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Interview with
Roger R. Boyer
August 17, 1974

Place of Interview: Houston, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

Roger Boyer

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Roger Boyer for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on August 17, 1974, in Houston, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Boyer in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

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

Mr. Boyer: I'm a native Houstonian. I graduated at mid-term, 1941, from Lamar High School in Houston. I enlisted in the Army after three tries for the Navy--Houston, Galveston, and San Antonio. Because I had flat feet I was unable to get into the Navy.

Marcello: When were you born and where were you born?

Boyer: December 29, 1922, in Houston, Texas

Marcello: Why did you decide to get into the military?

Boyer: Well, I was in the ROTC in high school in lieu of physical education. I already had a little military in the back of my mind. I was also in the 36th Tank Division of the National Guard. We met in 1939-1940 at Canal and Milby in Houston, Texas.

Marcello: Canal and Milby, those are streets?

Boyer: Yes, this was an old warehouse. They had the small tanks. They had all types of operations from mechanics to radio operators. I went into radio. I started transmitting and learning radio at this time during one night or one weekend a month in those years.

I was underage. This weekend my father kind of started putting two and two together. Where did I go on these weekends? They started drawing out a pattern (chuckle). He went out and talked to the commanding officer of the tank corps. That eliminated me from that source.

Then I went on back to finish school in January, 1941. Then my mother . . . well, it was my mother's younger brother, my stepmother. Nevertheless, she's

my mother now and practically always has been. She took me to Galveston. Well, I tried here in Houston to go into the Navy. The younger brother, my uncle, also was going into the Navy at about the same time. So I went to Galveston to the recruiting station and then to San Antonio to the recruiting station there, and all three of them tried to stick a finger under my foot, and they said, "Well, too bad." They really did.

So after three tries at the Navy, I went on and joined the Army. This is the later part of February, and the first part of March was when I was taking enlistment papers and exams and what have you here in Houston. I was then assigned to the 3rd Engineer Regiment, Hawaiian Department.

Marcello: Did you take your basic training, then, over in the Hawaiian Islands?

Boyer: Yes.

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service, how closely were you keeping abreast with world events? Did you foresee the possibility of the nation eventually getting into war?

Boyer: No, not really because we saw . . . I stayed with it through my father, who is a great reader of National

Geographic and everything he could get his hands on. We followed the war in Europe prior to this, from 1937 from the initial attack from Germany through Poland and the other countries that were overrun by Germany. He felt that it wouldn't be long before we would be into it. Then England got into it in the early 1940's.

Marcello: Late 1930's actually, and early '40's.

Boyer: Well, yes. I decided that I just wanted to go on before I started college. I felt that the military was something there. I lived in an area . . . oh, I guess there was approximately 175 to 200 boys of my age in this area. It was about a four-mile square. We all drifted off to the service one by one as we graduated from high school. Well, in March of 1941, there was a couple of others that went to the service, so I decided, "Well, I'll go, too." I went on and tried the Navy and failed. So I went to the Army.

Marcello: Is there anything eventful from your boot camp at Schofield Barracks that stands out in your mind? Or was it simply the standard type of Army boot training?

Boyer: Let me back up just a little bit, Ron, if you don't mind. After leaving Houston on March 3, 1941, I went

to Angel Island--Ft. McDowell--right out in San Francisco Bay. I was there, and then we went on.

I landed at Schofield on April 5. From then, my recruit training was initiated for some six to eight weeks. We had some tents set up outside the engineer quadrangle. It was one of the first quadrangles at Schofield Barracks adjacent to Wheeler Field. So all of the men that was transferred to the 3rd Engineers at that time was taking their basic. The drill field was only a short distance away. We were between the engineer quadrangle and the infantry quadrangle. The drill field was all the way through from one street to the other, and quite big. That's where they held all their ceremonies, military parades, and what have you. Well, this is where most of our training was made--right here.

At Ft. McDowell we had . . . we were bunked way up on a hill. The quartermaster or storage area was down somewhat, so we had to carry . . . early in the morning as soon as breakfast was all over, we had to carry all our bedding and everything down to the quartermaster and turn it in. Then they lined us up out in the hot sun and stuck a thermometer in our

mouth. If we didn't have a temperature, well, they shipped on and went on. Well, evidently, I had a degree or so of temperature from this hot journey from carrying the barracks bags and mattress, bedding, and what have you, so I was delayed from that point.

So I went over on a freighter. On this freighter there was quite a bit of oil and dirt. There were quite a lot of servicemen on board in the bulkheads. Both pair of my shoes had gotten oil on them. Well, during boot camp this showed up real well. It stands out very well that the training instructor there kept me up till eleven o'clock or so at night until I got a shine on those shoes. If you've ever tried to shine a pair of shoes with a little oil on them, well, there's no way. So this went on for some time. I finally got my shoes shined where I could pretty well see my face in them.

Marcello: How did you react to being assigned to the Hawaiian Islands? Were you looking forward to an assignment there?

Boyer: Yes, sir. I was.

Marcello: Why?

Boyer: Well, there were three of us that joined--Robert Bryson, James Burkett, and myself. Our serial numbers run consecutively. Our names were all . . . we were all right together. We stayed together all through boot camp or recruit training. It wasn't boot camp there. It was the Army and it was plain old rough-going recruit training. After this, I was assigned to Headquarters Service Company. In fact, all three of us were assigned to Headquarters Service Company, 3rd Engineer Regiment, Hawaiian Division.

Marcello: What sort of advanced training did you take after you got out of recruit training?

Boyer: I went to . . . first of all, all of us had to go through the motor pool to learn to drive anything from a jeep to a five-ton tractor-trailor. After this, we went to gunnery. We had M-1's at the time. This was a new one that had just come out. We were training, field stripping, sighting, firing. We'd go to the firing range. I made "expert" in riflery. I might mention at this time that the only time I fired my rifle through the whole war till I came back was only on the firing range. Never did I

kill anyone or shoot anyone all the way through the South Pacific.

Marcello: How would you describe your training in this pre-Pearl Harbor period? Was it thorough? Competent?

Boyer: Definitely. Since I had been in ROTC in high school, it wasn't hard for me to get into the drill sessions and pick up. I was assigned as squad leader for one squad because of this training which was very helpful. Calisthenics were every morning. We had then the regular right-face, left-face, about-face. You name it; we had it.

Being in the Engineer Corps, we didn't have as vivid training as an infantry unit or field artillery or something of this nature. We were more of being able to put a bridge together or string barbed wire or . . . this will come a little later. Fort Rutgers was one of the stations at Hawaii where barbed wire was stolen. Then there were other places around Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. Fort "Kam"--they had a big warehouse of barbed wire. Over on Kaneohe they had warehouses with barbed wire in them.

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

Boyer: Very good. We had a lot of fun. The three of us purchased a nine-passenger vehicle--it was a used taxi cab--not too long after we arrived in Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. We were taking men around after we became associated with the island. Honolulu--we made several trips to Honolulu. There was a little town close by about two miles, Wahiawa.

I can remember during training sessions that the commanding officer of the training or of the engineer regiment came out and spoke to us one day underneath a big tree there on the drill field. He had us all sit down. He says, "Now there's a little town over there about two miles. This is something new to you. Most of you are under twenty or twenty-one. There's a lot of beer joints. There's a lot of whiskey. There's a lot of wine. There's a lot of women." He continued and a little later he said, "On your first liberty, the first time you go over there, don't try to drink it dry because there's plenty more when you get back." This stands out in my mind during the training period.

Marcello: What else did you usually do for entertainment? I'm referring now to your social life. What did the social

life consist of here while you were stationed here at Schofield Barracks?

Boyer: Well, once a month we would have a three-day period--leave period. We'd go to Honolulu. We'd stay at the Army-Navy YMCA. We'd go to the Black Cat Cafe and roam the streets. I would sight-see more than anything, personally. Now there were a lot of them that went into Honolulu to visit the houses of prostitution--just to get something different. This is things that I didn't care for too terribly much. I was more interested in the local scenery, the parks. I visited Kanoeha Park, the gardens. I took a lot of pictures over there. When we were in transport in Los Angeles, I went to a pawnshop and picked up a little camera. So we took pictures all the way. I bought plenty of film in Los Angeles. We went through the Pali. I got to be friends with a lot of people in and around Honolulu. There were several that I would be needing as of a later date. So this would be mostly my social life. I didn't care for Waikiki Beach too terribly much because of the coral. Well, I was a good swimmer. I had attended the YMCA here in Houston faithfully and was "waterproof," so to speak, and had been all my life.

Marcello: How often did you manage to get into Honolulu?

Boyer: Approximately once a month.

Marcello: Was it mainly because of the distance involved and the lack of money?

Boyer: No, not really. I was conservative to a certain extent. I had an allotment coming home in which the government matched the amount that I sent home. So if I had something in particular that I wanted to do, I would wire mother and she would send me a money order or cashier's check or something of this nature. So money was no problem as far as I was concerned.

Marcello: When was payday in the Army?

Boyer: On the first of every month.

Marcello: So in other words, on December 6, 1941, or December 7, 1941, would most of the servicemen have had a fairly large amount of money, that is, considering what their wages were at that time?

Boyer: We were drawing \$21 a month as privates. Most of them would devour their money in poker games in the day room or rec room in the quadrangle. But myself, I was . . . I ran the day room and had quite a bit of money in the bank at Schofield Barracks. They would play with nothing but silver dollars.

We had a . . . this comes in later after the division split. Up until . . . prior to the . . . from March until December of 1941, we would take . . . after we bought the vehicle, we would take boys around the island. We'd leave Schofield Barracks around noon and make a trip around the island. This would be one way that we would pick up a little money. This is one reason I didn't have too much of a problem with money.

Marcello: Did you mention awhile ago that you were living in tents at this time?

Boyer: Only during the recruit training. After that, we moved into the three-story concrete barracks.

Marcello: There were quite a few military personnel here at Schofield Barracks, were there not?

Boyer: In our quadrangle there were four buildings. In this quadrangle two buildings was divided among the engineers. The third . . . one building had the MP detachment. Some portions of G-2, G-3, and G-4 men were at Schofield. The general headquarters was at Schofield. The headquarters was in our quadrangle. On one end of our building we had a mess hall on

the lower floor. The day room was on the second floor. The theater was up on the third floor. Then on the other end of this building was the general offices--military offices for the base. The base commander was here and all his staff.

Marcello: Now with what division were you attached at this time?

Boyer: Hawaiian Department.

Marcello: It was simply called the Hawaiian Department. But you were not a part of any specific division like the 24th or the 24th Division or something of this nature?

Boyer: Not at this time, no. We wore the palm leaf on our uniform. We did not have a patch as such, but we wore the palm leaf of the Hawaiian Department.

Marcello: What special alerts did you have in those weeks immediately prior to Pearl Harbor and as conditions and relations between the United States and Japan continued to decline?

Boyer: We didn't think . . . none of us had any idea of this because we were too busy. We were working back in the field artillery areas. We didn't have time to really think about this. After supper and retreat was over, well, we would either go to the day room or go out on

the drill field and sit around. We'd walk up to the beer garden and get a couple of beers. This was on up towards the recreation center of Schofield.

Marcello: But did you go on some particular maneuvers in those weeks immediately prior to Pearl Harbor, or go on an alert?

Boyer: In November of 1941 there was a great maneuver throughout the island which involved all Army personnel. At this time the Hawaiian Department split and originated the 24th and 25th Divisions. I went with the 65th Engineers of the 24th Division, and the other half went to 65th Engineers of the 25th Division.

Marcello: Was there ever any special reason why these maneuvers were taking place? Had they simply been scheduled for some time? In other words, were they a part of your routine?

Boyer: I don't know. I don't know the foreground of this particular maneuver, but I feel that with the influx of men there, the 3rd Engineer Regiment was becoming quite large. So we had to . . . there was more than what a regular regiment would be. So we felt that since we were getting so many men . . . we were all double-bunked in squad rooms in our barracks . . . that we felt that the Hawaiian Department was just

getting so big that they had to form other divisions. But there was no idea of battle or fighting or attack or anything of this nature.

We carried on normally after our transfers were all made. In my position I was already bunked down in our area, so we didn't have to move. Well, none of us really had to move. What men were in one building stayed in that building. What were in the other building stayed in the other building. They just took . . . each building had four sections. So they just took this building here and said, "This will be the 65th Engineers. This building over here will be the 3rd Engineers." So there would be four companies to each division.

Marcello: I gather, then, from what you said awhile ago that you really didn't give much thought to the possibility of the Hawaiian Islands being attacked by some foreign power--not Japan or anybody else.

Boyer: Not until Saturday, December 6. I don't know, but the headlines of the paper, Honolulu Times, on Saturday had big headlines that said, "Zero Hour Awaits Pacific." This kind of put us to mind.

Marcello: But there was still no specific mention of the Hawaiian Islands and Pearl Harbor. The Pacific is a big place. This could have meant the Philippines or any other place.

Boyer: Yes, yes, we paid no attention to that. I mean, we read the article.

In the middle of '41, prior to Pearl Harbor, there was a big recruitment for men to go to the Philippines to take care of some of this influxuation of these two divisions or the Hawaiian Department at that time. I had a lot of buddies that volunteered. They hit the little narrow gauge railroad and off they went. I've heard from some of them since then, but not many.

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

Boyer: Well, I didn't give it too much thought as to their nationality. A majority of them that we were associated with were very congenial. We'd go over to Wahiawa and go get a haircut. They had Japanese women there giving haircuts and things of this nature. Of course, we struck up conversations with them.

We later found out that there were several . . . one big cafe in particular that we frequented quite often had a big transmitter in the . . . up in the attic which was taking all this information from the barbers and the barmaids, different people that ran

the curio shops and stuff of this nature, where they would listen to little parts of here and little parts there. They would put it together. The first thing you know, they had the complete story. We didn't feel, prior to Pearl Harbor, that any of this was going on, but later it came out. A lot of things cleared up at Pearl Harbor. Let me put it that way.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up, I think, more or less, to that Saturday of December 6, 1941. What I want you to do at this point is to describe as best you can and in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was on Saturday, December 6, 1941. From that point we'll talk about December 7, 1941.

Boyer: Prior to Pearl Harbor, I went on to radio school in mid-1941 at Aiea, which is down close to Pearl Harbor. I became an operator for Colonel P. M. Reeves, battalion commander of the 25th Division. We would station a command car out on the drill field. We had a dugout just behind our barracks with radios down in the dugouts. Well, this was after Pearl Harbor.

Prior to Pearl Harbor, anytime Colonel Reeves wanted to go anywhere, I went with him because we would use the radio for communications back to the outfit--

the headquarters. Sergeant White of Palestine, Texas, was over us. He and I were real good buddies. We communicated real good. He could read me. We were using code waves as well as voice. A lot of times we would have code waves. We would have particular times to report back. If Colonel Reeves had went to Kaneohe . . . we were building the Naval Air Station at that time. We had a lot of men over there. We were back and forth from Kaneohe to Schofield. We had to go through Honolulu, either over the Pali or around Diamond Head to get to it. Most of the time we'd go across the Pali. I'd have to get out away from the . . . if we were in Honolulu, I'd have to get away from the electric bus lines there, so I could transmit out and get away from the interference and transmit back to Schofield. So when we'd go out to Kaneohe, well, there wouldn't be any problem. I'd call back, and if there was any messages for the colonel, well, I would relay them to him and keep in contact with headquarters. The weeks prior to Saturday the 6th, I was with the colonel for most of the daylight hours.

Marcello: What did you do specifically on that Saturday of December 6, 1941? That's what I'm particularly interested in right now.

Boyer: I was off that day. We had . . . we were . . . well, we worked till noon. This is just one day that all of us had an invite to a big luau in Wahiawa. So I'd say about half our company went over. We went over in any type of transportation we could find. Well, actually, we had the car. We loaded it up and went over. I became acquainted with one girl that worked in the bakery at Schofield. She was a white girl from a white family that lived in Wahiawa. So this was an attraction for me to go to Wahiawa pretty frequently or any chance I got. I went over there more than I went to Honolulu. The only time I went to Honolulu would be when we'd make the trip around the island.

So this particular Saturday . . . well, prior to Saturday, she invited me to a luau with her, as a lot of women invited the other men to the luau. It was a big one. It went on practically all night. From all of the . . . there were a lot of parties in Wahiawa itself. This was in the central part of the island away from Honolulu or Pearl Harbor. We were about thirty-five miles by highway and about fifteen or twenty miles as the crow flies. We had to wind through

the mountains to get up there. There were several luaus given down in Waipahu. This is the major town of the sugar plantation. This is only about fifteen or twenty miles south of Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Okay, let's get back to the particular luau that you attended on that Saturday of December 6, 1941.

Boyer: Well, we all went in civilian clothes--Hawaiian shirts and all. We were just . . . everything was on the house. It didn't cost us a thing. They had dancing. They had the hula girls out. We danced with them. We danced the hula. This was out in the open, out among the coconut trees and palm trees. They had fresh pineapples. It was just . . . when they started passing the food around, we were just out of this world. We had a little sake over there, a lot of liquor. Anywhere you went, you had a glass in your hand.

Marcello: About how many servicemen from Schofield were attending this luau?

Boyer: Oh, gosh, I don't know. I would say from our outfit alone there were twenty-five or thirty men invited to the luau.

Marcello: In other words, there were probably several hundred people at least.

Boyer: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, what time did you leave the luau that night?

Boyer: It was . . . the carload that we took over . . . Robert Bryson brought one carload back around midnight and then returned. Then we were approximately one of the last ones to leave. This was the wee hours of the morning-- three or four o'clock.

Marcello: Okay, what was the condition of your buddies when they got back to the barracks that morning after having attended this luau?

Boyer: Well, they sobered up pretty quick. We didn't hit . . . they were all in a feeling that, "Well, I'm going to sack out all day tomorrow." This was their . . .

Marcello: Were a good many of them inebriated, would you say?

Boyer: Yes, sir. There were. This is one reason Robert came home around midnight. There were several of them over there getting kind of rambunctious and raising cane. They were making passes and flirtations with the girls, so we just rounded them rather than have the MP's come in and break up the whole works. So we went on and he brought a carload home. They sacked out as far as we know, and as far as I know. Then Robert came back and joined the crowd.

Personally, I didn't drink too terribly much, but I was feeling good. There was no doubt that. This

particular girl that I was with, I thought a lot of her at that time. I can remember back when we were . . . she was going to school. I'd meet her at school in the afternoon. Of course, I was on duty at night, so in the daytime . . . she'd ride a bicycle back up there. Well, I'd get a bicycle from the unit motor pool and go over and meet her at school and ride home with her and have supper with her, go to a show or something, and then come back. Well, this went on most during the fall of '41. Then the luau was there. Well, I stayed with her pretty much. I finally took her home about, I guess, 1:30 or two o'clock. This was not too very far from her house. We had luaus all over the island.

Marcello: In other words, like you mentioned, this wasn't the only one that was going on. There would have been other men from other bases attending these other luaus as well.

Boyer: True. There were so many invitations to the servicemen for luaus all through the area . . . and from the boys that were at Kaneohe. This is the big area where there were a lot of luaus going on.

Marcello: Okay, this more or less brings us up to Sunday, December 7. Again, I want you to run through your

routine as you remember on Sunday, December 7, from the time you woke up until all hell broke loose.

Boyer: Well, prior to Pearl Harbor I had my pack packed with a suit of clothes, a blanket, toilet articles--complete pack. It was sitting upside down on top of my wall locker. At approximately 7:30 or 7:45, we heard planes coming over, coming real low to the barracks.

Marcello: I assume you were still quite a bit drowsy at this time, since you had gotten in rather late.

Boyer: Definitely. And the windows in our barracks were of a high nature. Alright, I was in an upper bunk. I was right even with the base of the window where I could look right out. When this plane came over, it sounded like he was coming right in the barracks. So I just raised up and looked out the barracks and there it was--flying on back towards the back side of Schofield. Immediately, with no instruction whatsoever, I went to . . . I got in uniform.

Marcello: Did you realize at this point that it was a Japanese plane, or did you think it was some sort of a drill?

Boyer: Yes, I definitely saw the Japanese plane. I raised up just as he passed over our barracks, and I saw the red spot on the wing. When he came down he was strafing

the infantry barracks. He was going directly from our barracks toward the infantry barracks, and over the drill field. This is where I saw him. He was strafing the barracks of the infantry. I can't remember whether it was the 19th or the 21st Infantry next to us--I don't remember--but we had the three infantry regiments--19th, 21st, and 25th Infantry Regiments.

So immediately, everyone came up about the same time. It was just like he just raised all these guys out of their bed at one time, you know, like a pulley. He pulled them all out at one time.

Then the first sergeant came over the loud-speaker that Pearl Harbor was under attack. Everybody was to report to their stations. Immediately, we closed . . . we just reached up over the wall locker, slid out hands under the straps on our pack, and over our heads it went. We were in packs. We knocked the lock off the rifle rack. We got our particular rifle. There was no one in the supply room, so we cut the lock on the supply door. Each of us grabbed two or three bandoleers of ammunition and reported directly to our particular station--wherever.

Marcello: Where was your particular station?

Boyer: Mine was with the battalion headquarters. I was with Colonel Reeves.

Marcello: At this point how would you describe the reaction of the men? Was it one of panic? Professionalism? Perplexity? How would you describe the general reaction?

Boyer: In our particular squad room there was a little confusion, so to speak. They still really didn't know what was happening because there were several planes overhead. We had a couple of .30 calibers, a couple of .50's, down in the supply room. They immediately took those up on the roof and started protecting ourselves the best we could.

Marcello: How far was Colonel Reeves' headquarters from your barracks?

Boyer: Just across the street.

Marcello: Did you come under any particular fire when you went from your barracks over to Colonel Reeves' headquarters?

Boyer: No, because it was just enough to . . . just a . . . the entrance to the quadrangle . . . there was an entrance at each corner of the building. The street is only two cars wide. It was a very narrow street. I went in the back door of the building or battalion headquarters. It was on the end of one building where the mess hall was.

I went in the back door. The sergeant major was there. He told me to stand by, that the colonel was going toward Pearl Harbor. He was going to Aiea, is where we were headed. So I went on out to the command car. The driver of the command car was also . . . well, he was bunked at battalion headquarters. There was a small room in the back of battalion headquarters there where we had four bunks. I stayed over there once in awhile. If I felt the colonel was going to be out at night and I had to stay with him, well, I would just go on back and lay down on the bunks and go to sleep without going to the squad room and . . . the command car was approximately 100 yards from the front entrance of the battalion headquarters.

This is . . . then we were . . . at approximately nine o'clock or 9:30, after Schofield and Wheeler Field was . . . there was no more air activity over this area. It might have been ten o'clock or so--mid-morning, let's put it this way. All the air activity slacked off and then Colonel Reeves and myself and the driver, we went to Aiea. This was the main communication center of the island. It was adjacent to Pearl Harbor, Fort Kamehameha, Fort . . . all the military installations were just right along there in that area.

After staying there for a little while, well, we went up into the hills. There were roads that took us up the heights above Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. We stayed in communication with all of our company. Our radio was on all the time as to what was going on. We changed to the Hawaiian Department or Hawaiian headquarters channel to receive any messages that were on the radio.

Marcello: How much of the actual action itself did you see here at Schofield?

Boyer: I saw it from mid-way that morning. I saw four or five planes shot down from the .50 calibers that were on the roof. A lot of . . . we could see the smoke and areas all the way to Pearl Harbor because it climbed way up in the sky from the ships burning and such. Then we had . . . one dud came over and hit our barracks. It went through--I don't remember--either one or two floors and landed in the kitchen area in the mess hall.

Marcello: How close were you to this bombing and strafing?

Boyer: Oh, I was pretty close. Just prior to Colonel Reeves calling me to go back, I went back up to the squad room to . . . I don't know why I even went back up there, but there were a group of us standing on the front division

of our squad room which was separated by a scalloped wall where there were passageways through like a column. But it was curved--curved tops. The openings were curved tops. Then the front was screened. We were . . . there were rails across. We were all standing--I guess five or six of us.

There was a call from downstairs. We were on the third floor. There was a call from downstairs from either the first sergeant or someone down there. They hollered, "Take cover! We're being strafed!" This may sound very unreasonable, but two men were killed and one was injured of the group that was standing at this rail.

I went . . . as soon as I heard them holler, I went toward the wall lockers which was at one end of the room. Of course, at that time I weighed about 120 or 125 pounds. I was eighteen. This was just before my nineteenth birthday. I was frail or small for my age. I wasn't too heavy. I slid under the row of wall lockers. After this was all over--after it settled down--I was there and I couldn't get out. They had to come pick . . . four or five of them came and picked the wall lockers up. They were in sections. They had

to pick the wall lockers up and let me roll out from underneath. We had to . . . some of the men in the barracks took care of these two that were killed. The other one was immediately rushed to the hospital there at Schofield.

Marcello: What was the condition of the base in the aftermath of the attack? Describe what it looked like to you.

Boyer: Schofield barracks wasn't hit too hard other than strafing. They were after Wheeler Field more than Schofield. Schofield had concrete barracks throughout. They hit the upper end of Schofield where the field artillery and caissons were all located more than our end. It seemed like they hit Wheeler Field, bounced over, and got the back end of Schofield.

Marcello: I'm sure that there were all sorts of rumors floating around in the aftermath of the attack. What were some of the rumors that you particularly heard.

Boyer: Well, I wasn't around the men for about three days. I was with Colonel Reeves day and night. I wasn't with them. We ate, drank, slept in the command car where the radio was because Colonel Reeves was one of the men to start stringing barbed wire. We had already had this barbed wire in the warehouses that I mentioned.

We were at Rutgers. We were at Fort "Kam." We were at different locations where barbed wire was stored-- barbed wire and stakes. Waikiki Beach was one of the areas that was barb-wired. There was no entrance or exit through this barbed wire at all along Waikiki Beach and around Honolulu.

Marcello: In other words, apparently, all of this stringing of the barbed wire might have been a response to those rumors an invasion was imminent.

Boyer: It could be, yes. Then immediately within these three days, the three companies . . . our headquarters company stayed at Schofield. The other three companies-- Company A, Company B, Company C--were spread throughout the island. Company A was at Waianae on the southern edge of Oahu. This is an area where the Marines and all took practice landings and things of this nature from Pearl Harbor. There was a sandy beach. So A Company went out there, and B Company took over a Japanese school right in downtown Honolulu. C Company was on out at Kaneohe. They were supervising in conjunction with the infantry to string barbed wire around the complete island. The barbed wire would be anywhere from ten to twelve feet in diameter. It took a lot of men to put this up.

Marcello: I would assume that that evening of the attack that there were quite a few trigger-happy servicemen around. Could you hear sporadic small arms fire and this sort of thing?

Boyer: Yes, yes. Especially at Schofield there were . . . this was a black night. There were no lights, no moon, no nothing. You didn't hear anything say, "Halt!" or anything. Maybe a pair of long johns were hanging on a fence somewhere, well, it was full of holes the next morning (chuckle).

As I said, I was with the colonel. We didn't get back to Schofield for . . . we were out in the pineapple fields, mostly where we could see in great distance. We were above the areas where we could overlook Pearl Harbor and some of the areas. We stayed away from Schofield or any installations because of our radio communications.

Marcello: What sort of radio communication work were you doing here? What sort of function was this colonel performing?

Boyer: Directing the installation of barbed wire.

Marcello: I see. In the aftermath of the attack, how did your attitude toward the Japanese change?

Boyer: Well, I don't remember, really, my actual feelings toward them other than . . . of course, I hated them.

I kind of felt that "Well, we'll return the attack."
That's the way we all felt, generally.

Marcello: Did you blame any of your superior officers for the disaster that took place or anything of this nature? In other words, did you try to single out any scapegoats or anything of this sort?

Boyer: Not at that time, no. Through later avenues of communication and what have you, we found that they were lax in communication between the upper echelons on the island. Being with Colonel Reeves, myself, I personally heard the call from Diamond Head--the warning of aircraft. After the first wave hit . . . because he was . . . whoever it was was still on the air. We were on the island band, and we could hear everything that went on on the island. We had . . . everyone was on this particular band.

We stayed up in the hills and backroads above Honolulu in a safe portion where we could observe but still be in contact with all three companies, where we could go to the commanding officer and the operators at that point. You kept up with them as to their operations, where they were, where they had contacted with the next section of barbed wire being spread. It was just like you lay a highway across a . . .

Marcello: How many miles of barbed wire do you figure the three companies set up in the aftermath of the attack?

Boyer: The island is ninety miles in perimeter, so with the miles of barbed wire that was spread I have no idea because it was so entangled that it just emptied all the warehouses of all the barbed wire. It went to the extent of our supply of barbed wire around the island.