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

Pat Duncan

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Pat Duncan for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on February 12, 1977, in Fort Worth, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Duncan in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the cruiser U.S.S. Raleigh during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Now Mr. Duncan, 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.

Pat Duncan: I was born at Meridian, Texas, south of here a few miles, on February 22, 1923. I went in the Navy in 1940 and went through training at San Diego and was shipped out to Pearl Harbor on January 2, 1940, to Pearl Harbor to be assigned to USS Raleigh.

Dr. Marcello: Okay, let's back up just a minute here. Why did you decide to enter the service?

Duncan: Well, there was the war going on in Europe at that time, and so many were going into the Navy at home, and they looked pretty colorful when they came home on leave. I've always liked the water and was raised on a river, and I thought I'd like the Navy.

Marcello: You mentioned that the war was going on in Europe at that time. How closely were you keeping abreast with current events and world affairs?

Duncan: Oh, I'd listen to the newscasts all the time and read the papers. I kept up with it.

Marcello: But did you ever think of the possibility of war coming in the Far East?

Duncan: Not really. I didn't think I'd ever have to go to war for some reason or other, but I thought if I did, well, that was the way it was supposed to happen.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you took your boot camp at San Diego. Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we ought to get as part of the record?

Duncan: Not anything except the strenuous training I had. My son has just recently gone through the same thing, and it doesn't seem like it's changed much since then.

Marcello: How long was boot camp at that particular time?

Duncan: We had three weeks in detention. That was when we had our shots and were in South Unit, they called it, in San Diego.

In North Unit I believe we had six weeks there, and then we were sent out either to the training school or to our ship.

Marcello: Okay, now in your case did you go to a training school, or did you go directly aboard ship?

Duncan: I went to bugler school right after that.

Marcello: This sounds interesting. How did you end up in bugler school?

Duncan: Well, I used to play in the band in high school, and I thought maybe I could get into the band that way. That's what I wanted to do at that time, and when the war broke out, I was still trying to go through the music school in Washington, D.C. I don't know if I'd ever made it or not.

Marcello: How long was bugler school?

Duncan: If I remember right, it was three or four months. I can't remember for sure.

Marcello: What sort of training do you undergo in bugler school?

Duncan: Oh, we'd take our bugles down, and you'd try to get out of the way of anyone that we'd bother, you know. We'd go down to the beach, where the water was, and that's pretty far away from anything. We'd just go down there and practice. We had an instructor and our standard book that we went by for the different calls.

Marcello: What sort of a role did a bugler play in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Duncan: Oh, we had to stand watch on the quarter-deck with the officer of the deck in port and on the bridge when we were underway;

and we had to sound any calls that they need to be sounded --chow call, and mail call, and away motorboats. And then, of course, they had general quarters and antiaircraft battery calls.

Marcello: In other words, just about every movement that was made aboard that ship was preceded by a particular bugle call?

Duncan: Yes, even in getting underway from the harbor, we'd have our special sea detail call and all that.

Marcello: How hard was it to get in to the Navy Band at that time?

Duncan: Well, you had to know the chromatic scale, if you know what that is. It's every note up so far that a trumpet could play. I never even did get far enough to take the test, though, but the bandmaster aboard our ship at that time was going to help me. But the war came along.

Marcello: Did the Raleigh have a band?

Duncan: Yes, we had a flag. . . we had an admiral, and he would move his flag sometimes, but we were the flagship. When he was aboard, well, the band was aboard.

Marcello: But when you were aboard the Raleigh, you were strictly the bugler and were not a member of the band.

Duncan: Yes. I was a member of the crew--the Raleigh crew.

Marcello: Okay, so where did you pick up the Raleigh?

Duncan: In Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: And when did you say you got to Pearl Harbor?

Duncan: Well, I think it was in January, the middle of January some-time. But we made one trip back to the States and then back to Pearl Harbor before the war started.

Marcello: What sort of a ship was the Raleigh? Describe it so far as its physical appearance was concerned.

Duncan: Well, let's see. It was easy to remember the dimensions, because it was fifty-five feet wide and 555 feet long. It had four stacks; it was the old-type, built in 1924, I believe. Or it was commissioned then. It was a fast ship and had four engines and four big propellers, eight boiler rooms. It was pretty easy to maneuver and had the old electric street car type of rudder control. It didn't have a wheel, you know, like most ships did. I was in the navigation department after that, and that's where I stood most my watches on the bridge when we were underway.

Marcello: Now as a bugler aboard the Raleigh, what particular functions did you have in addition to that?

Duncan: Messenger-type stuff. I stood watch there alongside the officer of the deck. He also had a messenger, but when the messenger was gone, I took his place.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Raleigh?

Duncan: It was good. Of course, you get complaints everywhere you go, you know, but we had good food. Even at sea, when we'd

stay at sea a good while, it was fairly good. I'm not much of a connoisseur on food, but it was wholesome.

Marcello: What was your living quarters like aboard the Raleigh?

Duncan: When I first went aboard, I slept in a hammock. That was before the war and before we got the ship rejuvenated. I had to get up before the crew started going through because I was right across the passageway, you know. But then right after the war started, we had to get our battle damage fixed up, so they also put bunks in and they remodeled the ship. It was pretty nice, then, after that.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about those hammocks. What was it like to sleep in a hammock?

Duncan: Well, you get used to it. You just had to swing it every night and wrap it up during the day to get it out of the way. It was a chore and a nuisance, really (chuckle).

Marcello: Was it a comfortable thing to sleep in?

Duncan: No, not really, because even at night people would be coming through the passageway, and they'd hit it and knock it. It wasn't pleasant at all (chuckle).

Marcello: How long did you say you actually swung a hammock?

Duncan: Not more than, I guess, probably a year.

Marcello: You mentioned that it was swung in a passageway. Am I to assume that quarters were fairly cramped aboard the Raleigh?

Duncan: No, not there. I did in training, but not on the Raleigh.

Marcello: What was the morale like aboard the Raleigh in those pre-Pearl Harbor days?

Duncan: Well, it was fairly good because they were all volunteers, you know, aboard the Raleigh, and we just took what come. Of course, you're going to get gripes everywhere you go, but generally it was good.

Marcello: What role did athletics and inter-ship competition play in that peacetime Navy?

Duncan: I can't remember that we had any at all. The only thing I can remember is the band. They had their "Battle of the Bands," you know, over on the beach there, and that was interesting to go to because all the flag bands would come and they'd try to outdo the others. If you liked music, well, that was really something to listen to.

Marcello: How often would they have the "Battle of the Bands?"

Duncan: Oh, I'd say about once a month.

Marcello: Describe what one of those affairs was like, because I think they are sort of interesting.

Duncan: Well, all of the bands would be there, and they'd feature the certain bands; and then you'd clap for them, you know, and the one who got the best ovation was the one that won.

Marcello: How well would these concerts be attended?

Duncan: Oh, they were real good. They were full nearly all the time at this auditorium, as well as I can remember.

Marcello: You mentioned that the loudness of the clapping determined who won. I would assume, then, that one could "stack" the auditorium, and help one's cause a little bit.

Duncan: That's the way they usually did that. The bigger the flag, well, the more audience they would have; but, of course, they'd probably be the best band, too.

Marcello: What sort of music did they usually play?

Duncan: Just the popular stuff they had during that time. I can't remember but one when our band won it. They played "White Heat." They really played that good, you know, and they got a good ovation on that.

Marcello: Well, I think you've probably mentioned quite a few things that would have contributed to the high morale. The food was fairly good; quarters weren't too bad.

Duncan: We had a different setup on our mess on the Raleigh. Well, the mess cooks would be the waitresses, you know (chuckle), and would come around and serve the food to the men. Then they'd tip them, and they'd get tips, you know. But most of the ships, they had just the regular old cafeteria-style line.

Marcello: But you were being served family-style aboard the Raleigh.

Duncan: Before the war. Of course, after the war it was all changed.

Marcello: You mentioned that the Raleigh carried the admiral's flag.
What did that mean to the Raleigh itself?

Duncan: Well, it was the flag of the flotilla of destroyers. As the flagship, of course, we'd go out on maneuvers, and these destroyers would be on each side of us. I guess we'd go out on war maneuvers, you know, and he'd direct them. But it's funny about all that training. When the war started, it all changed. They took him off the flag, and we didn't have all the same destroyers. They split up. All that training was just wasted, as far as I'm concerned.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were working with a flotilla of destroyers. Were you working with any additional cruisers?

Duncan: Yes. Once in awhile we had our sister ship--the Detroit; it was just like the Raleigh. We'd go out together on maneuvers.

Marcello: But for the most part you were working with these destroyers.

Duncan: Yes.

Marcello: Did carrying the flag mean that the Raleigh would have to be more of a spit-and-polish outfit than some other cruisers?

Duncan: That's right. It sure was. And they always kept the decks painted and the railings wrapped with the white twine--bleached --and everything had to be spotless, more or less.

Marcello: Let's talk about the training and maneuvers and exercises that the Raleigh underwent after it got to Pearl Harbor. But

first of all, let me ask this question. What did you think about the idea of being stationed in the Hawaiian isles?

Duncan: Well, that was nice in a way, but everyone was homesick, and they'd lots rather be at home than over there. But it was real nice. The weather and everything was just perfect most of the time.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk now a little bit about those training exercises during that pre-Pearl Harbor period. When would you go out; how long would you stay out; what would you do when you went out; when would you come back in? There's about four questions I just asked you.

Duncan: Well, we'd usually stay out maybe all week. It varied. We'd go out with the destroyers most of the time, and they had a target there to tow, and we'd fire at it, you know, with our guns--with a salvo--and see how good you were at that. Also, the submarines would fire their torpedoes at us, but they were set to go under, and they didn't have a warhead in them, of course. We just fired all the guns at different targets and a drone plane that they'd shoot down. They'd fly it from the bridge under remote control. They'd shoot it down and repair it and fly it again until it just wasted away (chuckle).

Marcello: Normally, when would the Raleigh go out on one of these training exercises?

Duncan: What day of the week?

Marcello: Yes.

Duncan: It varied. We may go out at the start of the weekend. They didn't try to keep any pattern of that.

Marcello: But normally you would be out for how long?

Duncan: Well, a week at a time most of the time.

Marcello: In other words, you could never really count on getting into Pearl on every weekend.

Duncan: No, you couldn't count on any schedule.

Marcello: When you were out on those training exercises, did you have a particular battle station?

Duncan: I was on a 3-inch gun on the starboard side.

Marcello: What did you do at that 3-inch gun?

Duncan: Loaded ammunition.

Marcello: How much emphasis was given to antiaircraft training?

Duncan: A lot. We had a lot of training in that.

Marcello: What sort of antiaircraft armament did you have aboard the Raleigh?

Duncan: We had the 3-inch guns and the .50-calibers way up on top of the bridge. Then we had these pom-pom-type guns, and I forget what caliber they were.

Marcello: Now were you actually getting those aboard the Raleigh prior to the war? That was a relatively new gun, was it not?

Duncan: Yes. We didn't have anything but the .50-caliber, if I remember right. I believe we did have the old-type pom-pom --a couple of those. It's hard to remember, you know, for sure what we had.

Marcello: Now did that training routine change any as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as relations between the United States and Japan were continuing to deteriorate?

Duncan: Well, it seemed like our training was more frequent. I could be wrong, but it seems like we did do a lot more training there just before the war.

Marcello: Did the ship's routine change any? In other words, were you sailing more under blackout conditions, or were the portholes sealed or anything of that sort?

Duncan: No, not too much. If I remember right, it was not like it was after the war started.

Marcello: During that particular period, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of person did you usually conjure up in your mind?

Duncan: Well, I don't think we had too many bad feelings against them. There was lots of them in Hawaii, you know, and I remember seeing one of the old liners come in there. We later found out they were evacuating any Japanese that wanted to leave. I even have a picture of it. They were in there November of '41, so they sailed with a load of evacuees, I guess.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old salts talk very much about the fighting prowess of the Japanese Navy? I'm referring now to those old-timers that had perhaps served with the Asiatic Fleet or something of that nature.

Duncan: No, I didn't run into too many of those. I know the old navigator on our ship was on the Panay, if you remember that, when it was attacked. He was about the only one that had any stories of the Orient.

Marcello: Those Asiatic sailors were evidently a different breed all to themselves, were they not?

Duncan: Yes, they were.

Marcello: How safe and secure did you feel there at Pearl Harbor in the eventuality that war would break out between the United States and Japan?

Duncan: Oh, we didn't think we'd have any problem at all. We thought we were so strong, and we really didn't give it much thought, I don't think. I was only eighteen at the time and wasn't capable of much (chuckle).

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were eighteen at that time. Had you gone into the Navy under the so-called minority cruise, or were you old enough that you did not go in under that particular plan?

Duncan: No. I was seventeen when I went in, and I was supposed to have been eighteen. I tried to get in when I was sixteen.

They still had my papers, so I had to tell them I was nineteen (chuckle).

Marcello: So you did not go in under the minority cruise.

Duncan: No.

Marcello: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine of the Raleigh. How did the liberty routine work aboard that ship?

Duncan: I think that we had the port and starboard liberty. On the even days, say, the port could go and odd days the starboard could go; and if it happened so that we were at sea those days, we just missed out. You still stayed with the starboard and the port on even and odd days. It changed so much that I can't remember for sure, but I know that's the way it was most of the time on all the ships I was on.

Marcello: When you were in on a weekend, when would liberty normally begin?

Duncan: I can't remember. It seems like it was four o'clock. It has been so long.

Marcello: What did you normally do when you went on liberty?

Duncan: I liked to see the sights and walk the streets most of the time, and I really didn't have much of a cause for liberty (chuckle).

Marcello: I would assume that after the Pacific Fleet was moved out to Pearl Harbor that downtown Honolulu was wall-to-wall bodies

on the weekend with all the sailors there.

Duncan: That's right. I did climb on top of Diamond Head with several of them at one time. We'd do things like that.

Marcello: Did you ever frequent Hotel Street and Canal Street and so on?

Duncan: I remember them being there, but I can't remember the names of all the streets there. But I'd try to see the sights and everything.

Marcello: Next question I'm going to ask you has a little bit of historical significance, and I want you to take a little care in answering it. Many people like to say that if the Japanese ever would want to attack Pearl Harbor, the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday. What these people imply is that Saturday nights in Honolulu were times of partying and carousing and things of that nature; consequently most of those sailors would have been in no condition to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you answer that particular assertion?

Duncan: I would agree with that. If I had been older, I'd probably been along with them if I'd had liberty. But most of them did that--that's true, including officers and . . . I didn't have liberty that night because I had duty the next morning.

Marcello: What was your pay at that time?

Duncan: Oh, let's see. I was a seaman first class, I think. I believe it was fifty-four dollars a month. Let's see. Twenty-one dollars at first, and then I was promoted to thirty-six dollars, and then fifty-fourthen I was promoted to thirty-six dollars, and then fifty-four dollars, I believe, I was paid.

Marcello: How often did you get paid?

Duncan: Once every two weeks.

Marcello: And do you remember when these pay periods would occur?

Duncan: I can't remember for sure. It seems like it started at ten o'clock in the morning, and you had to line up according to your pay number, and if you didn't you had to drop out. If you were in the wrong position in the line, you'd have to drop out and get paid with the stragglers. You had to wait for all the line to go through.

Marcello: Were you paid in cash?

Duncan: Two-dollar bills most of the time (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us up to those days immediately prior to the actual attack itself. When did the Raleigh come in that particular weekend of December 7th?

Duncan: I can't remember that. It seems like we'd been in a few days from maneuvers.

Marcello: Where did you tie up?

Duncan: We had a special quay there where we tied up. It seems like it was Fox 12 or something like that. I can't remember exactly. They called it Fox 12 or Fox 13 or something like that.

Marcello: Now were you very close to where the carriers would possibly have been tied up, had they been in?

Duncan: Let me think where the carriers. . . yes, I think they tied up right down west of us there, if I remember right--some of them.

Marcello: Okay, now when a ship is in port and tied up for a weekend, what sort of condition or readiness is it in for battle? First of all, we have to keep in mind that we are still talking about a peacetime situation.

Duncan: Well, it just seemed like we more or less came in port, and we dropped our guard, you know. Of course, we had to be on duty; we had our in-port training and all, but it wasn't anything to fight a battle if it were to happen.

Marcello: Where would the ammunition be under circumstances such as they were that weekend?

Duncan: Well, we had a few in the ready boxes, but they were locked up. The ready boxes were right by each gun. And the magazines. . . they had to hoist them out from the magazine to get them out. I remember that day we tried to get into those

ammunition boxes, and we couldn't. We was beating on the locks and everything trying to get them open, and the gunner's mate who had the key finally got around, and he stopped us and opened it up for us.

Marcello: Well, this is getting a little bit ahead of our story, and we'll talk about this a little bit later on. Was the Raleigh torn down at all that weekend? In other words, were you overhauling any of the engines or anything of that sort?

Duncan: No, we didn't have anything like that. Of course, the painting of the decks and things like that, we were doing that.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about your routine then on Saturday, December 6, 1941, from the time you get up until the time you went to bed. I want you to go into as much detail here as you can remember. What did you do on Saturday?

Duncan: I can't really remember too much because on Saturday we didn't do any more work than was necessary. I was in the navigation department at that time, and I remember I would help the quartermasters correct their charts and do things like that in port. They'd get these "Notice to Mariners" for correcting their charts, and I'd do some of that because I was striking for quartermaster. That's what I wanted to be.

Marcello: In other words, you were no longer a bugler at this time?

Duncan: Well, I had a seaman first class rate, but I was standing bugler watches at that time.

Marcello: And were you still performing your regular bugler duties?

Duncan: Yes. There were three buglers aboard, and we'd have to take the watch, you know, to be on at all times.

Marcello: Okay, did you go ashore that Saturday?

Duncan: No, I stayed aboard.

Marcello: Now normally when somebody did have liberty, could they stay ashore for the entire weekend, or did they have to come back aboard ship at night, or how did it work?

Duncan: No, they could stay ashore Saturday night--Friday and Saturday night. I believe they had to be back on Sunday. Some of them that were married had special permits, you know, to stay with their families until it was time to get underway the next morning or at eight o'clock the next morning.

Marcello: On a weekend, normally, what portion of the crew might be aboard?

Duncan: I would say about a third at that time.

Marcello: And probably not very many officers would be aboard.

Duncan: No, not very many.

Marcello: What did you do that Saturday night?

Duncan: Well, now that I can't remember either. I don't think it was anything special. Whatever we did. . . played cards or what, you know, and then went to bed.

Marcello: Did you notice anything eventful happening aboard ship that night? In other words, were there more than the usual number of drunks coming back aboard or anything of that sort?

Duncan: Well, that's something I just cannot remember. I can't remember anything special that day or that night. All I can remember is getting up and going on duty the next morning.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about December 7, 1941, from the time you got up that morning until all hell broke loose.

Duncan: Well, I was supposed to go on watch at 7:45, and I remember Bob Wilcox had been on the night before. I relieved him, and he went down and laid in his bunk. Then I blew "First Call." That's five minutes before "Colors" at 7:55. And immediately after that . . . Ensign Korn was the officer of the deck, and Barry--I can't remember his first name--was the quartermaster.

We saw this plane coming in from over at Pearl City--real low and coming at us. Ensign Korn didn't get alarmed because he was one of the aviators. We had two planes aboard, and he didn't get alarmed, so why should we?

Then we saw them drop this torpedo at us, and he still didn't get alarmed because we'd had that training out on maneuvers, and we thought the same thing--that's what we wanted to think, in other words. It hit right under us--the

torpedo did--knocked us down. Water drenched on us and everything. Then we looked up and saw the rising sun on the plane when we went out. And then everybody hollered "the Japs!" and we started getting panicky and running.

He told me to sound "Antiaircraft Batteries" on the bugle. And it was full of water and nothing would come out. I tried to shake the water out, and it would just gurgle when I'd blow on it.

So then he said to blow "General Quarters." That's when everybody comes out, not just the antiaircraft batteries. So he changed it to "General Quarters." I finally got it going, and everybody was running around there anyway because we'd been hit. So then they knew to get to their battle stations.

Marcello: Okay, now you mentioned that you were going to sound "General Quarters." How would you go about doing this? In other words, did you have a loudspeaker that you blew into, or was there a PA system or what?

Duncan: Most ships had the PA system, but we didn't at that time. We later got one. I just had to go to all of the hatches where the people were sleeping, you know, and I sounded several times and roused them out that way.

Marcello: You simply would blow the bugle into the quarters?

Duncan: Yes.

Marcello: How long would it take you to make your rounds to do this?

Duncan: Well, that day (chuckle) I don't think I would wait till I got to their quarters; I was just blowing it on the way, and then I would blow it when I got down in there. I really don't know. It was just a matter of a few minutes.

Marcello: What sort of a day was this in terms of weather and climate?

Duncan: Well, the weather was nice as far as I remember--sunshiny.

Marcello: Do you remember from what direction that airplane was coming?

Duncan: It was coming over Pearl City towards Ford Island. If my directions are right, that would be north to south.

Marcello: It was coming from north to south?

Duncan: Yes. Now the battleships were over just across from Ford Island from us, and they were coming from south to north there.

Marcello: Was this plane coming in at a high rate of speed, or was it kind of gliding in, or how would you describe its approach?

Duncan: High rate of speed.

Marcello: When he dropped that torpedo, could you actually follow it all the way into the Raleigh?

Duncan: Yes, we did. We watched the wake come in and everything.

Marcello: Now where were you in relationship to that torpedo?

Duncan: Well, the torpedo hit just almost to amidship, and we were just off just a little bit forward from there.

Marcello: Describe what it was like when that torpedo hit the ship.

Duncan: Oh, it was just a great big blast, and it jarred the ship so bad and knocked us down, and a big wave of water came up on deck.

Marcello: Were you out in the open?

Duncan: Yes, we were in the open.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned at that point you were running around sounding "General Quarters" on your bugle. How would you describe the reaction of the men when "General Quarters" was sounded?

Duncan: Well, they were just going every which way, you know, and they didn't really know what to do. But when they came to their senses, they knew to go to their battle stations. And I knew to go to mine, but the deck was roped off because there was wet paint on that sign, and I was a little bit reluctant to get over on that wet paint, you know (chuckle).

Marcello: It's funny--some of the things you do under those circumstances. How were the men dressed when they were scurrying about to get to general quarters?

Duncan: Most of them had most of their clothes on. I think we were still wearing shorts at that time. That was the uniform of the day--shorts or long trousers.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened at that point now? You've sounded "General Quarters"; you ultimately got over to your battle

station, which was on one of the 3-inch guns. How much time has elapsed at this point?

Duncan: Well, time didn't mean much to me then; I couldn't sense the time much, but I would say it was five or ten minutes.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get over to your three-inch mount?

Duncan: Well, we couldn't get to the ammunition at first, so we started beating on the ready box that was locked. Then the gunner's mate finally came around, and soon as we could get the shells in the guns. . .all the electricity was off, and it was normally fired electrically. So Calvin Vincent--he was another one in Oklahoma that I was telling you about--he was the gunner in charge with that number one 3-inch gun. And he had to kick the firing pin with his heel each time. And they had the trainers, you know, that would sight the thing. Planes were all over at that time dropping bombs now. They dropped their torpedoes first, and then the bombs came next.

Marcello: Now as a result of that torpedo hit, did the Raleigh take any sort of a list or anything of that nature?

Duncan: It listed and we thought we were going over, and just old mooring lines is all that held us up to the quay--kept us from going over.

Marcello: On which side was it listing?

Duncan: At first I think it listed the port, and then it took the list the other way. Anyway, the captain ordered everything thrown overboard--catapults, just anything that was loose to throw overboard to keep us from sinking. We later dived and got most of it back, but it was really a chore getting all that thrown overboard.

Marcello: You mentioned that you got to the gun mount; you finally got the ready boxes open. There isn't much ammunition in the ready boxes. How were you getting the other ammunition from the magazines up to your guns?

Duncan: Well, they had men carrying them down. They were hoisting them up with just anyone they could get to do that, you know, and hoisted them up and out of the magazine, and they'd carry them to their guns. They kept those pretty well supplied.

Marcello: Had that torpedo actually knocked out the power on the ship? Is that why you couldn't get any power?

Duncan: Yes, that's the reason.

Marcello: And I gather this 3-inch gun could be used for antiaircraft purposes.

Duncan: That's what it was for.

Marcello: I see. How many rounds would you figure you put up that day?

Duncan: Oh, hundreds! It looked that way from the empty shell casings that were under our feet. They started throwing those over, and they said, "Don't throw those over because we can use those again!" (chuckle)

Marcello: Are these brass shell casings?

Duncan: Brass, yes. I remember I dropped one of those empties on this colored boy's toe, and he started jumping around on one foot. He didn't know what happened to him, I don't think. He was just scared and. . .

Marcello: How many people were on one of those gun crews?

Duncan: About six or seven, I think.

Marcello: And what was your particular function on that gun crew?

Duncan: Well, I wasn't a gunner's mate or anything; I just handed ammunition mostly and just loaded the guns for them. There would be one opening the breech, you know, and one shoving the shell in and someone back here handing me the shells. Everyone had a function.

Marcello: Now sometime around 9:10 in the morning, a Japanese plane crashed into the Curtiss, which, I think, was fairly close to you. You might describe this incident.

Duncan: Well, now it was on the other side of the ship from me, and I didn't see that, but I know I heard everyone hollering about it and talking about it.

Marcello: Could you feel the effects of the crash or anything of that sort?

Duncan: No, there was so much noise and stuff going around that I didn't know. . . one bomb hit us.

Marcello: It was around the same time, was it not?

Duncan: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, describe this. . . in fact, I think the bomb that hit you came from the plane in the same formation as the one that crashed into the Curtiss.

Duncan: That's possible. These planes were coming over the battleships. The battleships were so badly burning and the smoke was going over, and they'd come out of that smoke and they'd save their bombs until they got to the other side. I think they were really meant for the battleships, but one of them. . . they dropped, I think, eight or nine at us. We counted them, and we could actually see this one coming down that hit us.

Marcello: What sort of a feeling did that give you when you could watch this bomb coming down?

Duncan: It gives you a feeling like you have just a short time to live (chuckle). And it hit and it just barely missed one of the magazines in the . . . or I believe it was the aviation fuel tank that was just barely missed. It went all

the way through the ship, and then it blew up and blew back up into the ship. It went right through the compartment that I slept in, and it ruined all of my belongings.

Marcello: Well, here again, you might mention what it felt like and what sort of an effect that bomb had after it did explode.

Duncan: Well, we didn't know exactly what damage it did back there, and we thought sure there had been several people killed, but it didn't kill a one. We didn't lose one person in that battle.

Marcello: It evidently was an armor-piercing shell?

Duncan: It was, and it was set for the battleships.

Marcello: And I assume that went straight on through the Raleigh.

Duncan: That's what we think, yes.

Marcello: While all of these planes are flying over--and, of course, your firing at them--how would you describe the reaction of the gun crew where you were? In other words, was it one of professionalism? Panic? Confusion? Fear?

Duncan: Well, I think it was more professionalism. I know I was so scared, though, that day that I jumped everytime that gun would go off. I think we knocked down several planes. Well, we took credit for it, anyway. We thought we did. And everytime one of those hit, they'd yell just like it was a football game, you know.

And I may be getting ahead of you again, but then the little submarine came into the harbor, and I believe it was the Monaghan that finally depth-charged it. We saw all the oil and everything go up, and everyone cheered again. It was like at a football game.

Marcello: The Raleigh had been hit virtually amidships by that initial torpedo; it had taken another bomb hit when that armor-piercing shell penetrated the Raleigh and went completely through and exploded in the bottom. What condition was the Raleigh in at this point? We're talking about some time after nine o'clock in the morning now.

Duncan: Well, it was pretty badly listing, and we thought sure it was going over, and we were getting ready to jump off at any time. I don't know. It was just a weird feeling.

Marcello: Describe what you did personally to help the Raleigh from going over. In other words, do you recall any of the articles that you were throwing overboard? You mentioned awhile ago that everything that wasn't tied down was thrown overboard.

Duncan: I remember helping with the catapult. It took several people to get hold of that and throw it over.

Marcello: Well that's a huge thing, isn't it?

Duncan: It sure is! It's heavy and real huge. We kind of more or less rolled it over. A lot of that went on during the

battle, you know. I was on the gun, and a lot of that was done then. But whenever it kind of let up, well, we started looking for something else to do.

Along about four o'clock in the afternoon, they started bringing sandwiches around, and I thought it was about nine o'clock in the morning, you know. And all that time had gone by, and you didn't realize it, but you knew they had to feed us, I guess.

Marcello: Now in a situation like that, do you have a chance to observe the so-called "big picture?" Are you able to see and sense everything that is happening to the other ship and so on?

Duncan: Well, no, not really. I didn't. I know some of them probably did, but I could see the smoke coming from the Arizona. It would come over there and just cover the sky. And that was one thing that hampered the Japanese from getting more ships, I think, than they did.

Marcello: Now I gather that when that bomb hit the Raleigh, it was coming from one of the high-level bombers.

Duncan: No, he was real close. You could see their faces and everything. The machine gunners, they tried to strafe us, and we could see their expressions on their face.

Marcello: You might describe this because I think it's kind of interesting. In other words, how low were those planes?

Duncan: Well, I would say they weren't more than 150 feet above us. . . maybe not that low. But you could see them under their machine guns trying to get us, you know, get under their handles on their machine guns. They were trying to get as low as they could.

Marcello: What did these Japanese airmen look like?

Duncan: Well, just about like you would expect in their pictures, you know, with their goggles and everything. I can't remember too much what they looked like that day, but we knew what they were trying to do.

Marcello: Now I gather that all during the attack the Raleigh was continuing to fire. It never really stopped firing.

Duncan: No, it never stopped. We did see the Nevada try to get out of the harbor and couldn't. . . it ran aground.

Marcello: Do you recall what the Raleigh was doing in the aftermath . . . let me ask you this. While the battle was going on, I assume there is a lot of noise and commotion and shouting and so on and so forth.

Duncan: Yes.

Marcello: Now what is it like when the Japanese planes go away?

Duncan: Well, we really didn't know they went away, you know, for a long time. We were expecting them back anytime. Even that night we thought they'd come back. And we were just so

nervous and tense that we didn't know anything to do for a long time but sit there and wait for them to come back. Then we started easing up.

Marcello: In the meantime, after the attack actually did end, what steps were being taken to save the Raleigh?

Duncan: Well, we just jettisoned everything we could find. Like I say, it's a thing I can remember. Of course, the watertight doors down below. . . they closed off all that they could with watertight doors.

Marcello: I think some pumps were also obtained from the Navy Yard and the Medusa, were they not?

Duncan: Yes. They even brought a barge alongside to hold us up and keep us afloat. They had pumps there that pumped all that stuff out--oil and sea water.

Marcello: What did the surface of the water look like there in Pearl in the aftermath of the attack?

Duncan: Well, there was debris and everything floating around. Several days later--we had to eat our meals on topside; we couldn't go below because we was afraid it was going to capsize--we could see arms and a head floating around in the water, you know, there when we were eating. That was the first time we had noticed that, and it just turned your stomach. You just couldn't eat.

Marcello: You mentioned that this happened actually several days after the attack. In other words, they were still trying to save the Raleigh, at this point.

Duncan: Yes, that's right. They kept this barge alongside for a long time.

Marcello: What were you personally doing in the aftermath of the attack?

Duncan: Oh, helping to clean up. Like I say, most of us lost everything we had, and we were trying to gather up the blankets and clothing and things.

Marcello: What did the innards of the Raleigh look like as a result of that bomb having hit?

Duncan: Well, we listed so bad, and things were all messed up, turned over. We couldn't go below. We had to stay on topside--most of us couldn't. Of course, the ones who had to go below and had to work down there did. I didn't.

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

Duncan: Well, we could hear about the news, you know. They were trying to get up enough airpower to find them, but I don't guess they ever did find the actual ones who did attack Pearl Harbor. I don't know.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the rumors that the Japanese had landed and things of that sort?

Duncan: Oh, yes, we heard all kinds of rumors that they were invading and everything.

Marcello: Did you believe most of these rumors?

Duncan: Oh, some of them at first we did.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were able to observe the Monaghan taking care of that midget submarine. Why don't you describe this in a little bit more detail?

Duncan: Well, we knew the submarine had sneaked in through the nets in the harbor. We knew the Monaghan was out there with their sonar--that's what they found the subs with--and they had him located and kept dropping their depth charges and finally got him.

Marcello: Did you actually witness this?

Duncan: Yes.

Marcello: What sort of feeling did you have when . . .

Duncan: Well, it was a good feeling to know they got him, you know. We just hoped there wasn't anymore.

Marcello: What happened? Did this midget submarine come to the surface, or was it blown to the surface?

Duncan: I never did see anything but the oil, and you could tell they had really gotten him when that oil came to the top.

Marcello: I'm sure this did a great deal for the morale of the crew.

Duncan: Yes, it did. It sure did.

Marcello: Now that night there were several planes off one of the aircraft carriers that unfortunately came in. Do you remember this incident?

Duncan: I sure do.

Marcello: You might describe it. Where were you and describe what happened.

Duncan: Well, I was on that 3-inch gun again, I believe, and the planes were off the Enterprise. They came in with their running lights on, and then we got the orders to commence firing. And then they said cease fire, and we'd already shot down several of them, you know. That was kind of bad.

Marcello: How many rounds did your particular gun crew put up?

Duncan: I can't remember, but they. . .just about as many as during the day.

Marcello: What did the sky look like?

Duncan: Oh, it was full of tracers and everything. You could see it coming from all directions. And they had set up machine guns along the shore of Ford Island, and they were firing, too, at that time. They were real trigger-happy over there.

Marcello: And I'm sure that you could probably hear sporadic firing going on all night.

Duncan: We sure could.

Marcello: Did you get much sleep that night?

Duncan: I don't think I got any.

Marcello: Were you still at the gun mount?

Duncan: No. We tried to lay down on the deck--we couldn't go below and sleep there--as best we could. That took place several nights later that we had to do that, too.

Marcello: How long was it before the Raleigh was shipshape once again?

Duncan: Well, they finally let us go into dry dock in February. We had to wait that long to get. . . then, of course, the Cassin and the Downes were in dry dock and got hit over there. We got fixed up enough to go back to the States. We went to Mare Island, and it was July before we went to sea again.

Marcello: But in other words, after the attack, then, you were basically still aboard the Raleigh, first trying to save it.

Duncan: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: Do you recall any funny incidents that happened that day. You know, even in a situation as serious as this, there are sometimes funny things that occur that more or less relieve the tension. Do you recall any funny things?

Duncan: Not any except that I thought it was funny when I dropped that shell on that colored guy's toe, and he jumped around on one foot. But it was not funny at the time, but later it was.

Marcello: At that particular time, were most blacks working as cooks and things of that sort?

Duncan: That's about all they worked at, was mess cooks for the officers and crew.

Marcello: And obviously, when "General Quarters" sounded, most of those cooks would probably be ammunition handlers or something of that sort?

Duncan: They had their assignments to general quarters, too.

Marcello: How much would one of these shells weigh? Was this just the shell casing?

Duncan: Yes, just the shell casing. I would say it weighed five or six pounds at the most. . . maybe more.

Marcello: Were there very many casualties aboard the Raleigh?

Duncan: There were several. I think one gunner's mate got hit by machine gun fire. I can't remember what the casualties were. I know they had to go to the hospital just right away or as soon as they could get them there.

Marcello: Is there anything else that we need to talk about, Mr. Duncan, and get as part of the record?

Duncan: There was lots of things that happened, but I can't remember anything outstanding.

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

Duncan: Of course, everybody was mad at them. Some of them had the feeling they wanted to go get them, you know. It was a different Navy, then, after that.

Marcello: You say it was a different Navy. In what way?

Duncan: Well, they started. . . you know, after they fixed our ship up--remodeled it--it was different. We operated in different waters. We went to the South Pacific, made three trips down there on convoy duty. Then they sent us up to Alaska. We stayed up there a pretty good while. I got transferred off the Raleigh, and when I left, I went to this destroyer.

Marcello: And did you spend the rest of the war on destroyers then?

Duncan: During the war, I did--on the Stoddard. We went back up to . . . this was a new destroyer. From Seattle, we went back up to Alaska and stayed there several months. Then we went to Okinawa and had radar picket duty there and almost got hit by a Kamikaze. We relieved a ship that had been sunk out there, and that was a good feeling (facetious remark).

Marcello: That's a completely different story in itself, and someday I'd really like to do some interviews on the experiences with the Kamikazes and so on at Okinawa.

Well, Mr. Duncan, I want to thank you very much for

having taken the time to talk with me. You've said a lot of interesting and, I think, very important things.

Duncan: Well, like I say, I'm not very good at this, and I know there's a lot of things that happened that would be interesting, but I can't remember it.

Marcello: Well, I'm sure that historians will find this quite valuable when they use it to write about Pearl Harbor.

Duncan: Well, I hope so.