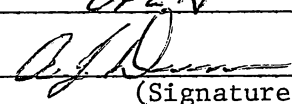


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Interview with
A. J. Dunn
July 9, 1978

Place of Interview: Corpus Christi, Texas
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Oral History Collection

A. J. Dunn

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Corpus Christi, Texas

Date: July 9, 1978

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing A. J. Dunn for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 9, 1978 in Corpus Christi, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Dunn in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the heavy minelayer USS Oglala during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Actually, the Oglala was the flagship of the entire mine force at Pearl Harbor during this period.

Mr. Dunn, to begin this interview, 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. Dunn: I was born on October 23, 1922, here in Corpus Christi, and, as a matter of fact, the homestead still stands. I went to school here and graduated from high school and went into the Navy in October, 1940.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service in 1940?

Dunn: I actually went into the Navy to stay. I went into the Navy for a career, but after the war changed things and my six-year hitch was up, well, I got out.

Marcello: Why did you select the Navy as opposed to some other branch of the service?

Dunn: I've always had the sea in my heart, I guess. Living and born around it, I always wanted to go to sea.

Marcello: In 1940, when you enlisted in the Navy, how closely were you keeping abreast with current events and world affairs? You were--what--about seventeen or eighteen years old when you went in?

Dunn: I was eighteen that month I went in, and I kept pretty close tabs on the world situation. As a matter of fact, I had scrapbooks going on the war in Europe at the time with . . . mainly, I collected ships and ships' names and battles at sea that they had.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Dunn: San Diego, California.

Marcello: When you thought of the country getting into war or the possibility of the country getting into war, did you think more in terms of Europe at that time rather than the Far East?

Dunn: I really didn't. I had every desire to go to the Hawaiian

Islands, where I had several friends from Corpus Christi that were in the fleet there. It was also a desire of mine to get to the Asiatic Fleet eventually.

Marcello: Why did you want to get to the Asiatic Fleet?

Dunn: This had a lot of romantic desire or something you always read in story books and sounds like it would be really exciting. At that age, well, I guess that's what everybody wants.

Marcello: I'm sure that later on you were able to meet some of those Asiatic sailors, and they were really characters, were they not?

Dunn: That's right, they were, especially the ones that had done any time over there at all. And later on, I found out why.

Marcello: We'll talk about those later on after we get you aboard the USS Oglala and out of boot camp. Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record, or was it simply the normal Navy boot camp?

Dunn: Well, it was the normal Navy boot camp with one exception. When we did our time there and it came to the day we were to get our orders to leave, we were going for our medical examination, and I came up with the German measles. Everybody got transferred except for me.

Marcello: What happened at that point?

Dunn: I went to the Navy dispensary where I spent the Christmas holidays in with all the shades drawn and everything that goes with it (chuckle).

Marcello: I'm sure that must have been a disheartening experience.

Dunn: It really was. It seemed like you were cut off from . . . well, everybody you knew for one thing, and you were just left alone, not knowing what they were going to do with you next.

Marcello: What a terrible way to start a Navy career! How long did boot camp last at that time?

Dunn: I don't remember exactly. It seems like it was about three months at that time. They were rushing them through even then.

Marcello: But they really hadn't cut back on boot camp yet. I think later on they cut it back as far as eight weeks or maybe even less than that.

Dunn: That's what I understand. We got the full course, I believe, or seemed like we did, anyway.

Marcello: Where did you go from boot camp?

Dunn: I went as a one-man draft (chuckle) aboard the aircraft carrier Enterprise, which was right across the harbor from the training station. We went to sea on maneuvers and went back into Long Beach, California, where I was transferred to the

USS Neosho, an oil tanker which was going to Pearl Harbor to the ship that I was to be stationed on, the USS Oglala.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that your duty on the Enterprise was designed only as temporary duty?

Dunn: It was strictly as a passenger--just temporary until we got to further transportation.

Marcello: I assume that, while you were on the Enterprise, you were probably in the deck force.

Dunn: We were treated as passengers, and we didn't really have any duties assigned to us because it was for such a short time.

Marcello: And then like you mentioned, you were transferred to the Neosho, which was to take you to your permanent station or permanent ship, which was to be the USS Oglala. I gather that the Neosho must have taken quite a few people from the West Coast over to the Hawaiian Islands, mainly because it made so many trips itself.

Dunn: That's right. We had a pretty good number of people that were being transferred to the Hawaiian Islands, but to different ships. As a matter of fact, I was the only one that went aboard the Oglala from this group.

Marcello: Had you heard anything about the Oglala before you actually saw it yourself for the first time?

Dunn: I had no idea what to expect.

Marcello: So you go over to the Hawaiian Islands, and I suppose we could say that one of your dreams was fulfilled. At least you got to the Hawaiian Islands.

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: What were your first thoughts when you saw the Oglala?

Dunn: Well, I thought, "I hope I don't have to stay on this ship forever." Later on, I found out that a person going into the mine force was supposed to, I think, do four years before you could get transferred to the fleet for some reason. I guess it kept some of them in the mine force that wouldn't ordinarily want to stay.

Marcello: Describe what the Oglala looked like from a physical standpoint.

Dunn: It looked more like a transport ship that had two huge doors in the stern. This is where the mine tracks came out and where you would dump the mines into the sea systematically. The Oglala was capable of carrying 360 mines. It was a pretty good-sized ship.

Marcello: I gather that it must have been a fairly old ship.

Dunn: Real old. We had pulling whaleboats as lifeboats; we had the old crow's nest where I stood watches like everyone else; we had steam deck winches. Most everything was run by steam.

Marcello: Now you mentioned in our pre-interview conference that the

Oglala had seen duty during World War I.

Dunn: It supposedly laid mines in the North Sea during World War I, and there was a plaque on the quarterdeck stating the duties that the Oglala had seen during World War I.

Marcello: Now was it a metal ship or was it a wooden ship?

Dunn: It was an all-metal ship, but it did not have watertight compartments.

Marcello: I guess it would have been pretty tough to have watertight compartments with all of those mines aboard.

Dunn: If you had a load of mines, I imagine it would send you to the bottom pretty quick (chuckle).

Marcello: Now when you initially went aboard the Oglala, what sort of a reception did you get? After all, you were a "boot," so to speak.

Dunn: I was a real fortunate "boot," as you say, because I went aboard as a one-man draft, and on the trip across I became pretty salty, and they accepted me as a ship-to-ship transfer and not as a recruit. I was on there for some time before they really wised up to me (chuckle).

Marcello: How large a crew did the Oglala have? You may have to estimate this, of course.

Dunn: I would say probably no more than six or eight hundred.

Marcello: So it did have a rather substantial complement on it.

Dunn: Yes,

Marcello: Were they rapidly trying to get up to a wartime complement?
Did you suspect this, perhaps?

Dunn: I don't believe that they would have needed any more crew than what we had, because we actually laid mines just like you would during wartime. There was minefields all around the Hawaiian Islands which we looked after and checked and made sure that the minefields didn't shift around and get in the way of traffic.

Marcello: Now when you first went aboard the Oglala, what was your particular job or function?

Dunn: When I went aboard, I was assigned to the 1st Division as a topside seaman, where I was almost immediately made a bow hook on one of the motor launches. The motor launches played a pretty important part because this is what we actually checked the minefield with and at sea. A motor launch is pretty small.

Marcello: Now what exactly does a bow hook do?

Dunn: He handles the lines for the coxswain who actually operates the boat. A coxswain or an engineer handles the engine, and the bow hook handles all the lines and is responsible for tying up.

Marcello: Am I to assume that is a relatively easy job and that's why they give it to a new man? Or is it simply a way of breaking a new man in?

Dunn: Well, I would say it was a easy job, and I considered myself pretty fortunate to have an easy job like that.

Marcello: What were your quarters like aboard the Oglala? Describe them.

Dunn: I'll never forget that. We had the forward compartment which was right up almost to within the anchor windlass. The Oglala had a fairly round bottom and a shallow draft, and at sea and in heavy swells, well, you had to hold yourself in the bunk. It would be a good idea to be strapped in sometimes in a rough sea. It made you salty pretty quick.

Marcello: How were the quarters in terms of comfort or lack of comfort?

Dunn: They weren't bad at all other than that. We had good ventilation. Later on, some of the other ships I spent time on didn't have near as good a ventilation as we had there on the Oglala.

Marcello: Did you find that you had enough room, or were things cramped like they are on most ships?

Dunn: No, we had sufficient room in our quarters there on the ship.

Marcello: How was the food aboard the Oglala?

Dunn: Since we spent most of our time in port, we always had good food--fresh food, which you don't enjoy on a ship that stays at sea a lot.

Marcello: In general, how would you describe the morale aboard the Oglala in that period prior to the Pearl Harbor attack?

Dunn: The morale on the Oglala before the war was more like a large family. We enjoyed a lot of things that the sailors in the fleet didn't; that is, when the fleet was out, we went ashore. We had our own ship's truck, where we were able to tour the island and go on outings that the fleet, of course, couldn't enjoy because of the number that would be over there with them. Now we had it much to ourselves when the fleet was out.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the daily routine of the Oglala. Now you mentioned when you first went aboard, you were a bow hook on one of the motor launches. How long did you remain a bow hook? In other words, were you still a bow hook at the time of the attack, or were you put into some other position?

Dunn: That was one of my duties right up to the time that I left it, or it was sunk. I had other duties, of course, on the forward gun crew. I was first loader.

Marcello: That was your battle station.

Dunn: That was my battle station. Of course, we had other deck duties. When you weren't out on the motor launch, you painted or scraped paint or scrubbed paint.

Marcello: In other words, you performed all the usual duties associated with being a deck hand?

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: What sort of armament did the Oglala have?

Dunn: The armament was awfully light. Other than the 3-inch .50-caliber we had on the bow, which I was first loader on, we only had .50-caliber machine guns, I believe, other than that.

Marcello: As you mentioned previously, the Oglala obviously was not designed for combat as such. Let's talk a little bit about the training routine of the Oglala, and I'll let you pick up the story at this point. In other words, what was the typical training routine like, or a training exercise?

Dunn: When we went to sea . . . actually, we didn't have an exercise; we had a job to do. Like I say, before the war, we were laying minefields and maintaining these fields.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about these, because I have never interviewed anybody before who was aboard the Oglala, and this is the first mention I've ever heard of any of these minefields. Give me as much detail as you can remember.

Dunn: The minefields that I recall were located around Oahu and near the entrances to Pearl Harbor. There could have been others around from the other islands. I don't recall checking any over there. But they were mainly around the island of Oahu and mainly around the Pearl Harbor area, because we would go to sea in a motor launch . . . the ship would be at dock in Pearl, and we'd go out to sea in a

motor launch with a navigator and other hands that were needed to check these fields. You would insert an apparatus that looked like a megaphone just below the surface of the water, and it had glass at the end, and you could see at great depths. Each mine had a number right on top of it, and we would go from one spot to the other checking numbers and making sure that they were in place and that they hadn't drifted.

Marcello: I'm sure you had some sort of a plot to indicate where all the mines were?

Dunn: Yes, and that's another reason why we carried a navigator-- to make sure we were at the right spot.

Marcello: What kind of mines are we talking about?

Dunn: These were stationary mines, and they had . . .

Marcello: Which means that they were anchored to the bottom.

Dunn: Anchored to the bottom. They had a huge, heavy anchor which, until the mine was dropped from the back of the ship, was all one piece. The exploding part was just like a round ball, and it had its detonators sticking out around it. It laid out so much line for whatever depth water you were in and how far below the surface you wanted that mine to be.

Marcello: Now were these contact-type mines?

Dunn: Yes. I don't believe they were magnetic. They were all contact-type.

Marcello: Approximately how many of these mines were laid around in that area? And this is again something that you would certainly have to estimate.

Dunn: I wouldn't have the slightest idea there. We had just got back from the states, which was the only trip that we made away from the Hawaiian Islands while I was aboard it in that year's time. We had just got back from San Francisco--Mare Island--where we had picked up a load of mines. We had a full 360-mine load and had just unloaded it over at the ammunition dump and had tied up to 1010 Dock before the attack.

Marcello: I gather, then, that most of the time that the Oglala was at Pearl, it was normally docked, and most of the work was being done by these motor launches and so on, except when the Oglala would go out and lay mines or something of this sort.

Dunn: We would go out on trips--you might call them maneuvers--because I do recall some training that we had with the 3-inch gun during which we'd fire at a sleeve pulled by an airplane. Mainly, it was to give the admiral a tour of the islands every now and then.

Marcello: Did the Oglala actually ever lay any mines while you were aboard it during that period prior to Pearl Harbor?

Dunn: Yes, we did. I remember one exercise we had, and we did actually lay a field of mines. That location was around Oahu

somewhere. That's all I can remember.

Marcello: I assume that you were not actually in on the laying of the mines as such?

Dunn: No, I was a helmsman, and most of the seamen were. First class seaman, I believe, was the qualification needed actually to be trained for the helm. But I did stand wheel watches the time we were laying mines and other times that we would have our watch.

Marcello: Now as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, did your routine change any in terms of your activity with the mines and so on and so forth? Could you detect any changes in your routine?

Dunn: At this time, in the pre-war Navy, everything moved a lot slower, and I went from apprentice seaman to seaman second class and then from seaman second to seaman first class; and apparently some of the other people on the ship thought I was going a little too fast when I made seaman first class, because they had been waiting a lot longer and had failed the test. But I did manage to make seaman first class before the war started in the year I was on the Oglala.

Marcello: Were you still a loader on that 3-inch forward gun mount?

Dunn: Yes.

Marcello: Even though you had advanced in rank, you were still a loader.

Dunn: Right. Once you're trained for a position, they pretty well hang on to you until they have to let you go.

Marcello: How slow or how fast was advancement in rank in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Dunn: I knew several third class petty officers with two or three hash marks, so apparently it was real slow. The only actual experience a person would get during that time would be on maneuvers and not like after the war had started.

Marcello: By this time, had you given up your desire to go to the Asiatic Station, or was this still in the back of your mind?

Dunn: It was actually still in the back of my mind. I had two friends from Corpus Christi that were aboard the destroyer Ford in Manila, and I received letters from them every so often egging me on, you might say. And I had one friend aboard the Arizona, and his twin brother was one of them in the Asiatic Fleet. I don't know how they ever separated, but they did separate right before the war started. Incidentally, the one on the Arizona is still on the Arizona.

Marcello: In other words, he went down with the ship when it was blown up.

Dunn: Yes.

Marcello: Did you have any of those Asiatic sailors aboard the Oglala?

Dunn: I don't recall. There could possibly have been, because there

were some old hands there. This first class boatswain's mate who actually headed up the first division was an old, old "salt" with several hash marks. He could have possibly been in the Asiatic Fleet at one time.

Marcello: I gather that most of those people were colorful characters. I've heard that the majority of them had many tattoos, and some of them, at least when they were on the Asiatic Station, had gold earrings and things of this sort.

Dunn: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: I'm sure if you had run across them and had been able to listen to any of their sea stories, that would have been rather impressive to an eighteen-year-old at the time.

Dunn: It would make you want to go that much more (chuckle).

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine of the Oglala. You had mentioned it a little bit earlier. How did the liberty routine work for the crew aboard the Oglala?

Dunn: We had regular section liberty like we did later on after the war started, only it was a whole lot better. We were able to get all the liberty you wanted, you might say. And, as a matter of fact, on twenty-one dollars a month you didn't make too many liberties. I found that it was real beneficial to stand-by the mess cooks and make a little bit of that money. They paid pretty good to stand-by for them while they made special liberty, which I did quite a bit.

Marcello: So you did have some experience in mess cooking aboard the Oglala.

Dunn: Yes. It was a little different, of course, after the war started. Each mess cook had a given number of tables. He was responsible for these tables and to make sure everybody had what they wanted. It went as far as furnishing sauce and such things that you wouldn't get from the galley, and in return each one of the crew members would come through with a tip at the end of the month. So these mess cooks really looked after their tables.

Marcello: Is it not true that they would usually set a bowl on the table at payday, and each person at the table would contribute so much according to his rank and according to how well the mess cook had served the table?

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: Now awhile ago, you mentioned that . . . well, let me back up for a minute. I assume that you liked mess cooking, but you didn't like it enough to remain a mess cook all the time.

Dunn: That's right. I liked the money part (chuckle).

Marcello: I gather that permanent mess cooking meant there would be virtually no chances for advancement in rank or anything of that sort.

Dunn: That's true. But as slow as advancements came then, a man considered himself fortunate to be a mess cook, and he would

stay with it as long as he could.

Marcello: Awhile ago you said you had section liberty. What do you mean by that?

Dunn: Each division had its own section setup, and each day a certain section would have liberty for that day.

Marcello: Was it a port and starboard-type liberty?

Dunn: I don't recall. I had so many different types of liberty sections that I don't recall that particular one, but all I remember is that it was a section. I think it was more of a division section than it was port and starboard.

Marcello: Which meant that how much liberty might you be able to get within a week's time?

Dunn: I think it amounted to just about every other day.

Marcello: When you had liberty, when did you have to return to the ship?

Dunn: Usually, by division roll call the following morning.

Marcello: Evidently, the expiration of liberty varied from ship to ship. I know that most of the personnel on the combat-type ships had to be back aboard at midnight. And then like you mentioned, in other cases, the personnel from other ships could stay out all night, just so they were back in time for duty the next day.

Dunn: That's true. I remember some of the other ships did have to be back in at night. But since we were more or less a permanent fixture there at Pearl, we had some other privileges that

they wouldn't have.

Marcello: I would assume that you probably couldn't have stayed ashore all night too often anyway, considering your pay and the lack of living space.

Dunn: That's exactly right (chuckle). You couldn't hardly afford a room other than at the YMCA.

Marcello: Do you recall what the YMCA charged at that time?

Dunn: It was a very small amount. I stayed there several times when I went over to spend more than one day and one night. Then a dollar was a lot of money. I don't remember exactly what it was, but it wasn't much.

Marcello: What did you normally do when you went ashore?

Dunn: We spent a lot of time touring the island. There was a lot to do over there on Oahu, and I remember going around the island several times. I spent a lot of time out at Waikiki. We had a pretty nice beach there to swim from. That was the biggest part of it. There was always something to do in Hawaii.

Marcello: I guess a great deal of activity for the sailors centered down around Hotel and Canal and Beretania Streets, also, did it not?

Dunn: There was a lot of activity down there, I remember that.

Marcello: Is it not true that on a weekend that area was very, very crowded even before the war?

Dunn: Yes, I'd say so. A lot of beer joints and other kinds of joints were there. There was a lot to do there (chuckle).

Marcello: Now, many people like to say that if the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor, that the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. How do you feel about that?

Dunn: That's probably true, because there were so few that actually stood any type of duty on Sunday. This would be in their favor. Everybody is relaxed, and a typical Sunday is not much on guard about anything. I'd say that Sunday would have been an excellent time to hit.

Marcello: Sunday is a day of leisure; it's a "holiday routine," is it not . . .

Dunn: Right.

Marcello: . . . if one doesn't have the duty?

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: Was there any specific time that you had to get out of bed on a Sunday morning?

Dunn: Some ships, yes; some ships, no. Some were very lax, and if you didn't have a watch to stand, well, you could sleep in on Sunday morning. Some of them had muster just like they did any day of the week. Some of the more military ships like in the fleet had all the regular ceremonies, and you had to be present.

Marcello: On a Sunday morning, what percentage of the crew might be ashore?

Dunn: I'd say at least 50 per cent and possibly more.

Marcello: I would assume that most of the officers and the higher-ranking non-coms might have been ashore, too.

Dunn: That's right. Just about, you might say, a skeleton crew of officers would be aboard--the ones that had watches to stand.

Marcello: Now, as one gets closer to December 7, 1941, did you have more general quarters drills or anything of that nature aboard the Oglala?

Dunn: I don't believe we had any more than we did when I first went aboard in the first part of 1941.

Marcello: In other words, it was business as usual right up until December 7th. You couldn't detect too much of a change in your routine at all.

Dunn: No, that's right.

Marcello: Did you or any of your buddies in your bull sessions ever talk about the possibility of the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor?

Dunn: No, I don't recall ever even talking about the possibility. There was talk about what was going on in the European theater, of course, but the Japanese were never really given too much thought.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that pre-Pearl

Harbor period, what sort of person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Dunn: Well, a little-type fellow (chuckle) with slant eyes is about all I ever had in mind.

Marcello: I guess you probably had come in contact with quite a few Japanese there in Honolulu. You couldn't avoid them.

Dunn: That's right. There was a number of Japanese living there, and some of them had been born and raised there at the islands--Japanese and Chinese. It was a pretty good mixture . . . kind of a boiling pot.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to that weekend of December 7, 1941, so let's go into this period in a great deal of detail. Now, refresh my memory if I'm wrong, but did you tell me earlier that the Oglala had just come back from the West Coast with a load of mines?

Dunn: That's right. And the only time that we ever went anywhere outside of the islands was that one time--to pick up this load of mines at Mare Island, San Francisco. This was just two or three weeks before the actual attack. We had just went over and tied up to 1010 Dock, and, by the way, I had got a five-day pass, and I was in Honolulu up until Sunday, December 7th. I had got up real early. I had stayed over at the YMCA, and my main purpose for this five-day pass was to get all my Christmas shopping done and which I did. I completed

it and I was supposed to go back on Sunday morning and go over to the Arizona and meet W. J. Sherrill, who was a personal friend of mine, and we were going to go back to Waikiki.

Marcello: So this is where you were, then, when the actual attack started, that is, over at the YMCA.

Dunn: Yes, when it first started. Like I say, I was ready to go back and meet him, so I immediately grabbed the first cab, and we were en route to Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: In other words, you had gone over to the Arizona to . . .

Dunn: I was going aboard the Arizona to meet him, and we were both going back to Waikiki.

Marcello: I see. So you were in the taxicab, then, when you actually heard about the Pearl Harbor attack?

Dunn: Right.

Marcello: Okay, pick up the story at that point. You get in the taxicab, and you're heading toward the Arizona.

Dunn: Of course, everyone was excited, including the taxicab driver,

Marcello: How did you hear the news?

Dunn: Every radio in town seemed like it was turned up all of a sudden. It was coming from every direction : "All personnel return to your ships and stations! This is not a drill! This is an emergency!"

Marcello: What happens at that point when you hear that message and when the taxi driver hears that message?

Dunn: He was real shook up. He got us to Pearl in record time. I never remember making that trip in such a short time.

Marcello: Now, it was just you and the taxicab driver?

Dunn: No, the cab was full of men, and we were all in whites. As soon as he got to the gate, instead of his usual procedure, you know, he just slowed up and everybody dismounted from the cab (chuckle). He never stopped to collect his fees or anything else; he was just gone, because at that time there were shells hitting all around the gate area.

Marcello: Okay, so now where is the Oglala located with relation to the gate to Pearl Harbor?

Dunn: It was several blocks from the gate. Ten-ten Dock was located right close to the fleet area and the dry docks. It was real close to the dry docks. I immediately headed in that direction, and I found myself running down the street with a group, and everybody was in whites. I got a flash of a plane making a dive at us, and I knew what he could see with all these guys running along in their whites, and so everybody hit the ditch. By that time, tracers were bouncing around--all around us.

Marcello: What sort of a ditch was this?

Dunn: It was just a little shallow ditch alongside the road. It

was as close to ground as we could get (chuckle). Immediately, there was a chief in this group, and he grabs off me and several others and says, "Follow me! We're going to the dry dock! There's two destroyers afire, and we're going to help to fight it,"

Marcello: They had already hit the Cassin and the Downes, in other words.

Dunn: Yes, the Cassin and the Downes. And we went along with him to the dry dock, and we were on the fire hoses when someone told us to get out of there. Everything on the ships were ablaze, and I could see they had depth charges and torpedoes, both, topside. So I had just cleared the area and just went around the building when one of them exploded, and there was debris of all sorts falling like rain.

Marcello: How long were you fighting that fire there?

Dunn: It doesn't seem like it was too very long--not more than fifteen minutes, twenty minutes.

Marcello: Now, by this time, were things getting more or less organized?

Dunn: It was still was pretty well chaos and confusion at this point, because I recall the Arizona actually blowing up about this time.

Marcello: Did that affect you at all from where you were located?

Dunn: It was just a tremendous explosion. It kind of rattled your teeth a little bit. Then I immediately started toward where

the Oglala was tied up. I was running down the street, and some yard workmen kept hollering, "Come on in here and get out of the way!"

Marcello: Where were these yard workmen?

Dunn: They were standing in one of these buildings--maintenance buildings--and I looked up at the top, and the roof was glass--mostly glass--so I just continued on my way (chuckle). I arrived at 1010 Dock, and by that time, the Oglala had already rolled over on its side.

Marcello: Now, some time prior to the attack, the cruiser Helena had come up and tied up outboard of the Oglala, had it not?

Dunn: No, the Oglala was tied up outboard of the Helena, and they actually took a torpedo. The torpedo went under the Oglala and hit the Helena. The explosion ripped apart plates on the Oglala, and the Helena remained afloat. They shut their watertight doors and just moved up the dock. So that's where the story of being sunk from fright came from (chuckle).

Marcello: In other words, there was a story going around afterwards that the Oglala was so old that it actually sunk from ^{fire} ~~sight~~ after the Helena had been hit?

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: Okay, so you get up to the Oglala, and you discover that it is already sunk. Had it turned over, or had it simply gone straight down to the bottom?

Dunn: It rolled over and it was on its side at this time, and it kept going until it was completely bottom up. I've seen some pictures with the bottom up. But I didn't stay around there that long. There was several of the ship's company around there and several officers. I noticed this destroyer pulling away from the dock, and me and a friend of mine decided we would take leave of that place, and we run and jumped aboard this destroyer that was backing away from the dock.

Marcello: What destroyer was this?

Dunn: This was the destroyer Mugford. We went to sea, and I guess this is the destroyer that was talked about later on in later stories. The only ship to actually get out of Pearl was a destroyer; and I know I was on that one. I don't know of any more that actually got out of there.

Marcello: Did the Mugford head straight out of the harbor without any further incident?

Dunn: We went right straight out, and we passed Battleship Row as we went. The Nevada at that time had already backed down on the beach, and they were pretty much afire from the bombs that they had taken. We went on to sea, and just as soon as we cleared the harbor, why, the old routine that everyone had in their minds was, "Clear ship for action!" Everything went over the side; all the mooring lines and

mess tables and what-have-you went over the sides immediately.

Marcello: Is this the sort of activity that you participated in?
I was going to ask what you did after you got aboard the Mugford.

Dunn: I had no more than went aboard, and they sent me and my shipmate below to send up ammunition to one of the 5-inch guns. And neither one of us had really seen an automatic ammunition hoist before, but I guess we learned how to operate that in two to three minutes' time.

Marcello: Now was everything being done in a rather professional manner aboard the Mugford down here where you were loading ammunition?

Dunn: Considering everything, I believe everything was coming off just like they had been trained to do. In our instance, we were doing something we weren't trained to do, but apparently we were getting it up there.

Marcello: What did you do after you got out into the open water?

Dunn: After we got out of the magazine--the ammunition hoist--they assigned us as lookouts and what-have-you as regular seamen duties. At this time, actually, all I owned was the pair of white trousers I had on and a skivvy shirt. My jumper and my hat got lost somewhere. I was issued a lifejacket, so I had a lifejacket and a pair of white trousers and a

skivvy shirt for about seven days. That's kind of hard to wash.

Marcello: How long did the Mugford stay out?

Dunn: We were out seven days and six or seven nights before we came back into Pearl.

Marcello: In the meantime, did you rendezvous with other ships out there as other ships eventually cleared the harbor?

Dunn: Yes, we joined up with a small task force consisting of a couple of the old cruisers which, I understand, were near the islands. They weren't in Pearl, but they were near there. Several destroyers . . . I forget how many ships were in this task force which was supposed to have been looking for the Japanese attack force. But we were looking to the south, and I understand that they were to the north.

Marcello: It was probably a good thing that you didn't run into Japanese task forces.

Dunn: It probably was, no better equipped and armed than we were.

Marcello: I'm sure that during that period the ship must have been one big rumor mill.

Dunn: We really actually didn't have time, and everyone was in a state where they didn't do too much storytelling and such. Of course, things were happening and happening pretty fast. We did sink a submarine that was actually confirmed later on. This was not too far out of the mouth of Pearl. We ✓

dropped depth charges, and this is the first time I'd been aboard a destroyer when they did drop depth charges. I was below decks, and it sounded more like we took the hit when the depth charge went off.

Marcello: I guess that must have been a rather frightening experience.

Dunn: It was to me (chuckle).

Marcello: Were you still down in that magazine or the handling room or whatever?

Dunn: Every time they would sound general quarters, I would end up down below decks in a magazine somewhere. This didn't make me too happy.

Marcello: You liked to be up on deck where you could see what was going on.

Dunn: Where I could see what was going on (chuckle).

Marcello: And get out of there in a hurry if you had to.

Dunn: That's right.

Marcello: I assume you probably had many submarine scares?

Dunn: We had several submarine alerts on that particular trip.

Marcello: Real or imagined?

Dunn: It's hard to say. There were probably several of them true besides the one that we actually sank.

Marcello: Were you possibly speculating as to whether or not the Japanese had landed in the Hawaiian Islands or were about to land or anything of that sort?

Dunn: This was the general trend of thought. When I went aboard the destroyer, I thought, "Well, I'm getting out of here before they do land troops!" You know, well, everybody seemed to think, "Well, they are going to take the place over, and we're wanting to get out!"

Marcello: After the attack was over and you had been at sea a couple of days and perhaps had a chance to calm down just a little bit, what was the general mood or attitude aboard the ship? In other words, was the attitude one of anger? Fear? Lack of confidence? How would you describe the attitude?

Dunn: I think it would be more of anger. Most of them were saying, "Well, let's go get them!" This was the type of mood they were all in. They probably would have if they had a chance to go after them right then.

Marcello: During this entire episode--from the time that you hit the gate at Pearl Harbor until you got aboard the Mugford--did you notice any acts of heroism that particularly stood out in your mind? Is there any action or any activity that anybody did that seemed to stand out?

Dunn: No.

Marcello: How about that chief who evidently initially took some initiative in getting you over to fight the fires on those destroyers?

Dunn: Everyone was doing the duties that they were trained to do,

and this is the only thing you were thinking of. You were probably so scared, you know, that you were just doing what you were taught to do, and that's what everyone seemed to be doing. I'm sure they were probably all as scared as I was, but they did things automatic because that was the way they were taught.

Marcello: In a situation like this, do you ever get a chance to see the "big picture," so to speak, or are you simply concerned with your own particular function and little world?

Dunn: No, I think everyone seen that "big picture" as it was; it was there. There was a lot of activity, but I can recall seeing most of it--the motor launches out there picking up survivors, and the antiaircraft fire in the sky where it looked like a fly couldn't hardly have flew through there without getting hit.

Marcello: Did you observe this when you were moving out on the Mugford?

Dunn: Yes. I also saw the high altitude bombers that the Japanese still had in the area. I think they were more for surveillance and taking pictures. But during the actual time when the planes were flying low, and strafing and everything, well, you didn't miss too much.

Marcello: Well, let's go back just a minute and talk about a few of these things. You mentioned that you did observe the Japanese torpedo planes and so on when they came in. Describe their

tactics and what you can remember about these torpedo planes that actually took part in the initial wave.

Dunn: Well, the initial wave I didn't see. This was a little later on down the line and when they were actually still strafing and dropping bombs. I don't believe they were dropping any torpedoes at that time. I think they had already dropped their loads and had already cleared the area. At this time, I wouldn't say it was over, because we were still getting blasted, and there were still fires and explosions going on from the first wave of the attack. All I can remember is that I had one thing on my mind, and that was to move out of there someday, somehow.

Marcello: How low were those planes coming in?

Dunn: This one that strafed us there at the gate was quite low. You could see the pilot and everything. It was just real visible.

Marcello: Describe what the pilot looked like.

Dunn: I don't think I had that much on my mind (chuckle). I seen this airplane with a big rising sun insignia on the wings, and that was enough for me.. I don't believe I really paid that close attention. I was looking for a hole (chuckle).

Marcello: By that time, you had found that roadside ditch (chuckle).

Dunn: Yes (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, well, Mr. Dunn, is there anything else relative to the

Pearl Harbor attack that we need to talk about and that we haven't mentioned thus far?

Dunn: I believe that pretty well covers my part of it. After the seven days that I spent at sea and got back in, well, of course, there was still this thought that it could happen at any time again, and everyone was on their toes and looking for submarines and airplanes any minute.

Marcello: Well, this is a good place to end this interview, and I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You have said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure that the scholars will find your comments most valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Dunn: It's been my privilege.