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Interview with
Jesse E. Pond, Jr.
December 6, 1974

Place of Interview: Anaheim, California
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
Terms of Use: Open
Approved: Jesse E. Pond
(Signature)
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Oral History Collection

Jesse Pond

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Anaheim, California Date: December 7, 1974

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Jesse Pond for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 7, 1974, in Anaheim, California. I am interviewing Mr. Pond in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the destroyer USS Chew at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Pond, to begin this interview, would you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. Just be very brief. 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. Pond: I was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1917, and was educated in St. Louis public schools until after my Naval service. Then I was educated at Menlo College, California. I graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1953.

Marcello: When did you enter the service?

Pond: I entered the service on April 25, 1940, as a member of the 37th Division, United States Naval Reserve, St. Louis.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service?

Pond: It's a fairly involved story, but I had attempted to enlist in the Finnish Army in 1939. I was refused because of my American citizenship. I felt it was a patriotic duty to become prepared for the war that was at that time going on in Europe.

Marcello: That's rather interesting. I must say that I've never run across anybody who had tried to volunteer in the Finnish Army. Why was it that you had wanted to volunteer for the Finnish Army?

Pond: Because of extreme opposition in the Midwest to communism and socialism and its forms of government. It's really a form of totalitarianism. Four of us tried to enlist in the Finnish Army. One of the boys was killed in the Philippines in the Marines. The third one enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was shot down in the Battle of Britain, but he recovered and was invalided from the RCAF. The fourth fellow enlisted in the United States Army. I don't know what happened to him. I did see him once in 1946.

Marcello: Why was it that you decided to enter the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of service?

Pond: Stupidity, really (chuckle).

Marcello: Could you explain that further?

Pond: No, I just really wanted to play basketball on a Naval Reserve basketball team as opposed to the National Guard, who didn't have a good basketball team. I did want the Naval preparedness. At the time I was a labor foreman in a very large foundry in St. Louis. I was an athlete. I played on their semi-pro baseball team. That's why I was hired at the foundry. They needed somebody in the outfield who could hit more than they needed a foreman.

That's the way it worked out. The Naval Reserve wanted some people on the basketball team, too. A man at the foundry was a chief quartermaster at the Naval Reserve. He said, "You'd better come down. Look what you'll learn with us." After this other affair with the Finnish chargé d'affaires, you know, it was a good idea to learn something. The St. Louis Naval Reserve had a submarine chaser there on the Mississippi, although I don't think they ever moved away from the dock. But we did engage in drills, and we had guns inside, that is, four-inch guns that we could practice with. We went through rifle training. We did get a fair amount of training. We played cops and robbers all over the place in uniform.

Marcello: When was it, then, that this particular reserve unit was activated?

Pond: December 11, 1940. We were called to active duty. Three divisions from St. Louis went to Pearl Harbor by way of San Diego, transferred by the Lexington. One division manned the USS Allen, another one manned the Schley and the third one manned the Chew. The USS Ward was the fourth ship in our division. This was the Destroyer Division 80. It was manned by a reserve division from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Not manned entirely. Let's explain this. We brought a couple of officers along and a couple of petty officers, but the majority were just like myself. I was a fireman third class, which was one jump above apprentice seaman. I was a fireman third class and was put in the engine room immediately because of my experience as a foundry worker, foundry foreman.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going to the Hawaiian Islands? Were you looking forward to duty in that particular area?

Pond: We had many thoughts about that, that is, the fellows that belonged. Some of the fellows thought the Hawaiian Islands would be good. We had some married men who didn't like the Hawaiian Islands because you couldn't move your

wives around. But as a single man, we didn't mind it at all until we got there and discovered the discrepancy between our thirty-six dollars a month pay and how much it cost for liberty in Honolulu.

Marcello: Now from what you've said up to this point . . . incidentally, we'll come back and talk about your liberty and social life and this sort of thing a little bit later on. From what you've said at this point, you really haven't mentioned any formal boot training as such. Did you or did you not receive any, or was most of your training on-the-job training aboard that destroyer?

Pond: No, we had so-called "boot training" in St. Louis in the Naval Reserve in a period between April and December when we were called up. We were called up as part of the national emergency, so we had more than the equivalent of boot training. We were all proficient in the military portion, which you get in boot training anyhow. We all had gone through . . . every one of us were young and in good condition. We did have a couple of pretty old fellows in the crowd.

Marcello: Describe what the USS Chew was like. Now this is the destroyer that you were serving aboard.

Pond: I can remember the first time I saw the Chew very well. We came from the Lexington in large boats . . . Lexington

tied up at the aircraft carrier docks over where the Utah was sunk. It was tied up over there at . . . I think it was berth eleven. We came around the end of Ford Island in launches, and there were two destroyers at the end of Baker Six Dock. They were leaning against each other and leaning on the dock. They were covered with rust. Somebody said, "That's the Chew," and we all went "Uhhhhhh" (sound). I think the other one at that time was the Schley. These destroyers had been in "Red Lead Row" in San Deigo. The Chew was de-commissioned, I believe, in 1922. It was launched in 1917. It got into the North Atlantic at the end of World War I. The Allen was older. The Allen was a broken-decker.

Marcello: A broken-decker?

Pond: Yes. There were flush-deck destroyers and broken-deckers. The Allen was the only broken-decker left. I have a painting of her on my office wall--a copy of a painting. The original's owned by the Naval Academy. They had a break in the deck on the Allen. The Allen was smaller. It was 960 tons. We were 1,090, I believe. The four-stackers varied. The later ones got heavier. They got up to about 1,200 tons.

But the Chew, when we got aboard it, had only been out of "Red Lead Row" a short period of time. It still had grease all over the engine room. It had barely made it to Honolulu from San Diego. It was manned by a regular Navy make-up crew. When the eighty of us reported aboard, eighty regulars left. When we went aboard that day, there were about twenty-five or thirty regular Navy men aboard, including a sprinkling of fleet reserves who were called back who had gone out on twelve, sixteen, twenty, and twenty-four years. So we had quite a crew. We had a bunch of gray-haired old men and a bunch of young reserves. An interesting side-light is that I met the commanding officer, Commander Beck, who is now . . . he was Lieutenant Commander Beck at that time and is now Retired Admiral Beck. In 1971 at a Honolulu reunion, he told my wife what a wonderful job the reserves did in grabbing hold of the ship and making it a place to live, which we did.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get this destroyer back into such a condition that it would be able to operate with some degree of efficiency or effectiveness?

Pond: We went through several Navy Yard overhauls with that thing, and it was never what you would call a first line fighting ship. It always had a problem. I spent the

first year on board her as a fireman. I was a fireman third class, and I was standing a machinist's mate first class's watch as a throttleman within thirty days. I was still seasick and standing watches with a bucket between my feet. We stood the watches. That thing had no ventilators in the crew's compartment, so we went to the hulk of the Baltimore which we tied up next to, and we stole air vent lines from it, and we ran ventilation systems around. We did everything we could to make the thing liveable, the black gang and the deck force. We had all kinds of work that had to be done. It had to be painted. Machinery had to be repaired. The evaporators on that thing were a problem; the condensers were a problem; the main feed pumps were a problem. The boilers had all been rebuilt, so they weren't too bad. But the blowers in the fire rooms were a problem. Anything mechanical was a problem. We had no freezer aboard, so we had no way of getting a cool drink. So you drank hot coffee or nothing. You had your choice. Our rations was a bucket of water a day. You had to wash . . . I can't tell you exactly what we said, but you washed your socks first and your other parts later (chuckle).

Marcello: Why was it that the government was putting such a ship back into commission again?

Pond: Well, the government needed anti-submarine patrols in the Pacific. As a sidelight, the Chew had been offered to the British as part of the fifty-ship destroyer deal. The British turned it down; it was too bad for them. So I ended up three and a half years on it. But the government needed hulls, and the fastest way to get hulls in the sea was to put everything back into commission that was in "Red Lead Row." They got everything out. The Ward was the last ship out. It was after the Chew. There was supposed to be one more beyond the Ward as it was pulled. I'm not positive. The last one became a water barge because there wasn't enough good machinery to make a destroyer out of it.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the Chew was made up primarily of reserves, and at the same time you mentioned that there was a certain percentage of regular Navy personnel that remained aboard that ship. What sort of relationship existed between the reserves and the regular Navy personnel?

Pond: Oh, originally, there was quite a bit of rivalry. We were always called the "_____ (expletive deleted) reserves," and we always called them the "_____

(expletive deleted) regulars." We had a fair amount of animosity at first, but I would say that within the period of a year, especially after the war started, our crew was a good crew.

Marcello: How would you describe the training that you received aboard that ship? I would gather that you received a great deal of on-the-job training there.

Pond: Well, let me illustrate. We made a run to Hilo--a night run to Hilo--in which time the fleet reserve machinist's mate who stood the watch with me passed out from the heat because our main generators in the engine room that I was standing watch in kept breaking down. The trips kept breaking down. This man, who was my . . . they called him my "Sea Daddy." He was forty years old, and I was twenty-two. He taught me everything about the engine room so that we could get around it in the dark. Siegler just couldn't do it. He couldn't get that thing running anymore. We had to carry him up topside. It was a very rough and stormy trip. It was a bad trip. I had never reset the trips on the generator before in the dark. You're up there with an open switchboard behind you with knifeblade switches. When the thing started going and you threw the switch, there was a big spark. If you had keys

swinging around, if they swung back in there, you'd get a jolt. But I set the trips and we made it. That was the last time, by the way, that I was ever seasick. That storm and that trip ended . . . I was never seasick again. So I guess it is partly psychosomatic--the fact that your stomach keeps coming up. That was, I would say, about in June of '41.

Marcello: How would you describe the morale aboard the USS Chew during that pre-Pearl Harbor period.

Pond: During the pre-Pearl Harbor period there was some fellows--naturally in every group--there were some chronic complainers on the part of both the regular Navy and the reserves. There were some of the reserves that were unhappy because they were called up to active duty. There were some unhappy because they didn't have their wives with them. There were two or three of them that complained because of the amount of differential between what they had made and what they were making. I don't know. I kept myself busy. When we weren't working, I was on either the baseball team or the basketball team. We were doing something. I had a new car before I went into the Navy, and I had to sell it. But that's the way it goes. We also had regular Navy men that complained because they were on an old, second-line destroyer.

They didn't like the hard work. We had no ice cream. We weren't like a battleship or an aircraft carrier. We had plenty of coffee and plenty of stews, but we didn't get much cake or much fresh bread or anything like that. We had some of the fleet reserves complaining that they had been called back to active duty, and they weren't happy either. We used to call them the "metallic men." They had silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, and lead in their butt. But that wasn't fair. Some of them just . . . you're going to have complainers. After, as I said, the passage of about a year, we had a good crew. Some of the malcontents had gotten out. They got rid of some of the bad fellows from the regular Navy. We had a good working crew. There was always the rivalry between the deck force and the black gang, which is normal on every ship. But I would put that crew, man-for-man, against any crew in the Navy.

Marcello: How do you explain the fact that as time went on the morale did more or less reach a high peak and become very, very good?

Pond: Well, getting rid of the complainers made a lot of difference. There were two or three bad apples who'd do it. We were all busy. I know we had a couple of

fellows in the regular Navy that . . . their enlistment was up. They could not be discharged. This is about the time that the Army was having this "OHIO" affair. They called it "Over the Hill in October." We had a couple of fellows that were supposed to be discharged, and they couldn't get back to the States to get discharged. They were kind of unhappy. I know that one of them was later killed in the war because he did re-enlist. He was a pretty good fellow. Just working together, everybody developed a spirit that just wouldn't quit.

Marcello: What sort of training did you actually undertake here at Pearl Harbor after you finally got the USS Chew back into shape once again?

Pond: We didn't have much time for anything. I know we were out at sea in a couple of days after we were aboard the thing. As soon as we fueled, we were gone.

Marcello: What sort of a routine took place when you went to sea?

Pond: Then we had an immediate schedule. The whole division was under Commander Edwin Fullenwider. I just talked to him within the last six months. He's retired and moved to Florida, as an admiral, naturally. Fullenwider had put the four ships in the division under a heavy training

course. We were at sea just as long as we could be at sea. We did training exercises; we fired at . . . we had gunnery exercises. We had daily drills, continuous drills, unannounced drills, unrehearsed drills, fire drills, collision drills. This was a daily occurrence. We then, after a period of about six months, went on to a patrol duty which ran from around the islands, back around the Hawaiian Islands. We did certain types of escort duty. But they were continually squeezing in exercises.

I know that sometime in the middle of the summer . . . we had two guns . . . we had four four-inch guns and one three-inch gun. Of the four four-inch guns, one of them was manned by the black gang--the one up on the galley deckhouse. The three-inch gun up on the forecastle--we called it the peashooter because it was a little thing--I was a pointer on that. That was manned by the engineers. Sometime about in June we went to shoot at a balloon with that thing. They let loose a balloon, and we fired at it. (Chuckle) I remember Captain Beck looking over the wing of the bridge and saying, "Well, something else works." He didn't know whether the damn gun would fire or blow up. It could elevate to ninety degrees. It was quite a gun. One man was the pointer

and trainer. You'd swing it around at your shoulder. It had a trigger and it had sights, adjustable metal sights. You had a gun captain who opened and closed the breech, and a loader and a hot shellman and a couple of fuse setters because it fired fixed ammunition with a fuse. It was a very primitive antiaircraft gun. It could fire from half a second fuse up to about ten seconds. After ten seconds the projectile was falling back down again. It was about a two thousand foot per second projectile, not a modern gun by any means (chuckle).

Marcello: When you went out to sea, I would assume that it was strictly a destroyer division that went out. In other words, you were not actually working with any of the battleships or the cruisers or anything of that nature.

Pond: We did screening for them. Normally, they kept us away because they had their own destroyer divisions and squadrons that were supposed to do the screening for them. Later in the war, we did a helluva lot of work with them. We were assigned with escort carriers to do patrol work. But, normally, we were on the escort or the patrol duty job. That was our job--to patrol and do inner-island escort. We were attached to the COM

Fourteen, so we didn't have too much to do with the battleships except to sneer at them (chuckle).

Marcello: You might explain what you mean by that.

Pond: Well, after you're on a four-piper for awhile, you feel you can spit in anyone's eye because when you go to sea and nobody stands up without hanging on with two hands. When you sit down at the table you grab everything, and you hold onto your coffee cup, and you hold onto your plate. Then you see a battleship sailor and he's walking along as if he's on the sidewalk. Four-piper sailors . . . you talk to any of the survivors around here. Four-piper sailors have a certain feeling toward one another. If you've been to sea on one of those things and the weather gets rough, you know what to do if the weather gets rough.

Marcello: In other words, what you're saying in effect is that there was a great deal of esprit de corps as time went on among the sailors who managed to be serving on these four-pipers.

Pond: That's right. When we'd see a fellow, we'd ask him, "What ship are you on, Mack?" We'd talk back and forth. If he said he was on the Breese or the Montgomery or something like that, he was higher up in our estimation

than if he said he was off an aircraft carrier. The worst, I guess, in our opinion were the battleship sailors. We called them "gedunk" sailors, "gedunk" meaning ice cream.

Marcello: Okay, when you went out on these exercises, generally how long would you stay out in terms of time?

Pond: A week, sometimes two weeks.

Marcello: Normally, would you go out, let's say, on a Monday and come back on a Friday, or two weeks later come back on a Friday or something of that nature?

Pond: Just going by memory, I would say that our patrol duties usually lasted about a week, and another ship would relieve us for about a week. Usually, we were relieved on Saturday. I know we didn't have too fixed a schedule on this because the Ward, whenever it went to relieve us, it'd break down (chuckle). And the Schley would run aground or something like that. So we'd stay on an extra couple of days. But on December 6, the Ward did relieve us that Saturday morning on time, and we went into Pearl.

Marcello: Okay, generally speaking, if you were out at sea for a week at a time and you came back in, what sort of liberty would you receive?

Pond: At the start, we got one out of four liberty.

Marcello: Now what exactly does that mean when you say you got one out of four?

Pond: We had four sections--four duty sections--on the ship. One was left off. Then it was changed to one out of three. There were three divisions. The four didn't last long. So one-third of the ship could be away. Then, somehow or another--I'm a little confused now exactly how this went--we were split to about a duty section and a liberty section and a standby section under the three. The liberty section naturally was allowed to go ashore. Because we were attached to COM Fourteen, they could stay in until . . . they had to be at muster at eight o'clock. The standby section could get permission to go over to the Navy Yard to go to church services and things like that. They could get away. Even the duty section, if they got somebody to take his place, could leave to go to church. The duty section always had to stick around except in the black gang. In the black gang no liberty started for anyone until the ship was fueled, or until . . . in our case, usually, the damn evaporators were chipped and repaired and put back together again, or if we had to do some boiler work in the fire room, the fire gang

stuck around. No liberty started for anybody in the black gang until we had that thing ready to go to sea again.

Marcello: There is something interesting you mentioned here awhile ago. I do know that on a great many of the ships when there was liberty, the sailors had to be back aboard by midnight. But that wasn't the case with the Chew?

Pond: No, we were attached to COM Fourteen. We were allowed to stay overnight. That was until the war started and the curfew and the blackouts and all of that.

Marcello: Generally speaking, when did you get paid?

Pond: Once a month.

Marcello: Once a month.

Pond: We would have notice. We would have to get paid in port. We never got paid at sea. Whenever it was scheduled, it was sometime around the first of the month when we were in port. The paymaster would come aboard, and they would post our pay list, and we knew how much money we had coming. You could draw all of it or part of it, and they would keep the rest of it on the books for you.

Marcello: Now when you went on liberty after having been at sea for a week or two weeks at a time, what sort of a liberty routine did you personally follow?

Pond: Well, my personal routine was probably different. We naturally hit every place we could hit in Honolulu when

we first got there. We sightsaw and looked all over the place. But then a few of us discovered that we really didn't care for the bright spots in Honolulu and their watery drinks. We would hitchhike or take a bus and go to the other side of the island. We'd go up at least to Pearl City or go over to the Kaneohe side. We found less crowding and less military people over there. Once we got away from Pearl Harbor, we could take off our whites and wear dungarees and carry our whites rolled up. This gave us more chance to swim. The beaches were better on the other side of the island. The people were friendlier. The natives weren't as restless over there (chuckle).

Marcello: I understand that when the fleet was in on a weekend that the streets of downtown Honolulu were simply overflowing with sailors. There were long lines to get in every place, whether it be a brothel, barroom, or whatever it might be.

Pond: Well, Hotel Street was wall-to-wall sailors when the fleet came out there in about July. Whenever the fleet gave liberty to everyone, that's when Honolulu jammed up. The Oahu railway ran--I think it was--a twenty-five-cent or a ten-cent trip into town. The buses, the jitnies, everything was just jammed. I remember sometime in--just to take a guess--August, there was a letter to the editor

that just boiled us. Somebody had mentioned that Waikiki Beach was infested with white uniforms. Some civilian had written this letter to the editor and was complaining. Most of us didn't care especially for that because we knew what we were out there for. It was fairly obvious what was going on and what would soon be happening. We just didn't like the fact that the civilians didn't think much of us at that time.

Marcello: Generally speaking, when the crew of the Chew came back off liberty--let's say on a Saturday evening--what sort of condition would they be in? That's perhaps an unfair question to ask, but I'll ask it anyhow.

Pond: Oh, that's a fair question. It depends on the fellow. We would have some fellows that would be brought back soggy within an hour after they left the ship. We'd have other fellows that'd come back the next morning . . . after awhile, when they got their wives over, they almost were like workingmen. They went home and saw their wives and came back and . . . no problem. Later in the war we got a bunch of the so-called selective service volunteers who had the draft looking at them. They volunteered in the Navy first. We got a bunch of kids, eighteen-year-olds, who joined up in a hurry. As soon as they'd get the white hat on, they'd become a

real "salt." The first couple of times they'd get over, they'd get drunk and get hauled back by the shore patrol. Some of the fellows would only do that once and that was it. They didn't want to wake up with a head like that. Other fellows just didn't stop.

Marcello: Well, what I was leading up to is that many people assume that on a Saturday night this would be a time of drunken debauchery and orgies for the crewmen in Honolulu or around Pearl Harbor. Consequently, these individuals would not be in any shape to fight on a Sunday morning.

Pond: I would reject that out of hand as a generality. We had drunks; we had fellows that weren't worth a damn when they came back. They wouldn't be for awhile. They'd come back and their head hurt. Their eyes were red. But, generally, no. I would say they were in no more majority than they are in the average population today.

I know that I never came back that way. I know I had drinks on the beach. I know that I raised hell once in awhile. We got into fights and just what normal, healthy, young men do when they're out. We would get into ball games. We took off . . . I took off an awful

lot of steam in the baseball and basketball part of it. Later, I was the basketball captain and coach. I got all sorts of privileges by arranging games all over the island with our basketball team because this was when the war was going on, late in the war out there. We had a damn good basketball team on that ship. We had a little All-American football player as an ensign with us, and he was a good basketball player. So I had a lot of extra privileges by being sort of unofficial athletic director. There was no such animal on a destroyer, and I knew everybody at Hickam Field--the officers that were in charge of the games and at the section base--and at Fort DeRussy. We did everything but go to Schofield. We had an arrangement with the Honolulu laundry that I could use their truck to transport our team. We'd go down to Hickam, and anytime we got in we'd play basketball with Hickam.

Marcello: Well, what you've said about the condition of the men coming back aboard the ship on a Saturday night more or less confirms what just about every other person that I've interviewed has had to say on the subject, also. It was not normally a night of drunken debauchery for the vast majority of the sailors.

Pond: No, you'd have a songbird come back once in awhile singing and raising hell. The worst ones in our group, really, were two or three of the fleet reserves that had been called back. These people--the two or three of them that I can remember--I imagine they've long since passed to their reward. They were merchant sailors . . . they just weren't very good people anyhow. But they would come back and sleep in their bunk. We didn't bother them, and they didn't bother us.

Marcello: Well, as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, did your training routine change dramatically in any way?

Pond: No dramatic change because we were fairly busy anyhow. The idea was to get the ship into fighting trim. I would say that we were in fighting trim prior to December 7. Everyone knew his job, and everyone was fairly proficient in his duties. We had no recruits aboard. We had all been together for a year by December 7. I think we went aboard the Chew in January, '41. We had been on that thing for a year with very few changes--a minor change where a few men would leave and a few men would come on. We had replacements from

the regular Navy replacing the . . . like a reserve that would be waived. I remember one boy was waived because of his sight. They sent him back to St. Louis. He was replaced by a regular Navy man. So we didn't have a problem that way. I would say that we could stand our watches and do our job with no problem at all. We weren't rookies or greenhorns anymore. In fact, I know I'd gone up a notch or so. I think I was a fireman second class. That was a big deal. That was equivalent of seaman first class at that time.

Marcello: Well, that was really a big deal because rank came so slow, for one thing, in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy, did it not?

Pond: Yes, someone had to get out of the Navy before you could go up, really. And I know that we had two openings for firemen first class, and nine fellows took the exam in the old division. The two fellows that made it were on our ship--on the Chew. I don't recall who the other fellow was who made it other than myself. But we made fireman first class, and that was a big deal, you know, because I think we jumped to about fifty-four dollars a month (chuckle).

Marcello: At that particular time as a young sailor, how closely were you keeping abreast with world events?

Pond: Well, fairly close, I would say. Myself, maybe more than the average. I read the newspapers, the Honolulu Advertiser, and I think I read the front page right after the sports page and ahead of the funny papers. Usually, people read the funny papers first and then the sports page and never the front. We did listen to a couple of stateside broadcasts. I don't remember who the announcers were anymore. I think Gabriel Heater was one. But I'm not sure. We could pick them up. Some of the fellows had portable radios that were battery-operated, and they were about the size of a suitcase. They had a speaker with a sailing ship, that is, a sloop outlined in stitches on it. I remember that type of radio. There were three or four of them. We'd get up on the after deckhouse at night and listen to the "Hit Parade." These were broadcasts from San Francisco or Los Angeles. We'd listen to, I think, Gabriel Heater and a couple of other news broadcasters. I'm not sure if Bob Trout was on. I may be a little confused, but I'm sure he was on it. He was a California broadcaster. I'm not sure if he was on at that time or not from a Los Angeles station. We listened because the war in Europe was pretty bad.

Marcello: When you thought of war, were your eyes turned basically toward Europe rather than toward the Far East, or by this

time did you and your buddies foresee the possibility of war with the Japanese?

Pond: Oh, I think we foresaw the fight with the Japanese on our ship probably more than some of the others because we had several fellows who had done China service with us. We had a first class boatswain's mate whose name was Scullin--Pat Scullin--who was a regular Navy first class boatswain's mate, a big, heavy fellow with dark eyebrows. He was on the gunboat behind the Panay when it was sunk. We had Dan McGrew whose nickname was, of course, "Dangerous Dan." He was a watertender. There was Carl Hoffman, a watertender. They'd all done China service. They all knew what the Japanese Navy was like, how aggressive it was. The Japanese were at that time fighting in China. We knew that the Japanese were coming, that is, we did on our ship. I don't know anything about anybody else.

Marcello: What do you mean when you say that you knew the Japanese were coming?

Pond: Not coming to Pearl Harbor, no. Nobody knew that, that is, at least among us. We knew that the fight or the face-off was coming. They were committing too many aggressive acts throughout China and Asia, but not eventually that we were going to have to face them up. We

knew about their navy because of these fellows that had had contact with the Japanese in the Orient and the Asiatic Fleet.

Marcello: When these old China hands talked about the Japanese Navy, how did they evaluate it? In other words, did they recognize it as being a very good navy, or just exactly what was their opinion of the Japanese Navy?

Pond: Most of them thought the Japanese were sort of a good mechanical navy, that is, they had fast destroyers. Well, anytime you talked about the Japanese Navy, it always seems to me that they said "fast" in front of their destroyers. Japanese Navy was always hard working, and they stood long watches, and they were always good sailors, which is true. The Japanese are very good sailors, always have been.

Marcello: Well, of course, there's no question about it. We know now that that Japanese Navy was probably the best in the world, really, at the outbreak of World War II. It never got any better after the war started, I don't think, but they had a fine navy at the beginning of World War II.

Pond: It was a fine navy. They had a fine air force. I don't know exactly how to put this, but ours was better. In a face-off we would have been better, even with the Chew in there (chuckle).

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

Pond: All the Japanese that I knew were hard-working, industrious, very serious people. Very amenable to discipline. In other words, if the Japanese were told to march up the wall, they would march up the wall. The only ones that I had had contact with in Honolulu were businessmen or servants. Both of them . . . well, you know what's happened to Honolulu in politics. The Japanese have moved along. You know what the Rainbow Division was like? They're good, organized people. They work hard.

Marcello: Okay, I think this more or less brings us up to the days immediately prior to Pearl Harbor. What I want you to do at this time is to give me in as much detail as you can remember exactly what your routine was on Saturday, December 6, 1941, and then from that point we'll talk about Sunday, December 7, 1941. Let's start with December 6, and let's go into as much detail as you can remember for that particular day.

Pond: On the week preceding Saturday, December 6, we were on offshore patrol, which meant we circled the island of Oahu, and we kept mainly on the side to observe the

approaches to Pearl Harbor. Our sonar was always in effect to guard against submarine infiltration. I'm not sure if we had a radar at that time or not. That's a little hazy in my mind because I was in the black gang and I wouldn't know. But I don't think we had a radar on board. Radar was fairly new then.

But our routine was to patrol, and we would get pretty far away from land. We did not steam in a straight line. We had a certain sector which the captain was assigned to guard and patrol. Sometimes we'd have two ships in there. We would go back and forth and zig and zag and move around. Then, on December 6, we were to be relieved by the Ward. So we got close to the entrance of Pearl Harbor because the other ship would have to come out of the gate, and as they passed the gate, they would signal to us, "We are relieving you," and then we would pass the message back to them, and then we'd enter Pearl. We'd station all special sea details and in we'd go.

Marcello: Now while you were out at sea during this particular period, did you ever notice anything out of the ordinary? In other words, were there ever any submarine sightings or anything of this nature that you can recall?

Pond: Not a one. Not a one. I don't believe we touched anything at that time. It was soon to change. But we didn't touch anything.

Marcello: Okay, so you came in on that Saturday of December 6,
and this is when you were relieved by the Ward.

Pond: Yes.

Marcello: Now what time was it that the Ward relieved you?

Pond: I would say probably ten o'clock in the morning.

Marcello: Ten o'clock in the morning. Okay, pick up the story
from that point. You're at the entrance of Pearl
Harbor, and you've been relieved by the Ward.

Pond: So we come in through the gates, and we get a berthing
assignment from the main water tower, which turned out
to be Berth Baker Six. So we went in past Battleship
Row, and the whole fleet was in there. I know there
were some . . . I don't know how long the fleet had
been there, but there were remarks made that, you know,
the fleet was there, so Honolulu was going to be jammed
and the usual complaints that a fellow would make with-
out really complaining.

Marcello: Normally, was the entire battleship fleet in there on a
weekend?

Pond: At that time they used to make it. They'd come in every
weekend. They'd go out and have exercises and go back in,
but they tried to get in by the weekend. We felt pretty
good because we were going in on a weekend. With our
schedule, sometimes you wouldn't go in on a weekend. You'd

be out for a week, and you'd come in for sometimes two or three days, and you'd go out again. Sometimes you'd stay in for what they called an "upkeep period" which was two weeks. The majority of time you were in for just a short period of time, unless you needed some sort of Navy Yard type of repair, which the captain would have to get permission to stay, and they'd schedule him into the Navy Yard.

But I know we went in. I didn't see anything on the sixth, because my job was on throttle in the number two engine room. I had to answer the bells and adjust the speed of the screw that the number two engine room controlled. All I knew was that we were going in, and somebody said that we were going out to Baker Six, which was out around the back of the Arizona, the first berth behind Ford Island. Baker Six was the old ex-cruiser Baltimore, which had been in Dewey's White Fleet and had been converted to a minelayer for World War I. That hulk was there. We went to tie up alongside of that, but the Allen was there. The Allen had been in longer. When you tied up at X-Ray Six, you steamed on auxiliary power. You were not hooked to anything on shore. You were just tied up . . .

Marcello: X-Ray Six?

Pond: That's what it was known as--X-Ray Six. We tied up outboard of the Allen. Both of us were bow end to Ford Island.

Marcello: Did you call it Berth Baker Six awhile ago?

Pond: No, Baker Six was different. Baker Six was a berth in the Navy Yard.

Marcello: I see.

Pond: That was over by the marine railway. That was on the inside of Ten-ten (1010) Dock. Ten-ten Dock was called Ten-ten because it was supposed to be 1,010 feet long. Until we secured, we in the engine room didn't know where we were, actually. So I stuck my head up, and I found out that there we were.

We went up topside and cleaned up, and I had the duty for the weekend, so I had to stay aboard, and we converted from sea steaming details to auxiliary steaming. We had one broiler fire that we kept on, and the crew in the fire room--a small crew--and we had two men on duty in the engine room. One maintained a broiler and kept everything going--the pumps running, that is--in the engine room, the feed pumps. The second man in the engine room manned the evaporators. My turn was to be on the evaporators, which was not too bad. We would stand a four-hour watch and then eight hours off for the

entire duty section. We'd swap the next day, and we could go ashore.

I'm not sure when, if any, time I had to go ashore. I know I had the duty on the seventh. I don't know how long we were scheduled to be in, but I would imagine it was a two-day stay, something like that. We'd go in and they'd send a launch into the beach and get foodstores, or whatever they needed in the line of stores. The storekeeper would make a stores trip and go in and bring stuff.

So we went in on a Saturday and we had normal port routine--doing things that we couldn't do at sea, cleaning up, usually scraping some bilges. We didn't sit around and play cards until after working hours. Then we had a little casino going around that place once in awhile, especially on payday. But that was the whole routine on the sixth. I know we had a movie aboard.

Marcello: Just out of curiosity, can you recall the title of the movie that was showing?

Pond: I can't because I know that we had a movie projectionist, an electrician's mate named Sam Curtin, and that I had a standing bet with Sam that if he showed a movie that had a horse in it, he owed me a quarter. If he could sneak

the thing through . . . if there was a horse in the movie and I didn't call it to his attention, he didn't owe me a quarter. So I didn't go to the movies if I didn't like them. I would go down to the ship's library and read a book or study something or do anything rather than watch a bum movie. We had some gems in those days (chuckle). We got Class D's once in awhile. But we had a standing bet, and it's now still a saying in our family. When there's a movie or something on television, we'll say, "There's a horse, Sam."

Marcello: What time did you turn in that night?

Pond: I had the watch from four o'clock to eight o'clock on the seventh, so I must have turned in early because I had to get up. We relieved at . . . I relieved at 3:45.

Marcello: Do you recall anything out of the ordinary happening that particular night, that is, any drunken or loud sailors coming back aboard ship or anything of this nature?

Pond: Not a thing.

Marcello: Was it a pretty routine evening?

Pond: It was routine, calm, nothing out of the ordinary. Everybody that could get ashore went because after you'd been at sea for two weeks on the Chew, you were damn glad to get around and walk on the docks. If you had the standby

duty, you always found an excuse to go over to the Navy Yard, even if it was just to drink some Navy Yard coffee or eat one of their terrible sandwiches-- just to get off the ship and walk around a little bit--or go play ball or go to the Tin Roof, which was out there opposite Baker Six and the marine railway. The Tin Room was a place you could get a ten-cent glass of beer.

Marcello: It was called the Tin Roof?

Pond: Because it had a Tin Roof (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so this more or less leads us in, then, to the morning of December 7, 1941, and as you mentioned awhile ago, you had the watch from four o'clock to eight o'clock in the morning. So pick up the story from that point, that is, from the time that you went on watch.

Pond: Okay, we had a routine where I was on the evaporators, and the only job I had was to keep pumping water. We'd evaporate water by steam process through three stages, test it, and then pump it into the fresh water tanks. Every tank had to be tested for salinity because if you had saline water in your boilers, boom! So this was a very, very monotonous and boring watch because you'd sit there and watch this water go plump, plump, plump

(sound), into the tank until it was filled. Then you'd switch to fill the other one and test this one and pump it away. But with what we called watchstander's courtesy, I was relieved at 7:45 a.m. by a skinny fellow named Ozzie Gray, whose nickname was "Slopshoot" because he ate like a slopshoot. He had an appetite. That boy just ate, and there was no quitting. But he was a real skinny guy. Ozzie relieved me at a quarter till eight, and I went topside and stood up there and stretched and yawned. It was a beautiful day.

Marcello: By beautiful day you're speaking in terms of climate.

Pond: Yes, climate. Oh, it was a beautiful day. There was high clouds, which I imagine the Japanese appreciated. It hadn't rained. There was usually a little rain squall that came through there. There was no rain squall.

I stood there and I stretched and I felt good. I didn't know exactly what I was going to do. The church party had left. They were gone. I think the Pennsylvania was holding church services. So the only people aboard were the duty section. The captain was Henry Hummer, and he was ashore. He's retired now and living in Florida.

Marcello: I would assume a great many of the officers were probably ashore when the Chew came in.

Pond: I forgot something. Henry Hummer had just taken command of the Chew either the sixth or the week before from

Edward Beck. He had just taken command, so he was brand, spanking new. Hummer was ashore. He went ashore. I think his wife was in Honolulu. He had come from the cruiser Indianapolis. He'd been gunnery officer, and he came over. I think this was his first command. Henry Hummer was well-liked by the crew. He was a going concern. He smoked a cigar and we could tell how mad he was when he threw his cigar on the deck by how high it bounced. We kind of liked Henry Hummer. We found out after he left that all the officers were frightened to death of him because he had said . . . after the seventh, he called us to quarters and said that if he caught a submarine on the surface, he'd ram it all the way up to the bridge. We didn't mind that especially. We liked a captain that talked like that. But I understand the junior officers would tremble in their boots. But Hummer was ashore. I got away from the story. Hummer was ashore.

The man in charge was the executive officer who was a lieutenant, a Naval Academy graduate who had gone into the reserves and had been called back about the same time we came aboard. He came aboard the Chew after we did. He was the senior officer aboard. There were a couple of junior ensigns aboard. There is no such rate. By junior, I mean they were young men. There were a couple of them

aboard. The engineering officer was not aboard. We had several chiefs aboard. We had a very short crew.

To go back to when I was standing on the deck from the after engine room, I stood and talked to someone for a couple of minutes. The mess cook went by saying, "If you want your chow, you'd better get down there and eat because I'll bring it right down." The mess cook passed me on his way to the galley going forward.

I turned and saw an airplane coming down. I watched the plane coming through the clouds, and he was on his way down. I paid no attention to it. I thought it was one of Halsey's planes. It had to be the first plane of the Japs. I turned and stepped into the hatch to go down to the mess compartment. The way you went into the mess compartment when you felt the way I did, you put your hands on the brass rail and slid and let your feet hit the deck as hard as you could because there were fellows down there asleep. I went down there and hit the bottom with a crash, and just as I hit, there was the damndest explosion you ever heard! It was topside. The only thing I could think of was, "That damn fool in that plane accidentally dropped his bomb, and is he going to catch hell!" I turned around to the mess table, and there was another one!

Marcello: Another explosion?

Pond: Another explosion! I didn't know what was going on. I stopped there for a second, and the mess cook stuck his head in the hatch up above us. He was white as a sheet. He said, "The Japs are here, and that is no crap!" So zoom! I took off. I had taken my shirt off, and all I had on was a pair of dungarees and a pair of shoes.

Marcello: How would you describe your original reaction?

Pond: Absolutely incredulous! At first I thought, you know, that it was an accident because that was the thing that you thought of. Everytime the carriers came in, the fly boys always came in and buzzed the field. They did it after the war started until so many of them crashed that they made them stop. They came in and tried to see who could be the most daring guy. I thought that's what it was because they would come in and buzz the ships and buzz the harbor and do all sorts of damn fool stunts. But then this fellow yelled down. He said, "Those are the Japs, and that's no crap!"

I started up the ladder and about that time the general alarm went off. Gene Lindsey was on the bridge. He was quartermaster, and he hit the general alarm. By that time we got topside . . . now you have to look at the four-pipers. But from the after deckhouse all the

way to the forecastle, we were covered with a heavy canvas awning which was lashed in place. It was held to steel cables by oak strongbacks with steel pipes going from the deck up to the strongbacks. These things were lashed at every foot interval. They were heavy to withstand winds and the waves that would hit them once in awhile. The whole central part of the ship, including the forecastle and the guns--the anti-aircraft guns--was covered with a canvas awning.

My battle station was the peashooter, the three-inch gun, so I went up there on a dead run. When I got there I found out that I was the only member of the crew other than Jack Grossman who was aboard. We couldn't do anything. There was no ammunition, no nothing.

Marcello: In other words, all the ammunition was locked away. There was no such thing as ready ammunition on those ships.

Pond: No ready ammunition. We had a few rounds of fifty-caliber ammunition belted just for show. Nothing was out. There was no ammunition clipped to the fifties because I know the fellows had to get together and start clipping immediately.

We had to do something. There were no orders passed to commence firing. Red Brooks came up from

the galley with a handful of butcher knives. We cut down the awnings and threw them over the side in order to clear the gun. I know there was a strongback and a pipe painted in place in front of the muzzle of the gun, and I reached up and bent it over. I don't know how I did it, but I bent it out of the way so that the gun was free. In the meantime, fellows were coming up, "Can I help? Can I help? Can I help?"

Marcello: About how much time has elapsed by now?

Pond: Five minutes at the most. But in the meantime, the scene was utter chaos. There were planes coming in there, and . . . you know, the propeller planes make a snarling sound. The planes were coming in and dropping the bombs. There was strafing going on. The planes were going by at water-level height. They came right down into the bomb blast of the one in front of them, and they let the next one go. You know, the ships--battleships--are sitting there unprotected. They were two next to each other--two abreast. They really were catching it. We were three or four hundred feet from the Arizona.

Marcello: Did you have a clear view of the Arizona from where you were?

Pond: Oh, unobstructed! We were on the forecastle, and as soon as we cut the awning down, we could see everything.

In the meantime, one of the fellows had gotten a thirty-six-inch bolt cutter and cut the locks off the magazine. I remember one of the major mysteries was that one of the fellows appeared with two cases of ammunition, one under each arm. We wondered how he climbed out of the magazine. But he brought the ammunition up, and we broke open the boxes. We didn't have the fuse setting tools, so Jack Grossman set fuses with a pair of pliers. Carl Schoenberg came up, and I made him the pointer. I just automatically became the gun captain because nobody else seemed to know much about the damn gun and Schoenberg . . . I showed him how to fire the thing, and I opened the breech. Art Clymer was the shellman--the fellow that would throw the projectile into the breech. Dave Taylor, who is here at this . . . was the talker. He came up and put the phones on because Ensign Gex was on the flying bridge. He was spotting, telling us where planes were coming from. Harold Grossman came up, Jack Grossman's brother. He became the hot shellman. That was the crew. We threw the first round in the breech, and I slammed it shut. Schoenberg picked out a plane and fired at it.

We all jumped about fifty feet (chuckle). But that was it. We settled down and we fired over seventy rounds.

Marcello: I would assume that the Chew was not exactly a prime target in the eyes of the Japanese.

Pond: No, no, we were lucky in that we were out of Battleship Row, away . . . I would say we were forty-five degrees from Battleship Row.

Marcello: Could you see any of the other battleships except the Arizona?

Pond: Oh, we could see the whole row because we were off . . . three hundred feet . . . three hundred-four hundred feet from the Arizona and sitting off to its starboard side and behind it, so we looked down the entire Battleship Row. We also looked down the runway at Ford Island. So we saw what was happening at Ford Island. We saw every battleship catching it.

So we got our gun into action. We could also look across Ford Island and see the Utah. We shot at a plane coming onto the Utah, and we hit it with a direct hit and cut it in half. No one else was firing at the thing. It came in there and we got it, so we stopped and shook hands all around.

Marcello: I was going to ask you what sort of a reaction this set off among that gun crew.

Pond: About this time one of the Japanese planes had crashed just off our bow, just a few hundred feet. Some of the fellows said, you know, "Turn the gun on him!" I said, "No, he's down! We're not going to do that! We're not going to waste it! He's already had it!" The plane was on fire, and we could see the Japs trying to get out but they couldn't, you know. They were trapped in their own burning plane, and they died.

Out of our seventy-two to seventy-five rounds, we had five misfires. When the first misfire went, I tripped the breechblock so that Schoenberg could fire it again. It wouldn't go off, so we had a hangfire. Under normal circumstances you wait a half an hour on it. So I said, "Everybody get out of here!" I had Schoenberg open the breech, and I caught this live one and threw it over the side. One of the fellows said that when I threw it over the side, one of them went off. I don't believe it. I don't remember it. You know, there was so much confusion going on. It's a good story, anyhow, that it went off seconds after I unloaded it.

Marcello: Now by this time had the Arizona exploded yet?

Pond: Right about in the middle of our firing, the Arizona went up.

Marcello: Describe this particular occurrence as best you can.

Pond: You must remember now there was other chaos going on. Some of the battleships had been holed already. The oil was on fire. So there was smoke, and there were planes coming in.

Marcello: Did this block your view or your vision of Battleship Row?

Pond: No, because the smoke was above us and the wind was blowing away from us. We were upwind from it. It was blowing toward the Navy Yard, carrying it toward Honolulu, really, that way. We were on the Pearl City side from them.

The Arizona went in one helluva blast! Junk rained on us for minutes, it seemed. I'm not sure but what water even came on us when she blew up.

I have an anecdote when we were clearing the ship for action at that time. Fellows that weren't actively firing . . . we had two fifty-caliber machine guns in action and the three-inch gun. The two fifty-calibers-- Phil Handley had one and Leo Theodore had the other. I think Hanley shot a hole in the Allen's whistle (chuckle). I lost the train of my thought.

Marcello: We were talking about the Arizona exploding and debris raining down aboard ship.

Pond: Okay, we were clearing ship. We were clearing ship. We had a very conscientious storekeeper named George Hoffman, not to be confused with the Carl Hoffman I mentioned before. George was running around. We threw over the accommodation ladder; we threw over the pulling whale boat; we were throwing over the awnings. We weren't . . . the fellows that weren't actively engaged in fighting were doing what they could.

Carl Hoffman, as an aside, organized a group of riflemen on the fantail, and they were firing volleys at the planes with .30-06's as they came in. I don't know, he could have hit somebody. We'd never know. They were firing as the planes came in head on, which is the way. Carl was a cool character.

But George Hoffman was going around--he was the storekeeper--with a stack of cards saying, "You can't throw that over. That is Title C, which is something charged to the ship." The Arizona blew up, and a big chunk skipped across the deck next to him and embedded itself in one of the torpedo tubes. George looked around, he looked through the cards, and he threw them up in the air and said, "To hell with it! Let's go!" That's just an anecdote.

The Arizona blew up in a helluva mess. We watched the Oklahoma roll over. We could see it go over. What confused me until just within the past six months . . . I remembered the Oklahoma rolling in a different direction. But it wasn't the Oklahoma, which I found out now. It was the West Virginia starting to list. I recently had copies of the battle reports of the West Virginia, and Lieutenant Rickets, who became Admiral Rickets, had counterflooded the West Virginia. She'd started to roll, and he settled it down in the mud--kept it from tipping over. That had been confused in my mind for thirty years. I thought the Oklahoma was going in toward the other ship, and, really, it rolled over the other way.

Marcello: What sort of feeling did you have when you witnessed the Arizona blowing up and the West Virginia beginning to list? What sort of a feeling did you have, or did you have time to really reflect upon it very much at that particular moment?

Pond: I would say we didn't think about it. We knew that we were catching hell. Ford Island was ablaze from one end of it to the other. Every one of those planes had dropped a bomb, and his tail gunner had nothing else to do when they went by but to squirt at us with his twenty-eight-caliber gun. He hit us with a lot of rounds. We didn't

know it till later, but he filled up our towing reel-- the six-inch reel--with twenty-eight-caliber slugs. Every one of them that went by took a squirt at us. We were busy.

We knew we were catching hell. It looked from where we were . . . we couldn't see the Navy Yard because of the battleship line in front of us. The battleship line was on fire. Everything was on fire. The oil from the West Virginia and the Oklahoma was on fire. The Arizona was burning. It burned for about a month, anyhow. But the blazes were up. We could see straight down the line when the Shaw blew up. We knew that blew up. We could see that.

Marcello: That must have been a very spectacular explosion when the Shaw blew up.

Pond: It was nothing compared to the Arizona. The air station was on fire from one end of it to the other. The hangars were wrecked. The planes were wrecked. The Japanese kept coming back.

We'd had a lull in the fighting sometime between the two waves. At that time the executive officer came up and told us not to do anything . . . not to get excited and to be cool. He was drinking a coke, and we were standing there. I might mention that I will not mention the man's

name. We had . . . Ensign Gex was gun spotter on the flying bridge. That was as far as anything went with direction to our crew. We stayed there until the second wave. We started fighting again. We think we got another plane.

Marcello: This brings up an interesting question at this point. At the time could you distinguish the first wave from the second wave, or did it simply seem like one continuous engagement so far as you were concerned at that time?

Pond: No, there was a definite pause.

Marcello: There was a lull in the activity.

Pond: Yes, there was a lull. There was a lull.

Marcello: What did you do during the lull?

Pond: Took more ammunition up. I know Jack Grossman filled up the entire ready box with three-inch ammunition set to go off at three-quarters of a second. I know he showed me a couple of shells. He said, "Is this one alright?" He had it set in the red, so it would have gone off in the gun. I said, "No, Jack. That's not quite right." (chuckle). So he had the whole box set. You're not supposed to set these things until you're ready to throw them into the breech, really.

Marcello: Now by this time is everybody performing with a certain degree of professionalism? Has the initial perplexity or confusion now vanished so far as your particular ship is concerned? Was everybody acting in a professional way?

Pond: I would say our confusion was gone in five minutes. There was a purpose . . . I told you about the man organizing the firing squad with rifles. There was a crew going around stripping the ship, getting it ready for sea.

Marcello: I was going to ask you, while all of this was going on, were you trying to get up steam to go to sea?

Pond: We were ready to go in thirty minutes. The crew ran into the fire room. The ones that . . . you see, we were all firemen up on the peashooter. We were the only firemen that weren't there other than the ones on the fantail with Carl Hoffman. The rest of them were getting that thing ready to go. They had steam up from the . . . only one boiler was firing. So they fired the other one off and had it ready to go and were testing safeties. I remember during the lull we were ready to go. They blew the safeties. They made a lot of racket when the safeties go off. They tested them, and we were ready to go.

But the executive officer . . . we couldn't understand why we didn't get out of there. The executive officer refused to move. In later talk our crew decided that . . . you know, we were just lucky because if one of us had been the captain or had been in charge, we would have gotten underway immediately and run alongside of Battleship Row and laid down a smokescreen, or even intercepted a fish, which was our duty.

Marcello: What you're saying, in effect, is that there was a certain amount of hesitation, maybe even panic, on the part of the executive officer or whoever was in command.

Pond: Let's back off from panic. I don't think it was panic. I just think . . .

Marcello: He was exercising caution. He hadn't received his orders.

Pond: The man was an incompetent, and he didn't do . . . I think he did pretty well on the coke. The man is still alive. I'm not going to mention his name. But if you mentioned his name in the deck petty officers' mess later on, you were fined ten cents. He was not held in high esteem.

But we thought that the ship should have gotten underway. We didn't need a skipper. Many ships got out without a skipper. The Nevada moved with a chief in command. There we were with a lieutenant who didn't move the ship.

Marcello: In the meantime, are other members of the crew coming back aboard the ship?

Pond: Our whale boats were running back and forth. The captain's gig . . . we had a whale boat and a gig. We had a pulling whale boat that we had just gotten rid of. The whale boat . . . I'm not sure who was the coxswain of the gig and who was the coxswain of the whale boat. Larry Meier was one of them, and Red McKenna was the other. One of them had to go to the officers' dock and wait for the captain. That was his orders--to go there and wait for the captain. So one of those fellows made his way through the harbor with the gig and sat there while all of the torpedo planes went right over his head, and he was ducking torpedoes and everything else to get there to wait for the captain. I only know . . . you know . . . I only got this information when they came back. One of the other fellows made some trips over amongst the battleships and picked fellows out of the water.

Marcello: How long was it before the captain finally did come back aboard the Chew?

Pond: He got back after the last attack. He came out after everything was finished, and I think we got underway about 10:15. Then we went out on the side away from Battleship Row because they were having hell over there.

Marcello: Well, before we reached this point, we had been up to where the lull had occurred.

Pond: Back came some more planes, so we went back into action.

Marcello: Okay, the second wave occurred.

Pond: The second wave came. By this time we had more ammunition up, more . . . I know the chief gunner's mate was in there with a crew, and they were belting fifty-caliber ammunition that would stretch around the world just about. They were getting everything ready, so the fifty-calibers were in action, and we had plenty of ammunition, too. We never had to wait for ammunition--never. As soon as the first one got up to us . . . I think there were six in a case of that thing, that three-inch ammunition. We never had to wait for ammunition. Jack Grossman just had to put his hand out, and somebody'd put one in it. He held it up against his chest and set the fuse and handed it to Art Clymer. When I opened the breech . . . in fact, when I closed the breech, I had to put my hand back so that Clymer wouldn't get the next projectile up into the recoil of the breech. I had to let the thing recoil back to hold Clymer back.

Marcello: Were your activities in the second attack more or less a repetition of what took place in the first?

Pond: Only shorter, much shorter.

Marcello: Was there any difference in the planes that were coming in? I would assume in the first wave those were mainly torpedo planes and dive bombers, were they not?

Pond: Torpedo planes and dive bombers. In the second one they brought through some high-altitude ones.

Marcello: When those torpedo planes were coming in, were they going so low that you could actually see the faces of the pilots and the Japanese crew?

Pond: No, we couldn't see the torpedo planes because they came down by the landing on the other side of the battleships. We never saw them until they zoomed up and over and came out of the smoke. We never fired at one of them because they were going away from us like a shot. The rule is you never fire at a plane that's going away from you, anyhow. You know, you're wasting your ammunition.

But we saw the dive bombers, and we saw good pilots. We saw a couple of them crash that were caught from the bomb flash from the preceding plane. They were that close. So they were eager, and they were in there. We saw them. We got a good look at them. There's no doubt about the meatballs. They were right there. You could have reached up and counted the rivets on them. They were close enough to see the numbers.

Marcello: In an action of this sort, a lot of the other people that I've talked to have mentioned that their throat, their mouth, became parched, very dry. In other words, they craved a drink of water. Did you experience this same sort of sensation yourself?

Pond: No, during the lull somebody brought coffee, and we had coffee. We didn't have good water. We had coffee, and I'm not sure but what we had sandwiches. I know that somebody else brought World War I flat helmets up to us, and we all put those damn helmets on. I still didn't have a shirt. We had helmets on and dungarees. That was it. Some of the fellows had shirts and some didn't. There was no such thing as flak protection at all.

We had no one lost. We lost two of our church party. They were over in the Pennsylvania area around the Cassin and the Downes. One fellow was reported as missing, and another one was killed, and his body was found. He was buried in the Punch Bowl for awhile, and then moved back to St. Louis. That's Matt Agola. Matt's buried there. He was a younger fellow than I. He was about eighteen at the time. Clarence Wise was about nineteen or twenty. He was missing. There was no word on him. You know, there were many, many unidentifiable bodies in that mess over in the Navy Yard.

We took off at roughly 10:30. We went around the back side of Ford Island. Captain Hummer was at the conn. We were doing about twenty knots, which was much faster than you're supposed to go. The Raleigh was down at the stern. The Utah was down. There was action going on . . . I think the Tangier had a small fire on it. We went by the Nevada. She was afire and aground. We headed for the open sea. We had picked up the commanding officer of the Alwyn, a destroyer. I don't recall his name. But he came up and wanted to be our spotter on a gun. This was a lieutenant commander. We had a couple of other junior officers from other ships aboard . . . because his ship had gone. He grabbed . . . he saw the Chew's whale boat and jumped in it and said, "Let's go!" We had quite a few extra people that way, but we were still undermanned. We hit the entrance buoys, and Hummer had the thing wide open.

Marcello: What were you going to do when you got at sea?

Pond: We had some sort of orders, and we picked up one of the light cruisers that was out there and a couple of other four-pipers. We turned north to look for the Japanese fleet. That would have been short and sweet had we found them (chuckle), but they were a day's

steam north of us. So we never . . . we got north of the island. We went pretty far. It seems to me we went out of sight of land.

Marcello: Incidentally, all of this time I gather that you did not have any experiences or contact at all with any of the midget submarines or any of the other submarines that the Japs had stationed out around the island of Oahu.

Pond: No, not at that time because we went out wide open. As soon as we got . . . at high speed our sonar couldn't do any ranging. But sometime during the seventh we did have undersea contact. We did drop some depth charges.

We went out of sight of land, and then we were detached from this cruiser. The cruisers went someplace else. I guess they used those for further screening. We were ordered to come back to protect the entrance to Pearl because of the submarine contacts. We got back off Pearl Harbor on that side of Oahu.

That's when the reaction came in. You talked about the dry throats and all that. We could see . . . it was dark. The place was afire. There were still minor explosions going on. We could see the smoke and smell it. We were, you know, fifteen or twenty miles out and going back and forth in there. The flames are up . . .

Marcello: Now were you down in the engine room by this time, or were you still back on the forecastle by the gun?

Pond: I was still on the gun. We were never relieved; we were still at general quarters. I still didn't have a shirt on. I started to shiver then (chuckle). We got rid of those damn helmets. Somebody got some clothes up to us and got some food to us.

There was no . . . nobody turned in. Finally, it got to . . . you know, we just had to get some sleep. Somebody had folded some of the canvas awnings and put it over the hatch to the magazine. Our gun crew had to keep one man on the phone at all times. The rest of us went back and slept in that hole in the canvas. We lived in that place for at least two weeks. We never did go to our bunks. We didn't wash our clothes. You know, when your skivvies got dirty, you pitched them over the side.

We were positive that the Japanese fleet was going to come back and finish it. There's no way anybody would not have followed up on that devastating defeat. We must have lived at least two weeks in the passageway over the magazine up to what they called the division cabin. There was a division cabin up forward under the bridge. So the five of us slept there. I stood a few watches

back in the black gang later, but they swapped me back up on the deck force so I could stay on that gun. The captain wanted me there.

Marcello: I would assume that in the meantime that ship was one great big rumor mill. What were some of the various rumors that you heard, as ridiculous as they may have sounded?

Pond: Okay, there were . . . the Japanese fleet was just over the horizon. That was on the hour, every hour. Then the Japanese fleet wasn't on the horizon. That was on the half hour, I guess. Late that night, there was some flying problems that . . . late the night of the seventh. It seemed to me there were some four-engine planes coming in from the States. Well, those were Japanese, of course, too, you know (facetious). I think somebody on the beach did shoot at them. I'm not sure about that. This is why I wish I had written all of this down twenty-five years ago. There was a great deal of confusion. There was this story that somebody had gotten out of a Dairyman's Limited truck, a Japanese with a machine gun, and blocked the bridge and had machine-gunned taxis coming back to Pearl.

Marcello: A Dairyman's Limited truck?

Pond: Yes, that's the name of the milk . . . the dairy in Honolulu that the Japanese had infiltrated. Well, this

was all false. This had never happened. Now how this got aboard a ship at sea, nobody knows.

Marcello: Nobody bothered to ask at the time either.

Pond: No, no. They were wonderful rumors. They had shot fellows down coming back in taxis. There were all sorts of things. They had bombed firehouses. There was a great big deal about some bombing in Honolulu that day. It turned out that one of the ships in the fleet had fired five-inch ammunition without setting the fuses. They landed in Honolulu. That devastated some houses, a whole block.

Marcello: What sort of an attitude did you have toward the Japanese now, that is, after the attack had actually taken place?

Pond: We were extremely mad, angry. We had a certain amount of trepidation about the future. We knew that we had lost the entire backbone of the American fleet. The American fleet was based on the battleships. We knew that every battleship had been either sunk, damaged, or immobilized. This included the ones like the Tennessee that was inboard and couldn't get out. The Maryland was inboard and couldn't get out. We knew the California had been damaged.

Marcello: You actually had seen the Nevada, I suppose.

Pond: Yes, we passed it. It was aground. We knew that the Arizona wasn't going to do much anymore, and neither was the Oklahoma.

We went back in, I would say, within a week because we ran out of depth charges. We tied up next to the Oglala, which was laying on its side. The words was, "Get your oil and your ammunition, get refueled and everything, and out!" We were in and out and picked up some of the guys that were off. We just got in and got out. We were only in Pearl Harbor for just a few hours, and we were back out again. You could see that it was a pretty bad situation.

The first three or four months were spent like that. I can recall . . . now remember I mentioned the short-wave radio. We picked up a short-wave news broadcast in the States. The storekeeper who was so worried about all the parts and he finally threw all of his cards up in the air . . . well, George and I were listening to the radio and the announcer said, "The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, and all we have lost is one old battleship." George paced the deck saying, "One old battleship! One old battleship! All we lost is one old battleship!" So as a result we started calling him "One Old Storekeeper." I still correspond with him at Christmastime. He signs his name, "One Old SK."

Marcello: You mentioned some of the funny things that occurred even during the seriousness of the predicament that you found

yourself in. Are there any other funny things that stand out in your mind that you haven't already mentioned?

Pond: Yes, Jack Grossman was kind of a funny scene just in life. He was a short fellow and stocky. We were in Pearl doing something because we were not allowed in there very long. We were at the Navy Yard. I know there were Navy Yard workmen. Jack was shaving. He had a very heavy beard. He was back aft in the head. We went to general quarters. This was supposed to be a raid again. Jack came forward wearing shorts. You have to realize what he looked like. He was about 5'6" tall, weighed about 165 pounds. He came up there with his face still half-lathered and Navy Yard workmen flying out of his way (chuckle). He looked like Jim Brown going through a line (chuckle). There he was, up there on the gun just wearing a pair of shorts. We were at general quarters, and the captain looked over the wing of the bridge and said, "Grossman, why aren't you wearing clothes?" (laughter)

Marcello: You know, you've mentioned something rather interesting throughout this whole story. You can recall the names of all the crew members. You just mentioned here that the captain apparently knew who Grossman was. I guess

this was a general thing aboard a destroyer, wasn't it? It was kind of like one big family where you knew just about everybody else, if not everybody else.

Pond: Well, the atmosphere changed after the bombs dropped. It was a lot friendlier after the bombs dropped because death is a great evener. Before that, we had a pretty definite officer-men caste relationship, you might say. There was a more or less unwritten law that the closer you got to the front, the less the chicken regulations were. The chicken regulations went right out the door on December 7. They came back into the Fourteenth Naval District a few years later. But things calmed down. The shore patrol was easy. Then later they came back with this "Square your hat on Hotel Street" and all of this sort of little petty stuff. But before the war it was pretty rugged. You know, they had the caste system and all of that. Then when Nimitz took over all of this changed.

Hummer was a very democratic captain. He rooted for our baseball team; he went to the ball games. He bet cases of beer with other captains. Of course, he had a cinch because we had the best team (chuckle). But that wasn't the thing to do prior to this. He was just a different type man and we missed him. He went on up.

Some of us almost became part of that ship. I know I stayed three and a half years and couldn't get off because I became a fire controlman, and I knew how all the damn circuits worked, and there were no prints on the wiring. It was all in my head. I hate to say it, but I became pretty important to the darn thing. I tried to get off to move on, and I finally did.

Marcello: In the aftermath of the attack, did you hold any particular individuals responsible for this disaster that had occurred at Pearl Harbor? Did you, in your bull sessions and so on, try to place the blame on Admiral Kimmel or this officer or that officer or somebody else?

Pond: No, absolutely not. None of us knew any of the warnings that had been missed or the radar stuff. We didn't know that because radar was so secret they wouldn't talk about it. None of us knew anything that . . . we didn't blame anyone but the Japs. You know, we took the blame out on the fellow that hit us in the nose. Later, some of the people started to think about it, but not aboard the ship did I ever hear anyone blame Admiral Kimmel. In fact, I was an honorary pallbearer at his funeral. No blame. He was a victim, pure and simple. He just didn't get the

word. You might compare Admiral Kimmel with Bucher of the Pueblo. He was a victim of circumstances. He didn't get the warning.

Perhaps looking back in retrospect, it would have been better had he not allowed the fleet in. But if that fleet had been caught at sea, it would have been sunk and lost. As it was, the West Virginia and the California and the Pennsylvania were all repaired and back in action, also the Raleigh. The Vestal had been hit as well as the Nevada. They were all brought back in action. If they'd been out at sea, they would have been lost. As it was they were repaired.

I certainly would think it would have been a lot better had we at least had a few more machine guns on our ship. If we'd had modern twenty-millimeter guns, we would have really massacred the planes that were coming low. But we didn't have modern guns. You know, we had old guns, and we had awnings up and things like that.

Marcello: Well, at this particular time I don't think that anybody actually realized just how important a weapon the airplane would become in naval warfare. And if nothing else, as a result of that Pearl Harbor raid, I'm sure that even the old Chew had antiaircraft guns installed in every open space aboard her.

Pond: Yes, they threw off our fifties, and we ended up with eight twenty-millimeters. They took the peashooter off later because it was a limited gun. The twenty-millimeters were better, and we got rid of some of our torpedo tubes and got depth charges. But I think there was warning because the German air arm had inflicted tremendous damage to the British in the Mediterranean. They should have known something about it and been prepared. I'm afraid our Navy was run with a sort of an "Admiral Blimp" mentality, that the battleship was king, and away they went. It was a mistake.