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Interview with
Eugene Woodward
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Place of Interview: Corpus Christi, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

Eugene Woodward

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Eugene Woodward for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 8, 1978, in Corpus Christi, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Woodward in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the light cruiser USS Phoenix during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Now, Mr. Woodward, to begin this interview, just 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.

Mr. Woodward: I was born in Waco, Texas, on February 18, 1922. When I was about two years old, we moved down here to Corpus Christi, and I was raised out at Chapman Ranch. It was down there next to the Kleberg County line. I went to school there--high school. I joined the Navy in 1940.

Dr. Marcello: So you would have been about eighteen years old when you

joined the Navy?

Woodward: You're absolutely right.

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

Woodward: Well, I was going to go to school--I was going to go to A & M--and I heard that in order to work your way through, you had to get up there early. So I made the trip up to College Station to get interviewed for some jobs that happened to be on the campus. When I got there, they was all full. I didn't have any money, so I said, "Well, I guess I'd better go to school somewhere." So I thought . . . well, the Navy had a big flashy sign, so I went in.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?

Woodward: Well, for one thing, I had a brother in the Navy, and he didn't dislike it. Well, I really didn't have to join anything; I mean, it was just the idea of something to do--to get away from the Chapman Ranch, I suppose (chuckle). You know, an eighteen-year-old kid had the wanderlust.

Marcello: And you figured that the Navy would give you one of the best opportunities to travel?

Woodward: Yes. And it was clean. I didn't particularly cotton to walking around in mud and sleeping in pup tents and fighting mosquitoes like I seen some of those guys doing.

Marcello: At the time you joined the Navy, how closely were you keeping

abreast of current events and world affairs and things of that nature?

Woodward: Pretty close. I was kind of interested in Hitler's idea. In fact, the speeches he made about the possibilities in the Rhineland was kind of interesting to me. But then after I got into the Navy, I lost touch of it. I was more interested before than after I got in, because I was really too busy, and they didn't have that good a newspaper on the ship, anyway.

Marcello: When you thought of the country possibly getting into war, did you think more in terms of Europe rather than the Far East?

Woodward: I knew or felt like we would be in the war with Germany, because whenever the Reuben James was sunk, it was alleged that the Germans sunk it. And then, of course, there was a disturbance in Indochina, you know, and Roosevelt threatened war if they continued that. So it was kind of a tossup, really, I suppose. In the later part, I had a little feeling we'd have war with Japan, but not that much.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Woodward: San Diego.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record, or was this the normal Navy boot camp?

Woodward: It was normal. I suppose it was normal for boot camp (chuckle).

Marcello: How long did it last at that time?

Woodward: Thirteen weeks, I think.

Marcello: So they had not really cut back on the amount of time one spent in boot camp, then.

Woodward: I don't know.

Marcello: Later on, I think it was cut back as short as six weeks, when they were trying to get men out into the fleet as quickly as possible. Where did you go from boot camp?

Woodward: Immediately from boot camp, I went to the destroyer base there in San Diego. I was assigned to a work detail, you know, to clean up those old four-piper "tin cans" going to England. You remember they had the trade with England.

I was working down in the bilges in one of those things, and I had a file scraper, and I was digging down in there and dug a hole right through the bottom of that thing. That water squirted up, and I like to tore the rest of it up getting out of there (chuckle). I thought it was going to sink on me.

Marcello: You actually scraped through the bottom of the ship?

Woodward: Yes. It wasn't but quarter-inch metal, and it was all rusted. However, they sent a welder down, and he patched it up--no sweat (chuckle).

Marcello: So how long did you work there at the destroyer base?

Woodward: About . . . let's see . . . I went in in March, and I left the

destroyer base in June, so I was there between the time . . .
I was in boot camp until June, so I think on about the
6th of June--I think--I was assigned to the USS Rigel.
Then immediately we was assigned to the Phoenix.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going aboard the
Phoenix? It was a pretty impressive ship, was it not?

Woodward: Yes, it was. It was considerably different than the ones that
I had become accustomed to looking at, inasmuch as it was
clean. It had wood decks.

Marcello: It was a fairly new ship, wasn't it?

Woodward: Yes. I think it was commissioned in about 1939. I may be
wrong on that, but it seemed like it was that. Maybe it was
before that, but it wasn't old.

I remember I came aboard, and they were changing commands
the same day. We got a new skipper named Fisher--Captain
Fisher--and he stayed on . . . he was aboard her when Pearl
Harbor was attacked.

Marcello: When you went aboard the Phoenix, where were you assigned?

Woodward: The deck force. It was in the Fifth Division. The work
schedule for me was getting up and washing down the decks and
doing the normal stuff during the day. And then finally I
got into mess cooking, and I stayed there. I liked that; that
was a pretty good job. I tried to stay on it for six months,
but they wouldn't let me (chuckle), so I stayed just three.

Marcello: Let's back up here a minute. You mentioned that when you went aboard the Phoenix, you were assigned to the deck force. You also mentioned that the Phoenix had wooden decks. Did you get involved in holystoning the decks at all aboard the Phoenix?

Woodward: Oh, you bet!

Marcello: Describe holystoning because that's the part of the Navy that's no longer in existence. How would it work?

Woodward: Well, a holystone is actually a fire brick. You know, it has been broken in half. It's that same type of material--it's a coarse clay. It has a hole in it, and you stick a swab handle in it--you know, a mop handle--and you cross your arms and hold it and just move it back and forth on the teak.

Marcello: Do they wet down the deck first of all with salt water?

Woodward: Yes--wet it down and pour sand on it and grind it. It'll do a good job of cleaning it up.

Marcello: Then is the sand residue washed off with salt water?

Woodward: Yes--wash it off and then take a squeegee and clean it up and then take a mop behind that and dry it the best you can. Of course, usually, it's dry enough to where it wouldn't make any difference if you didn't mop it.

Marcello: What were some of the other functions that you performed in the deck force when you initially went aboard the Phoenix?

Woodward: Well, of course, I shined brasswork and all that kind of stuff.

I washed the paintwork, you know.

Marcello: In other words, you were involved in ship maintenance more than anything else?

Woodward: Of course, my battle station at that time was in the magazine, and my job was to handle the shells.

Marcello: Was this down in one of the lower decks?

Woodward: Yes, the magazine was down in . . . the magazine was enclosed in the 6-inch armor plate.

Marcello: In fact, this is almost down in the bottom of the ship, isn't it?

Woodward: Well, yes. It's not right on the bottom, but it's close. The shells and the powder were not in the same compartments.

Marcello: It was not fixed ammunition that the Phoenix was firing?

Woodward: No, it was semi-fixed.

Marcello: I assume their main armament were 8-inch guns?

Woodward: Six-inch. We were a light cruiser--a Boise class cruiser. It was the CL 46. It was a pretty nice ship. It had a square stern; it carried four aircraft; it had fifteen 6-inch guns and eight 5-inch guns. Well, that's what it started out with, and then we got some additional antiaircraft guns like 20-millimeters and 40-millimeters attached on it later.

Marcello: Did they all come on after Pearl Harbor, though?

Woodward: Right.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were assigned to the magazine as your

battle station. This is where they put most new men, is it not, especially those who were in the deck force?

Woodward: Not necessarily. The Fifth Division was the maintenance crew for that part of the ship, and that part of the ship had the number five turret, which was a three-gun turret with 6-inch guns. It had the gunner's mates and all the people necessary, you know, to operate that gun. The Fifth Division's battle station was that gun plus the area around it, you know, like patrols on topside.

Marcello: A while ago, you mentioned that shortly after you were assigned to the deck division, you were assigned to mess cooking duty. How come you liked mess cooking duties?

Woodward: I didn't have to shine that brightwork (chuckle). I didn't really care for that job. Of course, I didn't care much for the deck force, anyway; it was just not my cup of tea. Mess cooking was . . . there was two things about it I liked. One was that you got liberty every night, and another was that whenever we got through, we didn't have somebody come along and give us a bad time about doing something. You could just sit down and read or whatever you wanted to do.

Marcello: Also, is it not true that if the mess cook had done a good job, the people that he served would tip him on payday?

Woodward: Oh, yes! That's where I made my spending money, because I made sure I did a good job on it.

Marcello: How much could you usually pick up on payday in tips?

Woodward: Well, I had to feed about thirty men, and you'd usually end up with about fifteen to eighteen dollars. Of course, they wasn't making any money. I was making twenty-one dollars a month whether I needed it or not (chuckle).

Marcello: All the food was served family-style at that time, wasn't it?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: You'd go up to the galley and get the tureens of food and bring it back to the table?

Woodward: That's right. Of course, we had what we called a dumbwaiter that handled it. But if we had anything special, I made sure that I'd go to the galley to get it, because I wouldn't wait on the dumbwaiter because somebody would beat me to it and get it for their crew.

Marcello: How was the food aboard the Phoenix during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Woodward: For the most part, it was good. If there was a way to mess it up, they would do it. But it wasn't bad; the food was all right. We did have some excellent cooks on there.

Marcello: When did you normally get that cornbread and beans meal?

Woodward: That was on Saturday morning.

Marcello: That was always the Saturday morning meal.

Woodward: That was Saturday breakfast.

Marcello: I don't think too many people ever looked forward to that one,

did they?

Woodward: I don't know. That one wasn't that bad. I like to never got used to Yankee cornbread. It was kind of like cake; it was sweet and about half-flour. The beans wasn't bad (chuckle).

Marcello: What were your living quarters like on the Phoenix? Describe them.

Woodward: In the deck force?

Marcello: Yes, where you lived and where you slept.

Woodward: Well, where I slept was right next to the bulkhead on the side of the ship. There was three tiers high, and I was in the top bunk. I think the reason for that was because it was the hottest bunk. They had air circulating around the others; guys had some fans down there. It wasn't bad. There was also a porthole right next to it, and it was rigged to a wind scoop that let the air blow in. There was about forty men who slept in that little compartment.

Marcello: Where did you store your clothing and things of that nature?

Woodward: I had a locker. My locker was . . . well, it was across the compartment from me, and there was a tier of lockers. I guess there was about twenty in that tier. Mine was on the bottom and way in the far end of it, where I would have to pass everybody to get there and pass everybody getting back.

Marcello: I would assume that like on most ships the living quarters were rather crowded and compact.

Woodward: Yes, they were. They weren't uncomfortable; they were crowded. But when everybody got . . . like on a holiday routine, whenever people had nothing to do and were sitting down and writing letters or reading or whatever, they'd usually just get in their bunks or find a corner and play acey-deucey or something . . . cards. It wasn't bad. Of course, we had a mess hall immediately forward of where we were. This is where the mess hall I served from was.

Marcello: I guess the quarters were even to become more cramped later on as the ship came up to its wartime complement.

Woodward: Yes, but I wasn't in that part then; I had been transferred to the engineers.

Marcello: In general, how would you describe the morale aboard the Phoenix during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Woodward: I would say for the most part that we had the best "cotton-picking" ship in the whole Navy, and I'm not bragging (chuckle)-- I think it was. Most of the guys were congenial, and they got together and had fun on the beach. We won all the "E's" available from those efficiency competitions. We got paid extra for that, of course. So it was a good ship.

Marcello: You get paid extra for getting an "E"?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: I didn't know that.

Woodward: Yes, for fleet competitions--that's right. Of course, you

also got paid for the most sharpshooters with a rifle.

Marcello: How much extra would you get if you got an "E"?

Woodward: Three dollars.

Marcello: Three dollars a payday?

Woodward: Three dollars, yes.

Marcello: One time?

Woodward: We got three dollars a payday. I don't know if . . . I think the ship's service store paid that. It came out of the revenue from the ship's service store. But we got three dollars a payday.

Marcello: As long as you kept the "E"?

Woodward: Right. Now if the whole ship won the "E" like in gunnery, each gun crew that was assigned got paid. If the engineering department did not win one, then they didn't get paid. Just the part that was competing got paid. It was fleet competition. It was pretty interesting, I thought. At least it was a change and took some of the boredom off of it.

Marcello: How often would this fleet competition be held? Once a year?

Woodward: Yes. Usually, they'd have what they called manuevers; they would have a competition for firing the guns; and then they would have the efficiency runs for the engineering departments.

Marcello: In other words, I assume that somebody would be out there towing a target and the guns would fire.

- Woodward: They'd usually have a seagoing tug that'd tow a target, and the ships would fire at the target. Or a plane may be dragging a sleeve or something, and you would shoot at that sleeve.
- Marcello: When the shells exploded, there'd be different colored dyes and so on for a particular ship. Is that the way it usually worked?
- Woodward: No, they didn't all shoot at the same time.
- Marcello: Oh, I see.
- Woodward: Each ship had its own target. The shells were marked with paint on the projectiles, so whenever it would pass through the target, it would leave paint on it. So you could tell which guns it was that passed through the target and shot it.
- Marcello: How could the engineering section get an "E"?
- Woodward: Well, they had a series of maneuvers that they had to go through, and they had to accomplish this with the least amount of fuel consumption and with the least amount of general confusion. We always got the "E's" on that; that was pretty good.
- Marcello: How long did you remain in the deck force before you were transferred down into the engineering section? I think you mentioned awhile ago that you did eventually get down in the engineering section.
- Woodward: Right. I was in the engineering department just before the

war started. Well, let's see . . . well, see, I went up for seaman three times, so that was nine months. The first time I went up, I was first on the list but nobody got rated.

Marcello: In other words, there were no openings?

Woodward: No openings . . . fleet competition. The next time I went up, I was about second or third on the list, and they rated one. The next time I didn't care; I just signed my name and turned it in and got rated (chuckle). But that was effective . . . I think the Navy at that time was starting to build up, because we didn't even have any different people on the ship.

Marcello: Rank moved very, very slowly in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy for the most part, didn't it?

Woodward: Right.

Marcello: Most of the senior petty officers had quite a few years in before they achieved their rank.

Woodward: Yes, it took a while. In fact, we had one old boy . . . there was two of them. One of them was . . . this old boy was named "Bunky" Fowler, we called him. Do you remember little "Bunky" in the funny papers? Anyway, "Bunky" was a coxswain and had been in the Navy about twenty-two years, I think, and he had an old buddy who they called "Shanghai" and who worked in the V-Division--aircraft. "Shanghai" made third class, so they got over on the beach, and old "Shanghai" was bragging that he'd just been in the Navy about twenty-two

or twenty-three years and he was a third-class already. Old "Bunky" said he was an "ear-banger." (Chuckle) So they got in a big fight over this.

Marcello: Let's talk about some of the typical training exercises in which the Phoenix might engage during that pre-Pearl Harbor period. Normally, when the Phoenix embarked on a training exercise, when would it go out?

Woodward: Usually, on a Monday morning, and we would come back for the most part on Friday.

Marcello: This was more or less like clockwork?

Woodward: Yes, that was . . . I think approximately all the ships in Pearl Harbor did that type of operation--appeared to, anyway.

Marcello: In other words, it would not have taken any genius to have monitored the movement of that fleet as to when it would be out and when it would be in. It was pretty routine that most of the ships would go out on a Monday, and they would be back on a Friday.

Woodward: Well, that was usually right, but there was cases where we would stay in a whole week. I'd say for the most part, you could bet on us being out.

Marcello: What did you normally do when you went out on these exercises?

Woodward: Routine maneuvers. You know, they would play all kinds of war games, I suppose. They would dream up missions to do.

Marcello: Would you be working with other ships when you went out on

these exercises?

Woodward: Yes. The whole fleet would probably be engaged. There'd maybe be a flotilla.

Marcello: What other cruisers would you normally work with?

Woodward: Well, the Boise and the Nashville and the Honolulu and the Saint Louis.

Marcello: These were all light cruisers, too, most of them?

Woodward: Yes, all those were light cruisers.

Marcello: How much emphasis was given to antiaircraft practice?

Woodward: On our particular ship, well, we didn't practice that. We did a lot of tracking--tracking with the guns--but as far as actually firing, we didn't do that much.

Marcello: Do you think anybody really recognized how important the airplane was going to be in future wars at that time?

Woodward: No. I think the only guy that really believed in it was Lindbergh . . . and Billy Mitchell. I don't think there was anybody in the Navy that had any real strong beliefs in that way.

Marcello: I guess I can assume that the Phoenix really didn't have very much in the way of antiaircraft weapons aboard it prior to Pearl Harbor, as contrasted to what it was to have after Pearl Harbor?

Woodward: Well, we had 5-inch guns. We had four of them on each side, and that was it. Of course, we had some .50-caliber machine

guns and stuff like that, but I'm not sure that you could classify those as antiaircraft guns (chuckle). After Pearl Harbor . . . after Guadalcanal, actually, I guess . . .let's see . . . we went down to Australia and came back in 1943 and got most of the guns. We stopped and picked up some in the Sydney shipyard.

Marcello: I guess you got a lot of the 40-millimeters on it after Pearl Harbor, didn't you, eventually?

Woodward: Yes. We had no Oerlikon guns at all before Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: What caliber or millimeter was that Oerlikon gun?

Woodward: Twenties and forties.

Marcello: They were both 20-millimeters and 40-millimeters?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned that the Phoenix would normally come in on a Friday. Let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine. How did it work?

Woodward: At Pearl Harbor?

Marcello: Yes.

Woodward: Well, we'd usually get in in the morning, you know. Right after lunch, well, they would allow liberty, I'd say, at one o'clock.

Marcello: This was on Friday?

Woodward: Yes. Liberty was over for anybody under first class petty officer at seven o'clock.p.m.

Marcello: In other words, you had to be back aboard ship at seven o'clock at night?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: This would be on Friday?

Woodward: Right. I think they changed that . . . I think they did change that to ten o'clock. I don't know . . . I don't remember. That's been too long ago.

Marcello: Well, normally--at least on Saturday and Sunday--you could stay out past seven or ten o'clock. A lot of the ships, I know, had the twelve o'clock curfew, did they not?

Woodward: That could be, but we didn't. I don't think we ever came in for . . . oh, it might have been. I wouldn't swear to that. It might have been twelve o'clock.

Marcello: Did you have port and starboard liberty?

Woodward: No, we had watch sections, usually.

Marcello: Yes, but how would the liberty routine work? In other words, obviously the whole crew couldn't go ashore. I mean, how many . . . if you were in Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, how many liberties could you pull?

Woodward: I see what you're talking about. In other words, about half the crew would go at once?

Marcello: Yes.

Woodward: That's about right.

Marcello: I know it varied from ship to ship. Some of them had one liberty

out of every three, and some had port and starboard. It would vary, and I was just wondering what it was like aboard the Phoenix.

Woodward: I would say that most of the time it would probably be in sections. I'm talking about right immediately before Pearl Harbor, because they did stop port and starboard watches sometime in that area.

Marcello: Why did they do that? Why did they stop the port and starboard watches?

Woodward: I don't know. I think they really had a feeling that something could happen. They had enough people on there to set Condition Three on the ship, which was semi-preparedness for action.

Marcello: Now, as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate, did your training routine change any?

Woodward: At that time, I was in the fire room and mine didn't change.

Marcello: Did you have more general quarters drills and things of this sort?

Woodward: Oh, we had that, of course, and we would get up an hour before sunup, you know, and have a general quarters and stay until an hour after sunup. This was going on, shoot, for six or eight months before Pearl Harbor.

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

Woodward: Me?

Marcello: Yes.

Woodward: Well, first, I thought I had to see this beautiful place. It didn't take long to get that over with, so I'd usually go over and do like everyone else and go find some place to eat or hunt a gal or whatever it took. You had to go down to Fisherman's Wharf and drink a few drinks or go swimming or surf-boarding and that kind of thing..

Marcello: Did you frequent Hotel and Canal and Beretania Streets?

Woodward: Oh, I was a little reluctant to go down there and get in that line. (chuckle). No, those were some bad spots,

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

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Why is that? Why do you think Sunday morning was a good time?

Woodward: Well, the first thing is that the crews on the ships were on holiday routine and were not wakened, you know, at five o'clock. The officers and the chiefs were at least 50 per cent on the beach. Just nobody would be expecting it. And besides that, the war game and all had already been planned by our own War College, and the Japanese knew about that.

Marcello: What are you referring to?

Woodward: What?

Marcello: When you talk about the war game having already been planned by our War College.

Woodward: Well, it's not a secret that the attack on Pearl Harbor was planned as a possibility.

Marcello: In other words, what you're saying is that the Navy recognized that there was a possibility that Pearl Harbor could be attacked.

Woodward: Yes, they knew it wasn't impossible.

Marcello: On the other hand, did you and your buddies in any of your bull sessions ever talk about the possibility of an attack on Pearl Harbor?

Woodward: I didn't. I don't recall anybody that did.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your mind in that pre-Pearl Harbor period? Did you ever give it much thought?

Woodward: A postcard-type . . . well, I'd seen a lot of them there in Honolulu, but I didn't think of those as being the same as they would be in Japan. They were kind of like the coolie-type that you'd come up with, with those pyramid hats and all that kind of good stuff.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old Asiatic sailors talk about the Japanese very much?

Woodward: Yes, they had a little different regard for them than we did.

Marcello: In what way?

Woodward: Well, they knew that they could fight, and they didn't like them.

I don't know . . . maybe it was the competition from them. In fact, I knew a couple of the guys that was on the old Panay, and they didn't like them at all. I mean, they said they were sneaky. I suppose . . . well, I couldn't say for sure. I'd just be "reading their mail," so to speak. For me, I just thought they were coolie-types.

Marcello: Did you have very many of those old Asiatic sailors aboard the Phoenix?

Woodward: No. We had about six.

Marcello: They were a different breed of characters altogether, weren't they?

Woodward: Yes, after they turned "Asiatic," they were (chuckle).

Marcello: I understand all of them had lots of tattoos, and some of them used to wear a gold earring--at least when they were on the Asiatic Station.

Woodward: Yes. Well, these guys . . . I knew one of them that didn't have any tattoos, but he was definitely an individual. He didn't let things bother him too much, and I don't believe the Navy could harass him to the point where he'd tell them, "Adios, señor!" He just rolled with the tide and would go on.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to the days immediately prior to the actual attack itself, so let's talk about that weekend of December 7th. When did the Phoenix come in?

Woodward: I'm going to say on a Friday.

Marcello: What procedure did it follow after it came in? In other words, first of all, where did it normally tie up?

Woodward: Well, we tied up at C-3, I think, is where we were. It was some buoys identified as "C" numbers.

Marcello: So in other words, to go ashore you would have to take a liberty boat--a motor launch--to get ashore?

Woodward: Right.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens after you came in and tied up?

Woodward: Well, I went on the beach.

Marcello: You got liberty on that Friday?

Woodward: Yes. I went to Nanakuli. It was a recreation beach the Navy had over on the other side of the island. So, oh, four or five of us went over there. That was a special treat.

Marcello: What was there to do over there?

Woodward: Well, there was really nothing. You had some tents up there and a mess hall and some slot machines, and that's about it.

Marcello: Cold beer?

Woodward: No. You could get beer, but you had to walk about a mile after it (chuckle).

Marcello: They didn't have any cold beer there at Nanakuli, though?

Woodward: No. They had a little store down there, and that's where we got our beer. About two weeks, I guess, before that, I had been over there, and whenever I came back to the ship, I had a real eerie feeling about something happening. I wrote this

down in my diary. So I began to question folks about what was happening. "Nothing." So I forgot and I didn't even think about it again until after Pearl Harbor was attacked, but I think it was probably a premonition of something.

Marcello: Okay, so you were over at Nanakuli on that Friday of December 5th. Incidentally, when was payday?

Woodward: Hell, I don't know (chuckle).

Marcello: I've heard some people say it was the 1st and the 15th, and then I've heard other people say the 5th and the 20th. Would this possibly vary from ship to ship?

Woodward: I don't think so. I think it was the 1st and the 15th.

Marcello: Now on Saturday, did you ever have any sort of an inspection or anything of that nature?

Woodward: Oh, we had an inspection--captain's inspection--every Saturday.

Marcello: What would the captain's inspection consist of?

Woodward: Well, he went over and inspected the ship for cleanliness and you know, shipshape. He'd inspect the personnel to see if they were meeting the standards that they had set up.

Marcello: When did liberty commence on Saturday?

Woodward: Immediately after captain's inspection.

Marcello: Which was usually over at what time?

Woodward: Oh, around eleven o'clock.

Marcello: I would assume that when a ship is in port, such as the Phoenix, there is virtually no watertight integrity being maintained?

Woodward: In port?

Marcello: Yes.

Woodward: No, it's open. Well, I'll say it's open. The magazines and the double bottoms and that kind of thing were closed.

Marcello: What sort of ammunition would there be at the guns? Would there be any ammunition there at all?

Woodward: No.

Marcello: In other words, it would all be stored down in the magazine?

Woodward: We didn't even have any ready boxes up there at the guns. Of course, it was a real simple thing to get ammunition up, because everything was on the hoist, and the 5-inch ammunition was fixed. The 6-inch ammunition was semi-fixed; it wasn't like powder bags or stuff like that. It was pretty easy to . . . you didn't really need anything as far as I could tell. However, they did put some containers on there later, and then they took them off.

Marcello: Also, at the same time, the Phoenix would obviously be operating under reduced power. You would only have, what, probably one boiler lit when you're in port like that?

Woodward: Oh, yes. Just enough to maintain the ship, was all.

Marcello: Did you stay aboard ship on Saturday?

Woodward: That Saturday?

Marcello: Yes.

Woodward: No, I was over at Nanakuli.

Marcello: Oh, you had not come back aboard ship again on Friday.

Woodward: No, I was . . . the Nanakuli thing meant you'd leave on Friday and come back on Sunday night. Well, it so happened that on that day--Sunday--the Japs attacked.

Marcello: Okay, so you're out at Nanakuli all day on Saturday? What did you do on Saturday out at Nanakuli?

Woodward: Played cards and the slot machines and drank beer and just had some fun.

Marcello: What sort of shape were you in that night when you went to bed?

Woodward: I was in good shape.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that morning of December 7th. Pick up the story at this point. Describe what happens on the 7th. You're still out at Nanakuli, of course?

Woodward: Yes. I woke up about six o'clock, I suppose, and I had a little radio--a little Emerson radio--about nine inches long, you know, so I turned that thing on, and I was listening to the radio station. And this friend of mine that was with me-- I forgot who he was now--but we "moseyed" down and got some beer and came back. We started to go in the tent, and we heard this rumbling noise. It was pretty close to seven o'clock.

Marcello: How far is Pearl Harbor from Nanakuli?

Woodward: Not very far. It was about maybe five to six miles. It was

just around Barbers Point there--not very far. It might be farther than that, but just the way the island was shaped made it look not that far. But anyway, whenever we came back and had on this radio, this guy broke in and was screaming about the sailors and soldiers and marines to return to their ship or stations because we were being attacked at Pearl Harbor.

So there was an ensign in charge of the watch there, so I went over and told him what happened, and he said, "Well, go!" So we went over and picked up the blankets and took out and started hitchhiking.

Marcello: There was no transportation there to get you back to your ship?

Woodward: No, no transportation. There was about five or six of us hitchhiking, and this lady came by in one of those big old seven-passenger Packard cars, you know--she was a colonel's wife, I guess, over there at Schofield--and she stopped and picked us up, and she didn't know what was going on.

We told her, you know, and she turned her radio on in the car, and she was hearing the same thing. And the farther she got, the faster she went (chuckle). At the top of the hill, there near Pearl City, we were looking down on the harbor, and the Arizona just blew up. That woman just passed out at the wheel. This old boy sitting there beside her drove us in to the Aiea Landing, and we got out and abandoned that car. Then we watched

the fireworks from there.

Marcello: How far was Aiea Landing from Battleship Row and so on and so forth?

Woodward: From the closest battleship, it was probably, oh, 350 to 400 yards.

Marcello: Could you not drive any closer to Pearl Harbor than Aiea Landing?

Woodward: No, that's about as close as you could get.

Marcello: What did you do at that point, then, when you got to Aiea Landing? Did you just become a spectator?

Woodward: That's all. I was laying out there in a canefield on a blanket watching. That's all I could do; I couldn't do nothing. I saw the West Virginia sinking; I saw the Oklahoma turn over. I saw the Nevada get underway; I didn't see it get hit, but I saw it backing up in the channel. I saw the Boise go out and the Phoenix go out.

Marcello: Describe the Oklahoma turning over.

Woodward: That was weird. Of course, it was just punctured on port side; it was riddled with torpedoes, and it just filled up with water and rolled over.

Marcello: I guess that was a rather sickening sight to see a big ship like that simply turn over.

Woodward: It's unbelievable. The West Virginia was burning, but it just sank straight down. It may be that they scuttled it; I don't

know that this happened, but it just sat down on the bottom.

Marcello: Did you say you did see the Nevada trying to make it out the channel?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Describe that action.

Woodward: Well, I didn't watch it all the way, but it was going out, and, of course, you could see the people on topside manning the stations and firing. The Japanese was . . . it was about . . . I don't know . . . I think it was four or five torpedo planes that took out after it, and then something happened and I was watching over here (gesture). There was so much to see that you couldn't watch it all.

Marcello: Describe the tactics being used by the Japanese planes. Could you see them making their runs and so on?

Woodward: They looked like they were just on a routine flight. There wasn't nothing spectacular about it; they just flew right in just like they knew exactly what they was going to do. Whenever they would start lifting off, some of them would, you know, zigzag and pull some maneuvers, but for the most part they didn't.

Marcello: Could you detect very much resistance being put up by the ships in the harbor, that is, in terms of antiaircraft fire and so on?

Woodward: Yes. Right at first, when we first got there, there was very little. When we first saw it, we saw shells bursting all the

way from Nanakuli. But when we got over there, it seemed like there was a lull, and very little was happening. Then all at once it broke loose again. At that time, it seemed like that every ship that we had was using some means of shooting at them.

Marcello: I guess the air was no doubt filled with black puffs of exploding shrapnel and so on?

Woodward: Right. Yes, there was a lot of it falling around, too.

Marcello: Yes, all that shrapnel that goes up has to come down.

Woodward: Yes. (chuckle).

Marcello: Did any of it fall around the field where you were located?

Woodward: It most likely did, but I didn't really pay that much attention to it. I just had my mind on other things (chuckle). Now, I probably would have gotten under something, but then I was just laying up there watching the fight.

Marcello: What were your feelings when you saw the Phoenix clearing the harbor?

Woodward: Well, I saw them getting underway, and I went out there and tried to flag them down (chuckle). There was a coxswain named Dortinski, who was on the captain's gig. He and I was out there trying to flag them down. In fact, he had the gig, and so I jumped in the back of that and took off. But they wouldn't pick us up. In fact, they went out of there in a hurry.

Marcello: So where did you go then?

Woodward: We went back to the submarine base.

Marcello: Did you go back in this gig?

Woodward: Yes. We tied up at the landing there at the sub base.

Marcello: In other words, when you went from Aiea Landing over to the submarine base, did you have to cut across the harbor?

Woodward: No. From Aiea to the sub base was just around the harbor.

Marcello: I see. You would have still more or less been outside the area of all the action and so on?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, what happened when you got back to the submarine base?

Woodward: Nothing immediately. We just sat around there. There was just so much confusion, and they had a commander there that was trying to organize some sort of assembly of people to find out who belonged where. He had all these various names of ships posted on the wall, and you were supposed to go over there and take a station around that posting. I went over there and we stayed over there two minutes, and they come along and assigned on a job to go out and get some chow. We left and I never went back to that part.

Marcello: Where did they send you to get the chow?

Woodward: The hospital.

Marcello: So what happened when you went over to the hospital? Did you get the chow?

Woodward: Yes, we got what they gave us, but it was about six tureens. I

don't know how they was going to feed about . . . it looked like there must have been two or three thousand men around there (chuckle). I suppose somebody else had gone somewhere else. We didn't eat it; we just took it back. The fact is, we went back down to Aiea Landing and bought some candy bars.

Marcello: What did you do the rest of the afternoon?

Woodward: I don't know. It's kind of a blank . . . oh, we went out and picked up people, you know, survivors, in various places and took them in to the landing.

Marcello: In other words, these were people in the water?

Woodward: At Ford Island.

Marcello: Over on Ford Island.

Woodward: Yes. Maybe some people were stranded, and we went around. We also went over close to the ammunition dump; there was some planes shot down over there, and we went over there.

Marcello: In other words, you had the captain's gig again at this time?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Were you ordered to do this, or did you simply do this on your own?

Woodward: We just did it. If somebody was over on the other side waving their hat around or something or other, we would go over and pick them up.

Marcello: You did pick some people out of the water then?

Woodward: Yes.

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

Woodward: It looked like a top of an oil tank. It was all oily; bunker oil was just everywhere.

Marcello: Is this a rather thick oil?

Woodward: Yes, it's the fuel oil like the ships use. It was black and thick. Well, it's thicker than most lubricating oils.

Marcello: What condition were the men in that you were pulling out of the water? What sort of wounds and injuries did they have?

Woodward: Most of them wasn't hurt any. They was either blown off the ship or maybe had somehow or another got in the water or jumped off or whatever. They had their lifejackets on, and they weren't hurt.

Marcello: How long did you continue to do this?

Woodward: Oh, half an hour.

Marcello: Is this taking us into early evening at this stage? What time of the day might this be?

Woodward: Well, I'd say it would have probably been around four o'clock in the afternoon.

Marcello: What did you do at that point, then?

Woodward: We went back over to the sub base, and we were assigned patrols. They filled us up with fuel and gave us a little old fellow from the Oklahoma to make a crew, and we went cruising around the harbor.

Marcello: Were you armed at this time?

Woodward: Yes. They gave us some .30-caliber machine guns; I guess they were Army issue-type things with a tripod deal, you know. It wasn't like anything I ever fired.

Marcello: Did anybody on the gig know how to fire it?

Woodward: Yes. We all had had . . . it was . . . I don't think we'd have had any trouble with it. We didn't have enough ammunition to worry about, so it wouldn't have made any difference (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you sleep at all that night?

Woodward: No (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you hear a lot of sporadic firing going on that night?

Woodward: No, we didn't fire the machine gun. We did fire the .30-caliber rifles that we had. That was when the planes started coming in that night.

Marcello: Were you in the harbor when those planes were coming in?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: Describe that incident. We're referring, of course, to the planes off the carrier Enterprise.

Woodward: Yes, they were coming in and trying to land at Ford Island. I was about half asleep, you know, and all at once all this firing started cutting loose, and I thought, "Here they come again!" So I thought maybe the best thing to do was get up out of this water and get up to the beach somewhere. But by the time we got up, we saw some planes that were high. They weren't in any type

of attack formation; however, they were coming over about the same way the Japs had.

I don't know how many of those people got shot down, but I know there was at least one fire over there on the island. There was too much between us to tell really what was happening.

Marcello: What did that harbor look like when all those guns opened up on those unfortunate planes?

Woodward: Well, it looked like kind of a Fourth of July celebration. There was a lot of firing.

Marcello: I assume there were a lot of tracers in the air?

Woodward: There was a lot of tracers; there was a lot of flashes. There wasn't . . . I don't think they shot too many big guns, like 5-inch. Three-inch and stuff like that was fired.

Marcello: So what did you do the rest of the night?

Woodward: Stayed awake.

Marcello: What sort of conversations did you have? Did you discuss what might possibly happen next?

Woodward: Yes.

Marcello: What did you conclude?

Woodward: We had heard a lot of rumors about the Japs trying to make a landing over on Barbers Point, and we decided if they come over that way, well, the thing for us to do was to find us a location somewhere to get out of the way. We didn't have anything to

fight with, and the .30-caliber machine gun you couldn't carry around. The next morning we knew that there wouldn't be any more Japs, or felt like there wouldn't be.

Marcello: What did you do the next day?

Woodward: Patrolled around the island.

Marcello: Still in your gig yet?

Woodward: Yes. We put a couple of depth charges on that thing--we tied them down on there--and away we went. If we could find us anything to drop them on, we'd do it.

Marcello: Were they thinking in terms of those midget submarines?

Woodward: I think perhaps they were. I didn't see the incident, but I know that there was at least one in the harbor.

Marcello: Now, I assume that you would have to hand-pull the pins out of those depth charges or something?

Woodward: Pull the toggle off, yes. Well, we decided when we got out there that the thing to do was to lock that toggle switch so that it couldn't possibly roll off (chuckle). That little old guy from the Oklahoma was some sort of a nut, so we didn't know that maybe he would go over there and do it (chuckle).

Marcello: Were you cruising around in the harbor most of the next day?

Woodward: Yes, we were just right out in the entrance of . . . just on the other side of the sub net.

Marcello: I guess that harbor must have looked like hell the next day, did it not?

- Woodward: Yes, it was pretty pitiful. You couldn't believe how bad it looked to me; of course, I had an advantage there, since I had been riding around and seeing everything, you know, in the gig. I saw all the ships that was damaged. The third day was when all the people started rising up out of the water, and that was bad, too.
- Marcello: Were you out cruising on the third day, also?
- Woodward: Yes. Well, that day . . . whenever the bodies started floating up, well, we got assigned to picking them up, and that was the worst job I've ever had.
- Marcello: What do you do? Do you simply tie a rope to them and drag them in behind the boat? Surely you don't pull them aboard, do you?
- Woodward: No, that's what we did; we just dropped a loop around them and tried to keep them from pulling apart. We would get eight, ten, or twelve behind us and kind of just ease up to the landing and tie them off and go get some more.
- Marcello: I heard they emit a smell that you never forget.
- Woodward: You're right! I'll never forget it.
- Marcello: I guess you were pretty thankful to get off that job.
- Woodward: Yes, I definitely was. I didn't even eat anything for about two or three days after that. I couldn't get rid of that odor. I just knew it was all over me.
- Marcello: When did you finally pick up the Phoenix again?
- Woodward: It came back in. . . . oh, let's see. It was about . . . I guess

it must have been about the 12th or the 13th that it came back.

Marcello: In the meantime, had you been staying over at the submarine base?

Woodward: No, we'd been staying aboard the gig.

Marcello: You were sleeping in the gig?

Woodward: Right. It was the cleanest place we could find. We'd go over to the sub station and get some chow, you know, but we were sleeping over in the gig.

Marcello: So is there anything else relative to the Pearl Harbor attack that we need to talk about and get as part of the record? I still have plenty of tape, if you have anything else to talk about that we've neglected to mention so far.

Woodward: Well, while we were laying out there in that field while the attack was going on, or immediately after that attack, a couple of Marines came by and they told us, "Get out of that field because there's been twenty-one soldiers killed out there by snipers!" Well, that scared the heck out of us, but we found out later that it was a bunch of baloney, that nobody had been shot and there wasn't any sniping going on at all. There was rumors flying around like that everywhere.

Marcello: I'm sure at the time you believed every one of those rumors.

Woodward: Well, we believed there was a possibility of them, at least (chuckle). I was not too keen on the idea of laying out there

and knowing I was a possible target.

Marcello: And you were right out in the open in that canefield?

Woodward: Right on the edge of it. The road, you know, went right down beside the hillside there where the sugar cane was. We were just laying right there on the edge, fully visible from the road.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Woodward, I can't think of anything else. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to participate in our project. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure the scholars are going to find your comments most valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Woodward: Well, it will be interesting to find out . . . I would like to see the whole book on it and see everybody's view.

Marcello: Well, maybe one of these days that will be a possibility.