live ammunition. We hadn't done that in a year and a half. I used to have to take care of marking the ships coming in. We used to have the Navy out there, and we'd detect them with our detectors and find out where they were. We had what we called OP station--observation posts--that used to watch. We had height finders out there, and we could see out there at least 49,000 yards out. It was pretty good. Each boat, we tracked it. We had a big tracking board. We'd

track each boat on there. Submarines, too, were tracked if we had a . . . we had a certain amount of Navy helping us, don't forget, and the Air Force to spot. We'd get it from certain places. This was our command post, and we had a map the size of this wall, I guess, and we'd slide two of them . . . we had two different types--one for submarines and the Navy and so forth, and the other one to locate our batteries. We could figure if we could shoot that ship or not by having a protractor and just go around. We just measured it from where our battery was. Each one had a point on there. You just put in there, put the protractor in there, and measured out. "Heck, we can shoot that ship and knock it off."

Marcello: Now how safe did you feel at Pearl Harbor in case there was some sort of hostilities between the United States and Japan? Did you feel pretty safe there?

Luciano: As a master gunner I knew what we could do. A lot of people didn't know. Don't misunderstand me, now. A lot of people say, "Well, they could have taken us and they could have . . ." I don't think so in a mass invasion, as they thought they could, for the simple reason that we had guns all around that island. We could

move other guns around that island, and we did move those guns around the island. We had searchlights set up. Inside of two hours, every searchlight could have been lit up. So if they didn't hit us within the three or four hours . . . no. If they had come in at the same time or just an hour after the attack, I think they might have had one beachhead, but I don't think they could have got any further because of the guns that we had.

Marcello: But just the idea of a sneak attack itself . . . I think this was usually out of the question so far as most personnel were concerned. Of course, theoretically, anything is possible but I think the probability of a sneak attack was far removed from everybody's mind.

Luciano: Far removed, yes. We never thought they would hit us because we thought we were too strong. We were kind of strong, especially on that island alone. Any other island, I would say no. I would say that they would be able to take any one of them.

Marcello: Plus I think that you have to keep in mind that the Hawaiian Islands were a long way from Japan, and probably when most people thought about war with Japan,

they thought in terms of the Philippines or maybe the Dutch East Indies or maybe something like that, but, you know, the Hawaiian Islands are a long way off.

Luciano: Not only that. We were thinking of another thing, too, because if they were coming in full force, their supply lines would be stretched out so long that I think they would have been vulnerable, and I'm certain that sooner or later we would have annihilated them one way or another. I think they used common sense in their own judgement. We would have lost quite a few men. Don't misunderstand me. I think we would have lost quite a few men. They may have had a beachhead quite awhile before we could get them off there, but we were closer to the mainland than they were closer to their mainland.

Marcello: There were a lot of people of Japanese ancestry on the Hawaiian Islands at this time. What sort of problems would they have created for the Army?

Luciano: I don't think they would have created too much. There were a few die-hards. We caught a few of them. We knew that. We caught a few at Hickam Field because . . . in fact, some of the . . . when I went over there to investigate . . . I was sent

over there on the morning of December 7th to investigate . . . I was sent by Lieutenant Twining. Well, he sent me over there because he had heard of saboteurs. I took a squad and we went out over there during the attack to the lumberyard. When we got over there, we were pushed into the service of helping the wounded. The biggest problem was trying to find if they were saboteurs, and they weren't. In fact, half the kitchen personnel that were supposed to be working there were Japanese and they were not there.

Marcello: When you thought of the Japanese on the island, there was this potential for sabotage or fifth columnist activity or something of this nature.

Luciano: Yes, there might have been a potential, but . . .

Marcello: But in view of what we know now, it certainly didn't pan out.

Luciano: No, I don't think anybody, as far as the men themselves who knew the Japanese and who were there for any length of time like I was, had any idea that any of them would do anything as far as the Japanese were concerned. So they loved Hawaii as much as we did, and I don't think that they would turn on us in that respect.

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

Luciano: Oh, I knew them very well. We had a lot of friends of Japanese ancestry over there, and a lot of people that came from Japan living there. In my rounds I met quite a few.

Marcello: What did you do in your leisure hours here in the Hawaiian Islands? Now I assume that you were single at the time. How did you spend your liberty and this sort of thing?

Luciano: Oh, downtown most of the time going to see someplace, taking a drive around the island. If somebody had a car, we'd all pile in and go around the island. Of course, I used to go around the island because I was a surveying engineer at the time, and I went around the island more than anybody, so I knew my way around. Somebody would say, "Well, let's go to the Mormon Temple. Let's go out here." Out there it was so calm and clear, and everything was so neat that we just enjoyed that. We'd go downtown most of the time. The YMCA was the only thing that we had. We didn't have much. Then, if we did meet a family of good people . . . two or three of us met some of them at an Italian place where we used

to go all the time, Florentino's, when we got paid. Of course, we were only getting \$18.75 at that time but we lived well. I don't think that we hurt each other. We enjoyed each other. We'd go downtown and we'd stay in one place. Headquarters 41st had the Tiger Inn and . . .

Marcello: Tiger Inn?

Luciano: Yes, and you would sit there and you drink beer. Of course, I didn't drink at the time. I don't know why I never did. I just never thought of it.

Marcello: That's not Italian (chuckle).

Luciano: Yes, that's not Italian (chuckle). Of course, they didn't have wine (chuckle). Wine was unheard of in barrooms over there. But they had their Primo beer, and they've still got their Primo beer made by . . . at that time it was owned by a Japanese company. I found it enjoyable most times to go down to Waikiki Beach, sit there, sit underneath a banyan tree. Back in those days . . . in fact, they used to call us in when they had "Hawaii Calls." If we were down there on a Saturday and they had "Hawaii Calls" with Webley Edwards, I think his name was . . . yes, Webley Edwards. The minute they started that sound they used to go,

"Come on, come on!" They'd get everybody in so they'd have enough people to clap. See, they were taping it. Not only taping it, but they were direct from there to the mainland.

Marcello: And who was doing this, Webley Edwards?

Luciano: Yes, and they used to call everybody in.

Marcello: Was this close to the radio station or what?

Luciano: No, this was underneath the banyon tree, we called it. Underneath the banyan tree at the Moana Hotel, right outside on Waikiki Beach. It's still there. It's still one of the most beautiful hotels. It's still one of the oldest. There was the Royal Hawaiian, and the Moana was right next to it. Sometimes they'd go ahead and say, "Well, serve them whatever they want." That's where you drank the beer because they used to furnish it at that time.

I went back in 1970 and, I'll be doggone, I sat underneath the banyan tree just to try to reminisce. I said, "Well, I'm going to have a beer." I paid \$1.25 for that beer and a dime to sit down. I got mad (chuckle). Here they used to call you in and . . . but that's how we spent our times. And dancing--we used to go to dances, too. There were a lot of dance halls. There were a lot of other places that I don't want to tell you about over this tape recorder.

Marcello: Down on Hotel Street?

Luciano: Down on Hotel Street and King Street and Beretania Street, River Street. I knew where they were (chuckle). We'd go there and we'd go dancing with the girls, and it didn't cost us anything. We put the money in a juke box, or sometimes they would just so they could dance with somebody. That's how we spent our time.

Marcello: What sort of liberty did you get here at Fort Kamehameha?

Luciano: Oh, we could go out any night we wanted to.

Marcello: In other words, you were usually free in the evenings?

Luciano: Oh, every evening, yes. After 3:30 we were free.

Marcello: How about on the weekend?

Luciano: Weekends? From that 3:30 Friday we were free all the time, unless we were on guard duty, unless we were on KP, unless we were on orderly. Now orderly means . . . at that time we were served at dinner tables. We served everything from the table. Five guys sat down with a corporal on each end. Of course, it was family style, but you had to sit there and enjoy your meal, and everybody else had to enjoy the meal. When you finished a dish you held it up, and you had to hold it and wait until the orderly came around and picked it up. If you had, say, mashed potatoes, well, he took it back and got it filled and put it down where you had it, and then

you'd give it to the next guy. So that's how we got meals--family style. Like I say, we were off, no special time to come in at all.

Marcello: Normally speaking, how often might you draw weekend duty? Maybe once a month or something like that?

Luciano: Oh, not even that.

Marcello: Is that right?

Luciano: Yes, not even that often.

Marcello: When was payday?

Luciano: Payday was at the end of the month.

Marcello: In other words, the last day of the month was payday?

Luciano: Last day of the month was payday. That's right.

Marcello: So, in other words, if you got paid at the end of November, 1941, would you still have had a little bit of money left yet by the weekend of December 6th or 7th, 1941?

Luciano: I would, yes. Don't forget. We played a lot of pool, and we played a lot of poker because there was nights when we didn't go to town. You didn't want to go to town all the time. When I was a young kid, I used to play pool quite a bit. I used to set up pins in a bowling alley, and I learned to play pool when I wasn't setting up pins. I used to play for the house. Then I got better and better till nobody wanted to play with me.

I was only a young kid of, what, fourteen or fifteen then. So when I get in the service . . .

Marcello: You found a couple of pigeons (chuckle).

Luciano: . . . I was quite a sharpie, and me and this other fellow Acunzo . . .

Marcello: What was his name?

Luciano: Acunzo, an Italian fellow from New York. Him and I were the two sharpies. We could hardly beat each other. On a good day he'd beat me, and on a good day I'd beat him. We'd go out together. We'd go around to all of the other batteries and play pool. So we had a little more money than most men, so we could buy things what we wanted. We'd always hit one place--and that was Florentino's--for an Italian meal. We spent our money there. If we lost the rest of it, we didn't care. We had that Italian meal during that time (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, this more or less brings us up, I think, to the weekend of the Pearl Harbor attack itself. What I'd like you to do at this point is to describe to me in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was on Saturday, December 6, 1941, and then from there we'll move into Sunday, December 7, when all hell broke loose.

Luciano: Okay, well, on December 6, we were still out on maneuvers, and they called it off--the maneuvers. Around noontime I

got called off, anyway. Most of them, I believe, did, too. So this other staff sergeant and I were both working where I told you we usually worked--at this command post where we would plot the boats and so forth and everything. We closed that down and came home.

Now we were living in this shelter. Well, our own what we called T-34, which was a bachelor's quarters. Only sergeants--what we called staff sergeants--and above could live in those quarters. Everybody else had to live in the barracks. I couldn't live in the barracks. I made staff sergeant, and they kicked me out. "You're a staff sergeant now. You've got to . . . "

Well, we went in there, and then we figured, well, we'll go to town. We had a little money left because we were on maneuvers, and we never spent anything while you're on maneuvers. So we still had the money left. So I was going to say, "Well, let's go to town." I said, "Well, I'll tell you what. Let's go to confession first." He was Catholic, and both of us were Catholic. I said, "Well, let's go to confession first. We'll go downtown, have a nice meal, and come home and get up and go to church." He said, "That's a good idea." So that's what we did. The rest of the day we went downtown, went down to Waikiki and went swimming and had a nice time. We ate and came back.

Marcello: What time did you get back to Fort Kamehameha?

Luciano: Oh, about eight or nine o'clock that night.

Marcello: In other words, when you came back you were still in good shape and all this sort of thing.

Luciano: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Let me ask you this question. It's one I ask everybody, but I think it's kind of an important question. You can only probably answer this in terms of Fort Kamehameha, but generally speaking, when people came back from Honolulu on a Saturday night, what sort of condition or shape were they in?

Luciano: Well, you'll find those people that . . . just like anybody else. You have a certain percentage who will overdo it when they've had to abstain for awhile. The Navy, I know, used to be that way.

Marcello: Of course, those guys were usually out all week.

Luciano: Yes, they were out, and when they came back, naturally . . . you'd see them getting on a bus and going back . . . because we had a bus going through Fort "Kam." Some of them would be Navy, and some of them would be Air Force. We had to go through Hickam Field to get to Fort "Kam." Hickam Field, when I first got over there, it was being built. They were just building it up, and to go through it . . .

naturally, you'd see a bunch of drunks, but there wasn't any time--let me tell you something--that I saw men get drunk and not be up at, what we called, 5:55 in the morning when reveille called. Even though it was a Sunday or Saturday or what day it was, you were up there even if your head hurt. You were out there, and the minute you took what we called the rifle drill . . . we used to do our exercises with the rifle . . .

Marcello: Physical drill under arms.

Luciano: Right, and when you did that, you were awake (laughter), and they didn't take you back in until you sweated.

Marcello: I can remember from my Coast Guard duty. I hated that damn drill more than anything I ever did.

Luciano: Yes (chuckle), I didn't mind it at all. In fact, I enjoyed it. I used to box at that time, so it gave me more exercise. Well, anyway at that time I would think that most of them were in . . . I'd say 90 per cent of them were in good shape. You'd always find a certain amount that were not sober.

Marcello: Well, this is what I wanted to get into the record because I think many people assume that Saturday nights in Honolulu were times of drunken debaucheries and things of this nature. The point that I think needs

to get into the record is that the vast majority of people returned to their posts relatively sober, and certainly they would have been ready to fight the next morning.

Luciano: Absolutely.

Marcello: And was this, generally speaking, from what you could observe, the case on that Saturday night on December 6?

Luciano: I think most of them got so tired of that being out and not getting a good night's sleep during the whole week of maneuvers, didn't have enough money in the first place to drink that much . . . and who can get drunk with that type of beer or whatever they drank? You'll find some, naturally, but they would more rather go out with the women and have a good time with the women and dance instead of drink. In those days I don't think much . . . you would find a drunk, naturally. We had them. We had them. We had old soldiers that sometimes were drunks, but some weren't. I mean, when you mention an old soldier, a lot of them will say, "Oh, he was a drunkard" when he wasn't. Or he was the man that'd get up the next morning and was up before you even if he was drunk that night, and that's the doggone truth. He'd get up before you, and he'd check you to see that you were

alright. The corporal, boy, he had to be up. So that's why I would think that 90 per cent of them were in shape and could be in shape at any time.

Marcello: Okay, so you got back to Fort Kamehameha, you turned in relatively early, and this more or less would take us into the next day of December 7, 1941. So again, describe your routine from the time you got up until all hell broke loose.

Luciano: Well, actually I was asleep because we were going to go to 9:30 mass, and, of course, wasn't going to eat anything because there was a . . . we had our own little refrigerator in there, but we didn't touch anything. We were asleep. Both Weisnger and I were living in this place.

Marcello: Who was the other guy?

Luciano: Frank Weisnger. We had another one in there with us--he was the telephone communications sergeant--in the other room, so the three of us had that one place. Well, all of a sudden we heard this bombing, and we heard the machine guns. "What the heck's going on? We just went on maneuvers. What's going on?" Weisnger goes, "I don't know." I said, "For crying out loud! There must be something out there!" So I went out and opened the door

to my house, and right in front of my home--right down the center--came a burst. I said, "Those guys must be nuts!"

But Weisnger was a flying nut. He used to love planes. In fact, he could fly his own plane. He had his own liscense--pilot liscense. He wanted to get in the Air Force. That's why he took the Coast Artillery--so he could get to the Air Force. He looked up and he said, "Frank, those are not our planes. Look!"

I looked again and saw that red ball on there. "Holy jumping," I said, "We're in it!" I said, "They finally came!" So he says, "What do we do?" I says, "Well, just go ahead and . . . well, the first thing we ought to do is go down and get our ammunition again," because we had turned it in December 6.

This other fellow, the communications sergeant, he came out and said, "What's going on?" I said, "Don't look out the door." He said, "I hear all that machine gun fire." I said, "Yes, the Japs are bombing Pearl Harbor! You can see it from here!" From my house, I was on the edge of the beach. I could look right into Pearl Harbor because we were what we called the harbor defenses of Pearl Harbor. That's what Fort Kamehameha

was. They had a submarine net across there. It had to be pulled by the Fort Weaver boat or the Fort Kamehameha boat--whichever they got at the time. The boat was on one side or the other. Well, boy, he says, "What do I do?" I says, "Well, where's your command post? He says, "I got to go down to Selfridge!" I said, "That's right. That's the communications section." So he went down to Battery Selfridge, and we went to our usual place in our batteries to go ahead and start plotting, see if there was any ships out there.

Marcello: In other words, at first there perhaps was a moment of confusion or maybe even perplexity--not fear--and then professionalism took over, and you went to your assigned battle stations.

Luciano: Yes. Well, first we went down to our battery. First, like I say, we had to go down and get our ammunition and so forth and everything and then go up there. Now the way this was set up, all the women and all the children had to come up to what we called our battery with a . . . I told you it was a fourteen-inch mortar--the battery was. They had to come up to our battery.

Marcello: Our battery?

Luciano: My battery . . .

Marcello: I see.

Luciano: . . . where we had the command post, and we put them inside where all of the projectiles . . .

Marcello: Now where were all of these women and children coming from, Hickam?

Luciano: Oh, no! This was all the people from "Kam"---wives of sergeants and officers and everything--but everyone of them had to come up to that. That was the safest place because it was the deepest and the safest that they could come to.

Marcello: How come you put them in there with the projectiles? That doesn't seem safe to me.

Luciano: Well, I'll tell you what. A projectile does not blow up. You know that, I hope. A projectile doesn't blow up unless it's fused or unless it's _____.

There's nothing in it.

Marcello: Oh, you didn't have the rest of that stuff there.

Luciano: No. Powder was way down below, definitely. It was more underground because we kept that where it doesn't get wet and so forth. It's no good if it gets wet. We had to keep the powder dry, and that's what we had to do. But we took the projectiles out afterwards anyway because they were on rollers, and we just rolled them out. But we first put them in there until the attack was over.

Marcello: Now actually, Fort "Kam" itself was not coming under direct attack. Is that correct?

Luciano: It was.

Marcello: Oh, really?

Luciano: Oh, sure! It was under attack as well as everything else. They were taking it by coming in . . . they had to come in close to us to get to Hickam, and they had to come in close on the other way to get into Pearl Harbor. If they dropped their bomb, they dropped it close to us.

Of course, we had one . . . well, B-41, the mess hall, blew up. We found out afterwards that the Marines were not cutting their fuses on their four-inch square . . . what we called a four-inch square battery. It's an anti-aircraft . . . what we call four-inch, meaning . . . four square battery was . . . they were in squares, and that's how they shot up at the planes so that they could converge on it. Well, anyway, that's one of them. They were so fast and trying to be so fast that they . . . some of them didn't cut their fuses. If you don't cut a fuse, naturally it doesn't explode up there. It comes straight down. Then when it comes down, it explodes when it hits something.

Then we had one . . . we shot down one plane. And as a master gunnery sergeant and also in intelligence and also in everything else practically, Lieutenant Twining and I had to go down and check out the plane. Actually, when it came down, it hit against what we called our ice house. In those days we used to make our own ice. They had this ice house, and it had hit this ice house, and, of course, the pilot was killed, and he . . .

Marcello: Now was all of this occurring during the attack?

Luciano: During the attack, yes. It was still going on, so we drove down there in the jeep and took everything we could out of his pockets. We found maps. Naturally, it was all bloody with everything else. Twining took it out, but . . .

Marcello: What were some of the interesting articles you found on this pilot?

Luciano: Mostly . . . no identification. Nothing of that type. Most of it was just the same old thing that you and I would probably carry, except our identification and stuff and . . . but we found maps--different types of maps--and we looked them over extensively. I knew maps, like I say, since I was making them. The minute I saw that, I knew

that they had been . . . circled . . . everywhere they were going to hit was circled. One of them was "Kam." One of them was Battery Clossen over at Hauula Point. They showed a railway battery that we hadn't even put in yet. We put in the _____, and I had marked it in, but they showed that one in there. Of course, we didn't have any guns . . . fourteen-inch railway batteries were moved. But this must have been done quite awhile ago. I had done that battery back in 1940. Maybe it was 1941, and they knew they were putting that battery in . . . you know, it was already in.

Marcello: You were mentioning awhile ago that you had a good view of Pearl Harbor from where you were. What did things look like from where you were down at Pearl?

Luciano: Just smoke. You couldn't see much at all. You could see smoke, and all smoke and flame and that's about it . . . and black smoke . . . it was very, very black. You could see Hickam very good because, of course, we were right next to Hickam, and to get to our place, like I said, you had to go through Hickam. The tower that we had, we put a fifty-caliber machine gun up there. When I took it up there, I could look over and see Hickam Field. It was

pretty well shattered--planes all over. A couple of planes were getting off the ground, though. They used to come right over the tower to get off the ground. They didn't care about the wind or what, as long as they got off the ground. We know that a few did get off. One did get off and went in the drink. Like I told you, I was then told to go over to Hickam to make sure that the saboteur rumors that they had weren't true or were true--find out.

Marcello: In other words, by this time you were already having to check out all the rumors. Is that correct?

Luciano: Yes.

Marcello: And I'm sure that that fort was full of all sorts of rumors.

Luciano: Yes, everything, anytime. "They're landing here!" "They're landing there!" None whatsoever. Of course, in the command post where I was we would get all the stuff and had to check it out.

Marcello: I guess you had to check out these things.

Luciano: You had to check it out. You had to check it out. I always had to check out--"Oh, they are landing paratroopers!" and everything else. One pilot, naturally, probably bailed out instead of getting himself killed.

None of what we heard besides the alleged landing, such as other saboteurs or sabotage by any other people on Oahu, was true. We know that there were people that were in communications. We did find some of those.

Marcello: Were you personally in on capturing any of those people?

Luciano: Yes, on one of them. He was in a house, and we caught him up at what we called Aiea, which was behind Pearl Harbor. We took radios and radio receivers.

Marcello: Was he still there at the time, or had he already left?

Luciano: No, they got him. They got him. The intelligence got him before we did. We just got the radios and confiscated all of those.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Was there some rather sophisticated equipment up there?

Luciano: No, to tell you the truth, it was just ordinary. In those days they didn't have the sophisticated equipment that you might see today, but it was enough to radio two or three hundred miles, and that's about it to get anything back. But then they had all short-wave radios, where they would get stuff but they couldn't send.

Marcello: As you looked down and you viewed the damage that was being done at Pearl Harbor and at Hickam Field, what sort of emotions or thoughts were running through your mind at this time?

Luciano: I'll tell you, I very truly, very seldom get emotional in that respect for the simple reason that you've got a job to do, and you worry about that and . . . because if you don't, somewhere along the line something's breaking down. I don't think any of those soldiers had any thoughts of that at all--no fear, no thought that this is going to be the end, no thought that someone was going to come and get us. We've got a job to do so let's do it. Let's put up our defenses as we were taught to do. Let's take care of the people that we were taught to do. Go out and man our guns, get ready. When we're needed, we're there. That's what we thought we should do, and that's the way we did act.

Marcello: How did your attitude toward the Japanese change as a result of the attack?

Luciano: Japanese--we hated those people that we thought were Japanese as far as the Japanese Army was concerned. Over in Oahu, it didn't change at all. They were thought of. They were watched, and some of them were,

because they had just come from Japan. Naturally, the intelligence would have to look at them and watch them. Anytime you saw a light, you wanted to make sure. That occurred after the blackout had begun and so forth. But we never thought of anything as far as them taking over any station or anything else. We had no ideas of them turning against us because I think they liked America too much because they'd lived there awhile.

Marcello: I assume there were quite a few trigger-happy GI's around that night, were there not?

Luciano: Naturally, oh, yes. That night sure, sure. Every-time they heard something, I guess, they . . . a burst of fire would go out once in awhile--a couple of shots. But after they settled down, they knew if they hadn't come by that time there wasn't anything that would occur. We did get some planes that were coming back in to try to come into Hickam Field, and they couldn't land.

Marcello: These are the planes off the Enterprise.

Luciano: Yes.

Marcello: Did your outfit open up on those planes, or did Fort Kamehameha open up on those planes, too?

Luciano: Yes. Some of them down on Hauula Point did. Of course, that wasn't from our unit. See, there was an infantry unit that had to come down from Schofield to take over our perimeter while we manned our guns. Our secondary purpose as Coast Artillery was to act as infantry. Our first purpose is to man those guns, and that's what we had to do first. But those people there, naturally they did shoot at anything.

Marcello: In the aftermath of the attack did you blame any individuals for the disaster that took place?

Luciano: Me? No. I wouldn't blame any individuals at that time. I knew one thing . . . somebody should have known about it. I also blamed one person that . . . this fellow himself saw the planes, had the radar, saw them in on there, saw them come over, radioed his lieutenant. The lieutenant thought he was drinking too much. He was out last night or something like that. The thing is that he didn't act. Of course, he was just a second lieutenant that had just come out of someplace without knowledge and the idea that no matter what . . . when you come off maneuvers with live ammunition, there must be some reason. A little common sense, see. Check it out--just one word--check it out.