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Interview with
Bill Overall
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Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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(Signature)
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Oral History Collection

Bill Overall

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas

Date: March 21, 1977

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Bill Overall for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on March 21, 1977, in Arlington, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Overall in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

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

Mr. Overall: I was born in Nacogdoches County in 1915.

Dr. Marcello: Were you raised in Nacogdoches County, also?

Mr. Overall: Up until I was about nineteen years old.

Dr. Marcello: And how old were you when you went in the service?

Mr. Overall: Twenty.

Dr. Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service?

Overall: Well, just to venture out into something (chuckle).

Marcello: And when was it that you entered the service?

Overall: 1936.

Marcello: So in other words, you went into the service quite a few years before there was really too much thought of war in Europe or certainly war in Asia.

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: Did economic reasons have anything to do with your entering the service?

Overall: No, not exactly.

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

Overall: I had friends in the Army.

Marcello: Now after you enlisted in the Army, where did you undergo basic training?

Overall: Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

Marcello: And when did you eventually get over to the Hawaiian Islands?

Overall: March, 1940.

Marcello: Describe this process by which you got over to the Hawaiian Islands. In other words, was it a voluntary assignment, or were you simply sent there? How did you end up in the Hawaiian Islands?

Overall: Well, I wanted to go overseas; I wanted to go to the Philippines, and I couldn't make it. They didn't have an opening, so they sent me to Hawaii.

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

Overall: Well, I didn't like it when I first got over there. It was just another Army base, you know.

Marcello: Did you go directly to Schofield Barracks?

Overall: No, sir, I went to Fort DeRussy, 16th Coast Artillery, A Battery.

Marcello: And how long did you stay there in Fort DeRussy?

Overall: Approximately ten months.

Marcello: And then you were . . .

Overall: Transferred to Schofield.

Marcello: Now at the time that you were assigned to the Hawaiian Islands, how closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs and things of that sort?

Overall: Well, we knew we was getting pretty close to war.

Marcello: What indications did you have that war was imminent?

Overall: Well, everybody else was in war, and I knew we was getting ready for it. We'd been getting ready for it as far back as '39. Everything was getting stricter, you know--more maneuvers, more field training.

Marcello: Now at the time that you got to Schofield Barracks, what was your particular rank, and what particular unit were you in?

Overall: My particular rank? I was just a private.

Marcello: And what unit were you assigned to there at Schofield Barracks?

Overall: G Company, 21st Infantry.

Marcello: And what was your function in that 21st Infantry?

Overall: Well, after about six months I went in the kitchen as a cook.

Marcello: And is this what you were at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: Now describe what Schofield Barracks looked like from a physical standpoint; I mean, in terms of the buildings that were there and things of that nature.

Overall: Well, Schofield Barracks was actually a small town. They had more troops there settled in one place, located in one place, than any other place in the world. They had their theatres; they had all kinds of sports--basketball, baseball; they had all kinds of beer gardens. They had just anything to entertain soldiers; something was going all the time. They had clothing stores there--a big exchange. Actually, it was a small town. They had their own taxicabs and own buses. In other words, it was just a small town.

Marcello: Now were these taxicabs and buses transportation that you would use to go into Hawaii and things of that nature?

Overall: Yes, or on the post. It was a big post.

Marcello: Describe what the barracks were like there at Schofield.

Overall: Well, most of them was three-stories, you know--big concrete barracks, concrete all over. They was built in a quadrangle-type, you know; two on each side, you know. The inside of them was real nice--grass growing and everything and shrubbery. The Army had you making things look nice and kept you busy when you wasn't doing anything else (chuckle).

Marcello: Each of the quadrangles was more or less a self-contained unit, was it not?

Overall: Yes. Like the 21st Infantry, 35th Infantry and everything . . . artillery post. But your small attachments wasn't; they was just barracks, you know--three-story barracks--the biggest part of them, you know, but they wasn't quadrangle deals, you know.

Marcello: What was the morale like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army while you were there at Schofield Barracks?

Overall: It was good.

Marcello: How do you account for that high morale?

Overall: Well, the most of the people in service at that time, they was single people. We'd been warned and knew how the Japan and Germany was, so we was ready to get after them (chuckle). But it was good. . . real good.

Marcello: Maybe this is not a very good question to ask you, but I'll ask it anyhow. What was the food like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army?

Overall: Oh, the food was pretty rough. We had the same food, but when you cook food in the dark, it's rough--and I mean in the dark. You're out in a tent or dug-in kitchen in the ground--no lights.

Marcello: Now you're referring to those periods when you were out in the field for maneuvers or something of that nature.

Overall: No, after the war started.

Marcello: No, I mean prior to the war. What was the food like there at Schofield Barracks prior to the war?

Overall: Oh, it was good. It was good. I mean, Army food is real good if it's fixed right. A lot of people cared, and a lot of them don't.

Marcello: Now you mention that you were a cook. Did you have any training to become a cook?

Overall: Oh, yes. You went to a cook and baker school.

Marcello: How long did that last?

Overall: Well, I went. . . I believe it was six months at Fort Armstrong. That was downtown. And I went two months to a school for pastry cooks--just to cook bread and cakes and things.

Marcello: How would you describe your training to become a cook?
Was it good? Fair?

Overall: Good. Yes, you had smart people in there. I mean, this head cook at the Schofield pastry school . . . they'd even call him down to Honolulu bakery sometimes to get his ideas on how to cook things. He cooked anything.

Marcello: And I would assume that the people in the Army ate pretty good there during that pre-Pearl Harbor period.

Overall: Oh, yes, yes. Of course, they fussed about it, you know (chuckle); you know how it is. It was good. Well, I'd say it was as good as you can buy, you know.

Marcello: You were talking awhile ago about sports facilities and so on at Schofield Barracks. I'm under the impression that sports--athletic competition--played a very important role in the life of the individual soldier there at Schofield during that period before Pearl Harbor.

Overall: Oh, yes. In other words, you'd get a break if you was a good fighter or anything, you know. There was a lot of people who transferred in there from all over the United States to get in that program.

Marcello: Well, I've heard that some of those units recruited just like a college would recruit football or basketball players today.

Overall: Yes, they did.

Marcello: Now as relations between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate during that period prior to the actual attack, how much thought did you and your buddies ever give to the possibility of the Japanese ever attacking Pearl Harbor?

Overall: Oh, we knew it. We didn't know it personally, but, oh, say, a year before it used to be that you didn't have to have no pass to leave. No amount of people had to stay on the post over the weekend or at night. But a year before that started, every so often--about every two months--each regiment would go out in the field on maneuvers, which was something new. All they'd do was guard--installation guard duty--maybe railroad tressles, bridges, plants, power lines, and things. You'd stay out there maybe a month just guarding it. That was all new. Well, we knew that something was fixing to happen.

Marcello: But did you really think that something was going to happen there on the Hawaiian Islands?

Overall: Well, you just didn't know. But we knew that they knew that something was going to happen. When you went on a pass, you had to check out, and you had to have so many men back in the barracks all the time in place of letting them all go.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that period before Pearl Harbor, what sort of person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Overall: Well, I just really wouldn't know. It was a lot of Japanese on that island, so I don't know whether I gave any thoughts to that or not.

Marcello: Did you have very many Japanese civilian workers on the base there at Schofield?

Overall: They had what they called "Kemo Farm." It was out from Schofield Barracks. Now it was a place, I would say, about three times as big as a gymnasium. You'd call them, and they'd come get you. You'd drink a drink up there; they had mixed drinks and beer. Then they had a big clothing place there, and you had as much credit according to your rank, see. I was told that he was a big shot in the Japanese Navy.

Marcello: Now you say "he"; this is Kemo?

Overall: Yes, the man that owned it--the Japanese man.

Marcello: His name wasn't necessarily Kemo.

Overall: No. It could have been, or it could not have been, see. They closed him down, and then they had another place there right at Schofield. You walked out and got drinks, and you had credit according to your ranks.

Marcello: Now are you referring to that little town outside Schofield? Wahiawa?

Overall: Yes, that's it. That's that little town right at the edge of Schofield.

Marcello: And there were quite a few Japanese that lived there.

Overall: Oh, all Japanese! All those joints over there was owned by Chinese or Japanese.

Marcello: How far was that from Schofield Barracks?

Overall: Well, it adjoined it. You know, there was a street between Schofield Barracks and this little . . . I forget the name of the . . .

Marcello: Wahiawa, wasn't it, or something like that.

Overall: Something like that. I forget just how it was pronounced.

Marcello: It was within walking distance of Schofield.

Overall: Oh, yes. You just walked right out.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk just a little bit about the liberty routine that took place here at Schofield Barracks. How often could you get liberty? Now I'm referring to that period prior to Pearl Harbor.

Overall: Well, most anytime you wanted it if all of them wasn't taken. But a year before that--approximately a year--you just would come and go, but the year before Pearl Harbor you had to check in and out.

Marcello: Now when you had liberty, where did you usually go?

Overall: Well, there wasn't too much to go to. You'd go to the beaches or mostly joints and things like that. That wasn't all the time because your money didn't last. It was real high over there; everything was real expensive.

Marcello: And you were not receiving too much in the way of pay at that time.

Overall: No.

Marcello: What were you receiving, let's say, around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack?

Overall: I believe around seventy-four dollars a month.

Marcello: How often did you get paid?

Overall: Oh, once a month.

Marcello: Was it at the beginning of the month? The end of the month?

Overall: Well, before the war started, they got so many sailors over there, and they was building up the Army and Air Force. They paid what they called the "Honolulu Sector" maybe the first of the month and maybe Schofield Barracks the fifteenth and then the Navy maybe on the thirtieth. So they had three paydays over there, so the town could take care of the men. There were some people over there; that was before the war started.

Marcello: How far was Schofield from Honolulu?

Overall: I guess probably . . . maybe fifteen or twenty miles.

Marcello: Do you recall how much a taxicab cost to go from Schofield to Honolulu?

Overall: I believe it was fifty cents. They generally got a load of five.

Marcello: So it wasn't really too difficult to get into Honolulu then?

Overall: No. Except on paydays (chuckle).

Marcello: What was downtown Honolulu like on payday? I'm referring, again, to that period just prior to the war--after the build-up had started and there was tremendous influx of both Navy and Army personnel there.

Overall: Well, actually. . . oh, people went down there for one thing --they'd either go to the beach or get drunk or go to a cat house.

Marcello: I've heard it said that downtown Honolulu was just wall-to-wall bodies on a weekend.

Overall: Yes, it was something. Of course, you'd go out on the beach . . . oh, there was a lot of tourists over there, you know. But there was 1,000 servicemen to each tourist you had (chuckle), you know what I mean.

Marcello: Now a lot of people say that if the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor, the best time they could have selected would have been on a Sunday morning. What these people are implying is that Saturday nights were a time of heavy drinking and carousing and so on and so forth, and consequently, the troops wouldn't be in any shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you reply to that observation?

Overall: Well, during the weekend, they had a certain amount of troops, as I said before, that they had to be in. If you was on

duty, like on the guard duty I was telling you about and everybody was doing, you wasn't out. You was in. But if you was in the barracks, you was allowed outside; you was allowed a pass. But you still had a certain amount they kept in, which they started about a year before that.

Marcello: About what percentage of the personnel would have the duty on a weekend?

Overall: Well, if you was in the barracks and wasn't on guard, I'll say that maybe a third of them. I may be all wrong, but I believe that's about the way it worked.

Marcello: Is it not true that, for the most part, Sundays were more or less days of leisure in the service at that time?

Overall: Oh, yes--Saturday and Sunday.

Marcello: In other words, I know on Sunday you really didn't even have reveille, did you, unless you had the duty?

Overall: No. No.

Marcello: You didn't have to go to breakfast or get up or whatever.

Overall: We sure didn't.

Marcello: Let me put it to you this way to get a little bit more specific. Would there be a lot of drunks coming back on the base on a Saturday night?

Overall: Right. There sure would.

Marcello: Would they have been in shape to fight on a Sunday morning?

Overall: I'd say a percentage of them wouldn't be. Some of them stayed out all night, and some of them stayed until ten o'clock and some until twelve o'clock you know.

Marcello: Now let's say in a month's time, how often would you actually get into Honolulu?

Overall: I probably wouldn't go down there. . . actually you didn't . . . Wahiawa, that's the name of that little town. You didn't have to go into Honolulu; you could go to those towns. But generally, you'd go to Honolulu.

Marcello: In other words, you wouldn't personally go to Honolulu more than to Wahiawa?

Overall: Yes, I'd rather go into Honolulu. Honolulu. . . I'd say they had everything down there. You had to line up way down the street to get into it.

Marcello: When you say "get into it," you mean into the cat houses and the barrooms and so on?

Overall: Yes. And as I remember. . . this was after the war, I know. But before the war, it was so crowded that if you got into a bar with a friend of yours or a couple of friends, you'd better tip that waitress pretty high, or they'd let you go and get somebody else in to drink, you know (chuckle).

Marcello: I've also heard it said that a lot of the Army personnel would kind of stay out of Honolulu on a weekend because of the tremendous influx of sailors that would be there.

Overall: Well, they would. They'd generally go during the week, but a whole lot of them would go. Then they had a lot of guys over there that'd just go down there and look around and take pictures. In other words, you had your drinking type and your non-drinking type--different classes of people in the Army.

Marcello: Okay, now you touched on the subject awhile ago, and it's one that I think needs to be pursued further. As one gets closer and closer to war and as conditions between the United States and Japan continue to deteriorate, how did your routine change there at Schofield Barracks?

Overall: Our routine?

Marcello: Yes.

Overall: Well, I don't believe it changed too much except that, you know, we wasn't allowed all those passes and everything.

Marcello: In other words, are you saying that at one time you could more or less go into Honolulu or go off base whenever you wanted to, that is, when you didn't have the duty?

Overall: Yes. Yes.

Marcello: And you mentioned, then, that as the situation continued to deteriorate, then the amount of passes that you were able to receive were restricted.

Overall: They was getting fewer, yes.

Marcello: How about maneuvers and alerts? What sort of maneuvers and alerts took place during these months immediately prior to the attack?

Overall: Well, it got a little bit more; the training got heavier. They'd have alerts, you know, and they wouldn't last too long. . .or maybe they would. Actually, the maneuvers over there wasn't like it was in the United States, because you didn't have the room. You just went out and covered a beach or, you know, plants or towns or water supplies and stuff like that, see.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were in the 21st Infantry. What particular function would this unit perform on these maneuvers?

Overall: Well, they was mostly actually guard duty. Of course, I couldn't say for sure, but I think. . . maybe the coast artillery or the field artillery . . . they just covered things. Well, about all we did. . . we attacked a few things, you know. . . play-like, is what it was. Then they'd play like this water supply's been captured and everything, and then we'd take it back.

Marcello: Did you have a predetermined position to which you would go when one of these alerts was called?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: But it wouldn't always necessarily be the same place of position.

Overall: Yes. In other words, in case of an alert, or if you went on guard duty, it would mostly be the same place. When we was relieved, some other infantry'd take it up, see.

Marcello: And where would you usually go?

Overall: I believe it was on the beach somewhere. I just forgot.

Marcello: How long would these alerts usually last?

Overall: Well, they'd probably last. . . some of them would last maybe thirty days. We'd go out there and stay thirty days, see, and then we'd come in, and somebody would relieve us. That's before the war started, see.

Marcello: How seriously were these alerts being taken by the individual soldiers?

Overall: Not . . . in other words, everybody knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that we was going to get in war, but it didn't bother us.

Marcello: Are you saying that most troops felt that the likelihood of the war coming there in the Hawaiian Islands was not much of a possibility? I guess what I'm saying is, did you feel pretty safe and secure there in the Hawaiian Islands?

Overall: Well, we felt pretty safe. . . more safe. . . and I was just thankful that I didn't get in the Philippines, because

my friends that went over there, most of them didn't come back.

Marcello: What gave you this sense of security there in the Hawaiian Islands?

Overall: Well, there's a lot of people there and a lot more servicemen there and everything. I don't know. . . I just wasn't too concerned. I figured we'd get out of it, you know.

Marcello: After awhile, that is, after so many alerts are called, do you more or less consider them to be a routine matter? In other words, did they kind of lose their seriousness after awhile?

Overall: Yes. Just the same way in the States when I was in the States, you know. In other words, they didn't have too many thoughts about it, you know. Just like over there, they'd say, "Well, that's just another alert."

Marcello: Let's talk about the last alert that was called prior to the actual attack. Do you recall when it occurred?

Overall: The attack?

Marcello: No, the last alert that you went on prior to the attack.

Overall: No. In other words. . . no, I sure don't.

Marcello: Okay, then let's talk about that weekend of December 7th. What I want you to do at this point is to describe for me, in as much detail as you can remember, what your routine was

on Friday, December 5, 1941. Then we'll talk about Saturday and go into Sunday. Do you recall what your routine was on Friday?

Overall: Only thing. . . let's see. I can check that out. On Friday, I got up at three o'clock and went in to fix breakfast.

Marcello: Now were you on the post at this time?

Overall: Yes. I fixed breakfast and lunch, and then I was off until Sunday at noon. That's how I can tell you what I was doing.

Marcello: Do you recall what you did on that Saturday, since you did not have the duty, that is, the Saturday of December 6, 1941.

Overall: I had a friend that had been discharged out of Schofield Barracks and he was a wealthy man. . . had a lot of money up there. He owned the taxi stand in Honolulu. A friend of mine and I went down to Honolulu that night, and we hung around his place, I guess, until about daylight. That was on Sunday morning; we went down there Saturday--I don't remember what time Saturday.

Marcello: You were there all night?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: And were you awake all that night?

Overall: (Chuckle) About half.

Marcello: What did you do that Saturday night there in Honolulu?

Overall: Oh, I just talked to people and drank and caroused around, you know.

Marcello: In other words, you weren't down there at that taxi stand the whole night.

Overall: Well, we wound up there about twelve o'clock that night. We'd just maneuvered around in town.

Marcello: What was happening in Honolulu that night?

Overall: Nothing, just the same old routine. See, Honolulu and that place over there, it didn't. . . actually, I don't know whether they closed those bars or not--I couldn't tell you that--at night.

Marcello: Did it seem as though there was just the usual amount of drinking going on and things of that nature?

Overall: Yes, same old routine. . . just everybody drinking. That's about all there was to do, you know.

Marcello: Okay, so when did you get back to Schofield Barracks?

Overall: Well, the best I can remember, this attack started at 7:30, didn't it?

Marcello: Oh, well, a little bit later than that. It was closer to eight o'clock.

Overall: It was? Well, I got back . . . I guess that's right; I believe breakfast was at eight o'clock. I got back about thirty minutes--me and my friend--before this started.

Marcello: How did you get back to Schofield Barracks?

Overall: In a taxi.

Marcello: What sort of condition or shape were you and your friend in when you come back?

Overall: Well, my friend was in real good shape, because he didn't drink. I wasn't in too good a shape.

Marcello: When you say you weren't in too good a shape, do you mean you were feeling sick or just sleepy or what?

Overall: Well, a man who had been up all night (chuckle) and drink that stuff, you know, he got a lot of bad feelings (chuckle). He's about half asleep and half sick, and the other half's drunk.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do, then, when you get back to Schofield Barracks?

Overall: Well, we got out of the taxi. This friend of mine, as I told you, he don't drink. The dice games and the poker games and everything was still going strong.

Marcello: How close was this to payday?

Overall: Actually, I don't know. I was going to go out there and play some poker, and he said, "No!" He said, "You're too drunk!" So he went with me down to the cook's room, and I made out like I was going to bed, so he goes upstairs to go to bed. So I get up and go back out there. So he looked out the window and saw me, and he come after me. We went back in the cook's room.

Marcello: Now is the cook's room on the lower level of the three-story barracks?

Overall: Yes, it's on the lower level joining the mess hall. So about that time, one of them bombs went off. It liked to have knocked us out of bed. He said, "Willie, this is the real thing!" So we get up and go out the front door, and by the time we get there, everything had popped loose. But they wasn't dropping any bombs on Schofield Barracks. Wheeler Field is down below adjoining. You could see them. Then the planes was coming over us, I guess, pecking up grass, you know, with machine guns, you know.

Marcello: In other words, the planes were strafing as they came over Schofield Barracks.

Overall: Yes, with machine guns.

Marcello: Describe the activities of these planes. In other words, how low were they coming in and things of this nature?

Overall: Well, I'd say they was right above the roof, see. . . about as close as they could get.

Marcello: Could you actually distinguish the pilots in the planes?

Overall: Yes, I think so.

Marcello: Did you know they were Japanese?

Overall: Yes!

Marcello: How did you know?

Overall: Well, on account of their deals (rising sun emblems) on them; everybody knew they was Japanese.

Marcello: Okay, so you feel the concussion, I suppose, of these bombs that are going off over to Wheeler. You come out of the cook's room, and you see these Japanese planes. What do you do at that point?

Overall: Well, just stand there (chuckle); everybody's out looking. Some of them had grabbed their rifles and went out and started shooting at them.

Marcello: What did you personally do?

Overall: Well, I stood there. Seeing as I was a cook or something like that, I wasn't trained for that. I wasn't in no squad or nothing like that; we had rifles and pistols, too, and things. But I don't know; you just stood there like most everybody else did.

Marcello: Did your particular area come under any direct strafing?

Overall: With the machine guns?

Marcello: Yes.

Overall: Yes!

Marcello: How close did this strafing come to you personally?

Overall: Well, I was standing on the porch. You could see them out in the quadrangle pecking up that. . . of course, if it hit the concrete, you probably couldn't see them, but you could

see them pecking up this grass that was growing along. Then here another one'd come; here another one'd come; maybe three or four at a time.

Marcello: What sort of thoughts were going through your mind as you saw this taking place?

Overall: Actually, I don't know whether you had any thoughts or not. You knew that. . . you wasn't thinking about getting hurt. I don't know; it just happened. Some of the people was real upset.

Marcello: What sort of resistance was the personnel at Schofield Barracks able to put against these Japanese planes?

Overall: Well, they wasn't looking for them that morning, I'll say that.

Marcello: Now you mentioned awhile ago that people were actually firing at these Japanese planes with rifles and pistols?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: Don't you think that this was done more out of frustration than anything else? There wasn't too much damage those rifles and pistols could do against those airplanes. I mean, they may get lucky once in awhile, but. . .

Overall: Well, I think that maybe. . . they just got in there before they expected them.

Marcello: How long did the strafing continue there at Schofield Barracks?

Overall: I'd say it went probably thirty minutes, maybe longer. I could be wrong about that.

Marcello: How much damage was done?

Overall: There wasn't any damage done.

Marcello: And did you stand outside on the porch and observe the entire attack?

Overall: Yes. Then I went to the back. . . me and this friend of mine, we went to the back of the building on the street to see what we could see. . . ten or fifteen minutes, maybe twenty minutes later. Well, adjoining Schofield they had Schofield General Hospital, and here comes a man and he said, "Boy, they're playing the real thing this morning! They're playing like they got real patients up there!" (Chuckle) And they wasn't playing. We used to play like that, you know, before the war, you know. Like so many wounded, they'd truck them into the hospital in the ambulance and things. But that was one thing. . . it wasn't funny, but it's just . . . he didn't know what was going on, see, and a lot of the rest of them didn't either, see.

Marcello: Now was this a civilian, or was this a military man.

Overall: Soldier.

Marcello: Were you ever scared during this period when the attack was taking place?

Overall: No. The only time that I got scared was that night. Then you was scared then, because everybody had that ammunition and everybody was shooting everywhere.

Marcello: Now when were you actually scheduled to go back on duty? Obviously, everybody's on duty now that the attack occurs, but had the attack not occurred, when were you scheduled to go back on duty?

Overall: I was scheduled to go back on duty Sunday at noon.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, from what you could observe, did everybody on the base seem to be acting in a professional manner, or was there a great deal of chaos and confusion? How would you describe the initial reaction of the people when the attack first started?

Overall: Well, everybody was confused. As I said, I was supposed to go back on duty Sunday at noon. Well, I went in and went to sleep, and they woke me up just before time to go on duty. They had moved . . . all this kitchen and dining room was perfect, and it was full of women. They had cleaned it up, because they had moved all the non-commissioned officers on the post there into these heavy barracks. Now where they went to that night. . . everything moved out of these barracks that evening except our company--G Company. There wasn't nobody there but us, I mean, just the cook force and the office force.

Marcello: In other words, they had actually converted the mess hall into an officers' barracks?

Overall: No, they just got so many women down there, you know--so many in each barrack, see. Where their husbands was. . . they was somewhere else.

Marcello: I see. These were dependents who had been moved onto the base from the housing area and so on.

Overall: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Marcello: Now was it your responsibility to care for these people in terms of feeding them and all this sort of thing?

Overall: Well, they left. They ate and they was so excited, I guess; and they wanted to help clean up the kitchen, see. But our company. . . everybody out of that outfit left but our kitchen force. Now I was scared then, because there wasn't no lights and there wasn't no nothing. The water we got, they had to haul it. They'd check all the food. They was scared to use regular water without boiling it--afraid it'd be poisoned, you know. There wasn't nothing.

Marcello: So what did you actually do, then, during the aftermath of the attack?

Overall: Then we stayed there until the next morning.

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute. Now you mentioned awhile ago that after the attack was over, you actually went back to your barracks and went to sleep?

Overall: Yes, I was in the barracks, yes. . . around the barracks.

Marcello: Were you able to sleep very well after what you had just seen take place?

Overall: It didn't bother me. I was ready to sleep (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so then you were awakened right before you were to go on duty, and about what time was that?

Overall: I'd say it was a quarter until twelve, maybe 11:30.

Marcello: Then when you went on duty, what did you actually do?

Overall: Well, I don't remember. Whether we started to getting another meal ready or not, I just don't remember. But I kind of think we did. If we did, it was sandwiches.

Marcello: In other words, it wasn't the usual Sunday meal that you had been getting together.

Overall: No, sir, because everybody has already gone.

Marcello: In other words, by this time the base has been evacuated so far as the actual military personnel are concerned.

Overall: All the footlockers and wall lockers had been emptied. They told them what to take, and all the civilian clothes was just piled up in the middle of the floor.

Marcello: And I assume that all these military units went to the pre-determined positions out in the field.

Overall: Right.

Marcello: Why was it that your particular company didn't go?

Overall: I don't know why. . . well, the company did but just the kitchen force stayed. I don't know why it was left back. I just don't know why it was.

Marcello: And did you mention that when you reported into the mess hall that the civilian dependents were there?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: How long did they stay there?

Overall: I don't remember what time they left, but they left out before night.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do that night?

Overall: We stayed in the barracks. As best I can remember, I was real shook up, and so was everybody there because they was scared. Actually, I didn't know what had taken place, you know. . . what was taking place. They didn't know that all of them had already left.

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

Overall: Well, it was just that Pearl Harbor and Wheeler Field and Hickam Field was just wiped out.

Marcello: Had you ever heard any rumors to the effect that the Japanese had landed on islands and things of this sort?

Overall: I don't believe we did except maybe some soldier got scared and said, "The Japs is coming!" you know.

Marcello: Now did you remain on the base that night?

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: And what did you personally do that night?

Overall: Oh, we slept. Of course, the best I can remember, they had some guards around the barracks.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were scared that particular night.

Overall: Yes, I was scared!

Marcello: In fact, you mentioned that you were more scared that night than when the attack was taking place.

Overall: Yes.

Marcello: Why was this?

Overall: Well, I didn't know what was going on; I didn't know whether they had landed there or what, see. I didn't know if they'd take over. One thing that made it a little bit scary was that there wasn't no lights.

Marcello: In other words, everything was blacked out.

Overall: I mean everything.

Marcello: Did you hear a lot of sporadic gunfire that night from trigger-happy GI's?

Overall: Oh, yes, people was nipping around, you know.

Marcello: I guess that would have been another good reason to stay inside.

Overall: In other words, people was scared, and they was moving out, and they was letting their guns go off and everything. It was a rule before then, you know, if you was alerted, you waited until you got in a position to load your rifle and everything. But there was a few people shooting around this; they was shook up.

Marcello: Now by this time, were you giving very much thought to the Japanese civilians on the islands? In other words, did you perhaps think that they might engage in some sort of sabotage or fifth column activity?

Overall: Well, I don't know about the other people, but there was just about four or five of us there in the barracks, see. Yes, they would talk about that, and there was a little bit of talking about everything.

Marcello: I've heard it said that on that Saturday evening of December 6th that the drinks were flowing rather freely up at Wahiawa. A lot of people have said that actually the Japanese were the ones who were buying these drinks for the GI's and so on. Had you ever heard that story?

Overall: No, sir, I hadn't.

Marcello: Okay, what did you do the following day? This would make it Monday of December 8, 1941.

Overall: Well, we moved out in the field where the other battalion was. That's orders coming from headquarters. We had an

ice box on wheels that we moved out there for the kitchen, and we had a tent. Of course, we set up. Now the roughest part of that was Monday night. . . oh, they had that heavily guarded--that battalion--everywhere with machine guns, automatic rifles. When they would change guards. . . I think they changed guards at twelve o'clock at night, and they'd get in a battle amongst themselves. A few got killed in there.

Marcello: In other words, when one guard would come to relieve another one, they wouldn't give the proper password or whatever.

Overall: Get scared. And then they started the practice of you went on guard at around sundown; you wasn't relieved until about sun-up so he could see.

Marcello: How long did you stay out on the field altogether?

Overall: Let's see. . . we would. . . I got hurt July 7th. We'd been out there all that time. It was a little bit better, but . . . like cooking in this tent, see, in the dark, you wasn't even . . . completely dark. Well, you put eggs in there to cook them. . . well, you couldn't see. You'd cook bacon, and you couldn't see. But the other troops was working so hard that they'd eat it and not gripe about it, because they was digging barbed wire gun emplacements and everything down on the beach, see. Now that was pretty hard to put out something like that, but you couldn't see.

Marcello: There was a question that I should have asked earlier and forgot to, so I'll ask it now. What was the weather like on that Sunday, December 7, 1941?

Overall: The best I can remember, it was nice. It was nice over there most of the time.

Marcello: In other words, are you saying that it would have been a good day for an air attack?

Overall: Yes (chuckle). Yes, it sure was, the best I can remember, you know. It's been a good while.

Marcello: Mr. Overall, is there anything else concerning the Pearl Harbor attack that you think we need to get as part of the record? Is there anything that I haven't touched upon or that we haven't talked about?

Overall: Well, I don't guess this'd be anything. . . but probably just the hardship on the soldiers, you know, just sleeping in those dugouts and underground and stuff like that, you know.

Marcello: You're referring to that period when you went out into the field after the actual attack.

Overall: Yes. Yes. Everybody was worked real hard, you know, and they closed down everything. If you happened to get to go somewhere, there wasn't nothing open.

Marcello: In other words, all the bars and so on were closed after the attack.

Overall: Yes. There were very few eating places open. In other words, a person could never realize. . . if he was sitting at home and they do away with everything. . . all of his clothes--of course, we had our uniforms--and all his food and his water, his light and his gas and everything, you won't miss it until it's gone (chuckle). That's a real . . . in other words, it's kind of a sad situation just to see everything left behind just like that (snaps fingers). All the bars was closed, I believe, for about three or four months.

Marcello: Of course, during that three or four-month period, you probably didn't have too much liberty anyhow, did you?

Overall: No, sir. In other words, you might. . . maybe one or two men would get to go over. Of course, being as I was working in the kitchen, I got to make a lot of trips there back to headquarters and the barracks maybe to pick up water or go . . . I didn't have to, but I'd just go with the truck driver. Where there wasn't no booze, it was a pleasant place over there. But when they let the booze back--the first day they let it--everybody was in fights and in jail and everything. So I used to drink all the time, but after I saw that. . . this country'd be a changed country if they didn't have it.

Marcello: Okay, well, Mr. Overall, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You've said a lot of

very interesting and important things. Scholars are going to find your comments very valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Overall: (Laughter) Well, actually, to get exactly what happened, you would have to get different people from different bases.

Marcello: Well, that's why we need to do as many of these interviews as possible.