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Ross Dungan
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Oral History Collection

Ross Dungan

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Mr. Ross Dungan for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on July 11, 1977, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Dungan in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of A Battery, 15th Coast Artillery, at Fort Weaver during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations on December 7, 1941.

Now Mr. Dungan, 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.

Mr. Dungan: I was born in 1914, September 22nd, and I was born in Bastrop County in the community of Paige, which is about thirty-two miles east of Austin. I was raised on a farm amongst ten more children, and I had two brothers besides myself in the service. One of them was over in Italy.

He's crippled; he has arthritis in both knees. They have planted . . . not planted, I don't guess, but they have put in two plastic knees for him, and he is walking now. Then I played baseball when I grew up, and I hunted, fished. I'm retired now from the state.

Marcello: When did you join the service?

Dungan: 1939.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service?

Dungan: Well, it was more of a bet amongst another boy and myself. We was in Big Springs, Texas, and we'd been playing baseball. So we flipped a coin to see about joining the Army. If it fell heads, we was going to join the Army; if it fell tails, we wasn't. It fell heads, so we joined the Army.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Dungan: Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Marcello: How long did boot camp last at that particular time?

Dungan: I believe it was thirteen weeks.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened at Fort Sam Houston that you think we need to get as a part of the record?

Dungan: No, I don't believe. I don't know of anything. I pitched ball while there.

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

Dungan: Well, I wanted to go to Hawaii, and at that present time,

that was the only thing that was open. The Air Force wasn't accepting nobody--just the Army.

Marcello: Had the Army promised that they would send you to the Hawaiian Islands?

Dungan: Oh, yes. When I enlisted, that's where I enlisted for, was Hawaii. But I didn't know which outfit I would be in, you know. I knew I'd be in the Coast Artillery, but I didn't know which battery.

Marcello: Now did you go directly from Fort Sam Houston over to the Hawaiian Islands?

Dungan: No, I went to California--Fort McDowell. It's right back to Alcatraz. We had to go by there going back and forth to the island. We stayed there until somewhere around the middle of February. Then we went to Hawaii. We arrived in Hawaii on March 1, 1940.

Marcello: Did you go directly to Fort Weaver after you got to Hawaii?

Dungan: No, we went to Fort Kamehameha.

Marcello: How long were you there altogether?

Dungan: Up until just before war broke out.

Marcello: And then you were transferred over to Fort Weaver?

Dungan: Well, it all belonged to us anyway. See, we had two 16-inch guns over there. We had crew over there, and we had a crew at Fort Kamehameha.

Marcello: I see. You had a crew on the 16-inch gun at Fort Kamehameha, and then you had another crew . . .

Dungan: No, we didn't have no guns at Fort "Kam." We had . . . the soldiers at Fort "Kam" was manning the outlying stations. We had instruments in these stations and these mountains that would track ships for these two 16-inch guns that we had over at Fort Weaver. So the gun crews was stationed at Fort Weaver, and we were stationed at Fort "Kam."

Marcello: I see.

Dungan: And at that time, I was on post special duty before war broke out.

Marcello: Now what does that mean that you were on post special duty?

Dungan: Well, after 9:30, well, the rest of my day was to spend in athletics.

Marcello: This was 9:30 in the morning?

Dungan: Yes.

Marcello: That's interesting. Was this because of your ability as a baseball player?

Dungan: Right.

Marcello: You might describe what your routine was here at Fort "Kam" after you got there.

Dungan: When I first got to Fort "Kam," well, we took a refresher course--boot camp. My battery was getting beat playing baseball, and they knew I was a baseball pitcher. So they come

down and got me, and I went up and won the game for them. I got a hit and drove in a tying run, and I scored the winning run of that game. Then we went on to win the battery championship and sector championship in baseball. We played Schofield Barracks; we played the Navy; and we played Hickam Field and all them other posts downtown, which is, you know, Fort Shafter, Fort Ruger, Fort DeRussy, Fort Armstrong, all those.

Marcello: Were you able to beat the teams at Hickam and Schofield Barracks and so on?

Dungan: We sure did!

Marcello: That's a pretty good accomplishment, considering how big those bases were!

Dungan: Yes. Then after we won the battery championship, we had what we called a sector game, which was composed of the Air Force and the Army personnel. It was down in Honolulu, including Hickam Field. Then we played the sector champions of Schofield Barracks, which was . . . we won one year and lost one year.

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute. Now you mentioned that you were through at 9:30 a.m. in the morning just because you had this post special duty.

Dungan: Right.

Marcello: Now what did you do at that point?

Dungan: Up to that point?

Marcello: No, what did you do after 9:30?

Dungan: After that point? Well, we practiced. We practiced baseball and we practiced basketball and bowling or whatever we were assigned to. Back in those days, you know, the Army went in for sports. In other words, we had what we called a Knox Trophy to win. If our outfit won that Knox Trophy, well, we were sitting on top of the world. You know, in other words, we was "big wheels."

Marcello: What sort of reward did you get for having won that trophy?

Dungan: Well, we'd probably have a big beer bust and stuff like that, you know. And the post would recognize us.

Marcello: I understand that athletics played a very, very important part in the service at that time.

Dungan: They sure did.

Marcello: Describe what Fort Kamehameha looked like from a physical standpoint, that is, in terms of the buildings and so on.

Dungan: Well, they had a . . . let's see, I guess you could call them "L"-shaped barracks--most of them. It had a quadrangle inside of this "L"-shape. We had papaya trees, and we had coconut trees, had banana trees.

Marcello: How big a base was this?

Dungan: It was a pretty good-sized base. I don't know just how many troops was there, but it was about . . . oh, well, there was

the 41st, the 55th, the 15th, and I don't know just how many it was. I think it was a pretty good-sized base.

Marcello: Now these units that you're describing were all coast artillery units?

Dungan: All coast artillery. Some of them was antiaircraft guns; some of them had 155's; some had 14-inch, 12-inch; some of them had the railway guns, in other words. And some of them had searchlights. Headquarters Battery of my outfit had searchlights.

Marcello: Now when you got to the Hawaiian Islands, were you simply put into the coast artillery, or did you volunteer for it?

Dungan: That's what I enlisted for--the coast artillery.

Marcello: Why did you want in the coast artillery?

Dungan: Well, I had some friends in the Philippines that was taken prisoner that was in the coast artillery in the Philippines, and one tried to get me to come over there. I didn't want to go to the Philippines, so I went to Hawaii instead. I enlisted at Fort "Sam" to go to the coast artillery, but I didn't know which branch of it. I didn't know whether it would be Fort "Kam" or Fort Shafter or Fort DeRussy or Fort Armstrong or some of those, which was all downtown.

Marcello: In other words, you went into the coast artillery because of the friends that you had.

Dungan: Right.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that these friends were captured in the Philippines. . .

Dungan: One of them, yes.

Marcello: . . . and for the record we should point out that this happened actually after the war got started.

Dungan: Right.

Marcello: What were your barracks like?

Dungan: Well, they was . . . you had to keep them awful clean. Your bunks . . . you had to make them up; you couldn't just pull the sheet up and make them over. You had to strip them down and make them and roll your cover back. If you'd drop a half-dollar on that, if it bounced, it passed inspection. If it didn't bounce, well, you might have to pull KP on the weekend.

But everybody was helpful. I mean, in other words, everybody got along together. It wasn't somebody trying to cut each other's throats or nothing.

Marcello: What was the food like here at Fort Kamehameha?

Dungan: It had good food. We had good food, and we had lots of good recreation there. If you wasn't on post special extra duty or KP or guard duty, well, you was allowed to go on pass on Saturday afternoon through Sunday.

Marcello: Now we'll come back and talk about this liberty routine a little bit later on, because I think it's pretty important.

Let me ask you a few more general questions relative to your activities here at Fort Kamehameha. What was the morale like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army?

Dungan: It was wonderful.

Marcello: What do you think accounts for the high morale?

Dungan: Well, there was more discipline than it is now; I think that has had a lot to do with it. In other words, the first sergeant was just as fair to one as he was the other one. So was the battery commander. If you had a problem, you could go to the first sergeant. If he couldn't solve it, he'd send you to a battery commander, and the battery commanders was swell fellows. You know, most of them was all West Pointers, but they was . . . in other words, they was fair to everybody. Of course, you'd find some second lieutenants once in awhile that was fresh out of the Academy that was a little bit different, but you'd expect that. You had the same routine just about every day, you know. You worked around the same people.

Marcello: You mentioned some other things that probably would have contributed to the high morale, too. I'm referring to the fact that the food was good, the quarters were clean and comfortable, and there were a lot of things to keep one busy, including athletics.

Dungan: Right, there sure was. We had a pool hall there; you could play pool, you know, in what we called the "rec" hall, you know--recreation hall. Then you could go down to the gym and bowl, or they'd go to the canteen and drink beer or soda water, or whatever they wanted to do. They'd go to town or go on hikes or go to the beach and go swimming, which was only about 150 yards from the barracks.

Marcello: Plus all of you were volunteers, and that would have helped maintain the high morale.

Dungan: That's right.

Marcello: In other words, you were there because you wanted to be there.

Dungan: Right. If we wanted to play poker, well, after payday, well, we'd go in there and play poker as long as we kept everything clean and neat.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit more about your routine here at Fort Kamahamaha. Now what time did you actually go on duty in the morning?

Dungan: Six o'clock?

Marcello: In other words, you worked from six o'clock until 9:30.

Dungan: Well, we had calisthenics at six o'clock. Then at 7:30, we had close order drill until nine o'clock. At nine o'clock we'd come back to our battery, and we'd dismiss. We'd go clean our guns up . . . rifles. . . rifles up--we don't call them guns--we'd clean our rifles, put them in the rifle rack,

lock them, take off our uniform, and put on our work clothes, and we're ready for work details. But myself, which was a bunch of us, we had the island championship boxers in our outfit.

Marcello: In other words, all these athletes got off duty at 9:30 in the morning.

Dungan: To train, right.

Marcello: Actually, from what you said, then, you really didn't have too much training as a coast artilleryman as such.

Dungan: Oh, yes. On weekends a lot of times--not during baseball season--well, we'd go to these outlying stations in the mountains with these instruments, and we'd . . . which it gives you the range as azimuth to a ship out there, which we tracked. Then we sent it back to our outfit, and they moved these guns--they got arrows they match, you know--for firing purposes. Well, sometimes we'd stay out for a week at a time. But during baseball season, if I was at one of those stations, they'd come get me, and I'd go in and play baseball, and then they'd take me back that night.

Marcello: I see. In other words, this routine of getting off at 9:30 didn't occur everyday. It was just during the baseball season.

Dungan: No, it was everyday unless we had maneuvers. In other words, we called them maneuvers when we'd go out to the station and

stay maybe a week, sometimes two weeks at a time. Well, we tracked these ships. The Navy'd send a destroyer, a mine-sweeper, or something like that out there, and we'd track it. We'd fire those 16-inch guns lots of times, which we did, and, I think, got in trouble a couple of times over it.

Marcello: Why was that?

Dungan: Well, I think we busted a lot of window lights out of Doris Duke's . . . was that her name. . . that tobacco heiress?

Marcello: Yes.

Dungan: Well, I think we like to have tore her home up over there a couple of times. See, those guns . . . it took 840 pounds of powder to fire one of them, plus the projectile weighed 2,300 pounds. So you see how much . . .

Marcello: Now these guns were located at Fort Weaver?

Dungan: Fort Weaver, right.

Marcello: So you tracked them from Fort Kamehameha, as you mentioned.

Dungan: No, in the mountains.

Marcello: In the mountains outside Fort Kamehameha.

Dungan: Yes, all around the island--Diamond Head and all those places.

Marcello: And then this information was sent over to Fort Weaver where the guns were located.

Dungan: Right. Sent to the computer outfits.

Marcello: About how often would you personally be going out into the field and working at these various tracking stations?

Dungan: Oh, probably sometimes once or twice a month.

Marcello: And how long would you stay out?

Dungan: Oh, sometimes it would be for one day; sometimes it'd be for a week. It was just according to what kind of mood the colonels and generals was in that'd send us out.

Marcello: Would you go to the same station everytime?

Dungan: No, we'd rotate.

Marcello: And what was your particular function when you went to one of these stations?

Dungan: Tracking ships with the instruments. Also, we had another instrument in these stations that we'd . . . when they was firing those guns, even the 16's and the 12's and 10's and 8's, well, we had a smaller instrument that we could spot these splashes in the ocean when they was firing. We could tell when they shot over the target before they got to the target. . . which was . . . we called it "over and under," you know; they'd shoot over or under. In other words, when they got to where they bracket that target, then we accomplished our mission.

Marcello: Now as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, did your training routine change any?

Dungan: Yes, sir, it sure did.

Marcello: How did it change?

Dungan: Well, we started going on maneuvers with live ammunition.

Marcello: Did the maneuvers intensify in terms of the number of times you went out?

Dungan: Well, we stayed longer, and we done more actual guard duty than we had done before. We guarded installations and stuff and we went to our stations in these mountains.

Marcello: And you mentioned that at this particular time, you were using live ammunition . . . or you would be carrying live ammunition.

Dungan: Yes, and we didn't do that before up until . . . well, let's see now. We went out a couple or three weeks before the bombing, and we come in on Thursday--out of the field. We cleaned all of our ammunition, put it back in the ammunition boxes, put in supply--all day Friday. Then we cleaned our uniforms, and Saturday morning. . . unless I'm getting too far along.

Marcello: You're a little far ahead of the story, but we'll come back and talk about it in a minute. Now when you say you were issued live ammunition, are you referring to small arms ammunition or all types of ammunition?

Dungan: Right. Well, we had all types anyway, all the time. We had bunkers over there--ammunition storage--for those 16-inch guns, and we had to haul the ammunition by railway. We had a little old diesel engine over there--a train deal, you know; we called it the "Pineapple Special."

Marcello: But you're referring to the small arms ammunition that you'd be using for your rifles on guard duty.

Dungan: Right. We carried it to the field with us. We knew something was going to happen, but we didn't know what.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine here at Fort Kamehameha. You had gone into it a little bit previously, but let's go into it in a little bit more detail at this point. First, how fast or how rapid was rank in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army?

Dungan: Not too fast. If you was athletic-minded, it was a little faster. In other words, say you was a good football player, a good basketball player, or a baseball player, you had a chance to get up to a buck sergeant quicker than the rest of them. But then from then on, you had to take tests the same as anybody else.

Marcello: What was your particular rank at at the time of the attack?

Dungan: After the war broke out, I was corporal.

Marcello: At the time the war broke out?

Dungan: Yes, and then I went on to sergeant. But, see, my outfit didn't have no turnovers. In other words, we had guys that had been in there for ten or twelve years; they wouldn't even come back to the States. They said they couldn't ride a boat; it made them sick. The only way that they was coming back is to wait until they built a bridge.

Marcello: So in other words, you really couldn't really advance in rank because there were no openings.

Dungan: No openings, right. In other words, some of those outfits had a bigger turnover, but our battery didn't have that big a turnover, because it was noted for its boxers and baseball players. Because, you see, we had all the good boxers over there.

Marcello: Now at the time that you enlisted, how long had you enlisted for?

Dungan: Three years.

Marcello: Three years. In other words, you would have had maybe one more year to go at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack?

Dungan: Right. In other words, I could have come home on December 7th.

Marcello: The Japanese changed that, though.

Dungan: Yes, and there's some of the boys that got on board ship to come back that didn't come home. It was cancelled anyway, because something happened to the rudder or something, and they had to put it in dry dock. There was a bunch of sick boys, you know, that Saturday when they found out the ship wasn't going to sail. Then, of course, on Sunday morning the Japs bombed us. The morning of the bombing, I was CQ-- charge of quarters.

Marcello: We'll talk about that in a minute, also. When was payday at that particular time?

Dungan: It was on the first of the month or the last day of the month, one or the other.

Marcello: But you'd get paid one time a month.

Dungan: Once a month, right.

Marcello: And the pay wasn't very much at that time.

Dungan: Twenty-one dollars a month when I went in.

Marcello: Now let's talk a little bit, then, about the liberty routine. When you had liberty, where would you usually go, and what would you usually do?

Dungan: We'd go to Honolulu.

Marcello: How far away was Honolulu from Fort Kamehameha?

Dungan: About eleven miles, the way we had to go. See, we had to go through Hickam Field and go out by Pearl to get to town.

Marcello: How long would it take you to get there?

Dungan: Oh, it wouldn't take long. We had to ride a bus.

Marcello: I was going to ask you if you used taxicabs or a bus.

Dungan: A bus and sometimes. . . a little while after we was there, well, we could get the motor pool to furnish us a truck if there was enough of us going . . . like going to a football game, which we did quite often, and also to go to some of the ballgames downtown--high school games. We played in Honolulu Stadium, but I understand they rebuilt all that now to where I wouldn't know it. But we'd charter one of our trucks and go down there. Then we could charter a truck and go on pass;

we could make a trip around the island in the truck. Or we could charter one of our trucks, and we'd go to what we called "Upside-Down Falls" or the Pali and go over to . . . oh, what is it . . . like they got in Utah . . . Mormon Temple. We'd go over there, or we could go to downtown, go to Waikiki Beach, go down to the beer joints--anyplace we wanted to go. I done more swimming than anything else, and playing baseball. Of course, I drank beer. I got drunk two or three times; I admit it.

Marcello: Normally, how would the weekend liberty routine work?

Dungan: Well, somebody had to be on KP. Okay, they'd go down numerical order--rotation, we called it.

Marcello: Alphabetical order.

Dungan: Yes, alphabetical, yes. Then after I was took off. . . I only pulled two KP's all the time I was in the Army, unless somebody got extra duty. You got a gig for something like if your rifle was dirty or your shoes wasn't shined or your bed wasn't made proper. Well, if you got extra duty, well, that relieved one of the other guys that was supposed to be on KP, and he'd get a pass and go to town.

Marcello: So in other words, if you did not have the duty or if you did not foul up in any way, it was pretty easy to get a pass for the weekend.

Dungan: Oh, yes.

Marcello: And it would be a weekend pass.

Dungan: Right. It'd be from Saturday at noon until Monday morning at six o'clock or 5:45.

Marcello: On a weekend, normally, what percentage of the base might be in town? You'd have to estimate this, of course.

Dungan: Well, I'd say nearly every . . . well, up in the middle of the month, it wouldn't be very many of them. But on payday, it would be, I'd say, two-thirds of them.

Marcello: Normally, during those weekends prior to payday, I assume everybody would stay at the base and so on and so forth.

Dungan: Most of them would, because, see, we could draw what we called "canteen books"; and it was held out of our checks. I believe it was five dollars. Of course, five dollars then went a long ways. We could buy beer; we could buy . . . mostly we'd buy tobacco and stuff with the canteen books. The old saying is we used to buy a carton of Bull Durham and two cartons of matches to last us a month, you know. That's what we had left out of our check.

Marcello: So normally, then, the weekends in Honolulu would usually be only the payday weekends, or the weekends right after payday.

Dungan: Well, yes. It was staggered some. Some of them would save their money until the following weekend, so it wouldn't be such a crowd, because Schofield Barracks, the Pearl group,

and Hickam and all that bunch would be down at the same time.

Marcello: I've also heard it said that a lot of the Army and Air Force personnel would stay away from Honolulu on weekends because of the tremendous influx of sailors when the fleet was in.

Dungan: Right. When the fleet was in, we would.

Marcello: Now on a typical Saturday night, when the personnel would come back to Fort Kamehameha after having been in Honolulu, what sort of condition would they normally be in?

Dungan: That's hard to say. I've seen some of them come in that was so drunk they didn't know where they was at and they didn't care. See, we had to come through Hickam Field, and at the gate coming in, they had the MP's. You couldn't get any whiskey in or anything like that, because they'd break it or take it away from you. But there would have a lot of them drunk, but usually by the time they got in, they was sobered up. Because they run out of money anyway, and a lot of them'd go down to Hoffman's Bar, which is a well-known place in Honolulu--and I think it still is--and you could drink about three of those "Zombies," and they'd have to haul you in like cordwood, anyway.

Marcello: Okay, what sort of shape would these people be in to fight on a Sunday morning?

Dungan: Most of them would be in shape to fight, because most of them was sober by Sunday morning.

Marcello: This is an interesting observation that you've made, and I think it's probably an important one because many people assume that everybody got drunk on a Saturday night, and therefore they wouldn't be in any shape to fight on a Sunday morning. And consequently, that's why the Japanese chose a Sunday morning.

Dungan: No, I don't believe they done it. They had that date set, and that's when they hit. They was waiting on the word from Washington; that's what they was waiting on.

Marcello: Probably one of the reasons they might have selected a Sunday morning was because Sundays were normally a day of leisure, were they not?

Dungan: Right. Yes, and they knew that a lot of the boys would be swimming or something like that or maybe fishing, or they'd be down in Honolulu on a tour or something like that, or, you know, they'd be out in a pineapple field somewhere. But usually, on Sunday mornings . . . most of your outfits come in on Saturday night, you know, around eleven or twelve o'clock. Then they had up until that time to get up to sober up again.

Marcello: Well, it's true, is it not, that it was pretty hard to find lodging in Honolulu?

Dungan: It was. And if you didn't have the money, why . . . unless you slept out on the beach somewhere. . . and then one of them Hawaiians was liable to take what little bit you had

left if you had any money. But on that Sunday morning of the bombing, we had quite a few on pass that was out and got rooms ahead of time. Some of them was . . . well, they had them a girlfriend down at Honolulu that they stayed with.

Marcello: Now normally speaking, on a Sunday morning, did you have a specific time that you had to get out of bed?

Dungan: No, if you wanted breakfast, you had to get up and eat and be out of the mess hall by eight o'clock.

Marcello: But you could lounge around in bed and so on if you wanted.

Dungan: Oh, you could sleep all day if you wanted to. If you didn't want to eat, well, that was up to you.

Marcello: Okay, now as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate, how much thought did you give to the possibility of the Japanese ever attacking the Hawaiian Islands?

Dungan: Well, we didn't think . . . at that time, we didn't think about the Japanese. We wasn't thinking about the Japanese attacking us. We figured it was going to be war, but we didn't know with who. We figured it would be Germany and them over there, you see; that's what we was figuring.

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

Dungan: Well, he seemed kind of quiet. Of course, then, looking at the slant eyes, you know, well, they seemed kind of funny to

us. But if you look back, like I was and some of the buddies that I run around with, now we'd get us a pair of blue jeans and an old shirt and barefooted, and when we went down to Honolulu, we looked just like the rest of them down there. But the Japanese was quiet people--the ones that we knew there in Honolulu. They seemed real friendly, you know, to us, because they'd invite us . . . well, especially myself, because I pitched ball downtown. . . they'd invite me out to their house to eat with them. Well, I'd have to pull my shoes off and sit on the floor, you know, and all that. But it seemed like they'd go out of their way to try to help you. And, of course, most of them was American-Japanese, you know.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that as one gets closer to December 7, 1941, your training routine intensified quite a bit.

Dungan: Right.

Marcello: Did you ever have any alerts or anything like that?

Dungan: Oh, we had drills, yes. We had them all the time.

Marcello: But in other words, would they ever call an alert to the extent that you would have to get in trucks or whatever and go to certain pre-determined positions out in the field and things of that sort?

Dungan: Oh, yes, we'd go to our stations.

Marcello: When were you transferred from Fort Kamahameha over to Fort Weaver?

Dungan: It was in 1941. I don't remember what month.

Marcello: Was it near the middle or the end of 1941?

Dungan: It was kind of in the middle.

Marcello: Fort Weaver was not a very big post, was it?

Dungan: No, it was just a small post. See, we had a little old . . . we called it the "Pineapple Special" running from the mouth of the harbor; it run up and dead-ended where we was at. We had . . . one, two, three, six . . . we had eight tents with wooden floors, and we had one long barracks; we had the mess hall; and we had the captain's and the first sergeant's offices; and we had ammunition storage; and we had the two 16-inch guns; and we had one antiaircraft gun down at the mouth. It wasn't many buildings over there.

Marcello: Why were you transferred to Fort Weaver?

Dungan: Well, the whole outfit. . .they combined us all to be together in one outfit. In other words, we gave our barracks to somebody else over there. Of course, a year after war broke out, after I come back off of that assignment on Diamond Head, well, they transferred me into another outfit then.

Marcello: What did you do after you got over to Fort Weaver? What sort of work did you do over there?

Dungan: Same as we was doing at Fort "Kam."

Marcello: But didn't you say that the tracking was done at Fort "Kam" but the actual guns were over at Fort Weaver?

Dungan: No, the tracking was done in the mountains. We didn't have no way of tracking at Fort "Kam."

Marcello: I see.

Dungan: See, we was just on flat, level ground there just like all the rest of it. We had to be up in these mountains.

Marcello: I see. And you had the guns at both Fort "Kam" and at Fort Weaver.

Dungan: We had the guns over at Fort Weaver; we didn't have no guns at Fort "Kam."

Marcello: I see.

Dungan: But the other outfits had some over there. See, it was another 16-inch gun battery besides us, see, that used the same station that we used, which was Fort Barrett. But their guns wouldn't traverse 360 degrees, and ours would. It was the other side of the mouth of the harbor on kind of a little rise. . . on what we called back of Barbers Point. See, our stations. . . we had them in all the mountains, and we could track a ship out 30,000 feet or yards, you know, out to sea. If you got much farther than that, you got over the horizon anyway. We had a known place, say, like the corner of this room; we had a mark maybe out in the ocean. It was a post or on land somewhere; it was a post on something there. Well, we'd put our instruments on it; we'd set it where the cross-hairs matched it; then we'd traverse

over to another known . . . they had known the distance between these two points. Then we'd set it to be correct at it. When we tracked this ship, we could give them the range, which was the miles, and the degrees, give them the azimuth on it. We could pinpoint that. In other words, they'd go from these . . . take that map with these two points, and they'd come together; that's right where that target was. Well, it would be two of these stations giving them the reading, see.

Marcello: And this information would go to Fort Weaver.

Dungan: Fort Weaver, right. We had an underground deal there with all these machines in there. You'd just match these points on those 16-inch guns. Of course, you had to load them and everything.

Marcello: Okay, well, I think this brings us up to that weekend of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do is to describe in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was during that particular weekend. Let's start with Friday, which would be December 5, 1941.

Dungan: Right. Well, on December 5th, we cleaned up all of our ammunition, took it out of the belts, put it back in the ammunition boxes, and stored it back in supply--all of our ammunition, except that used for guard duty. Saturday morning . . . well, Friday afternoon, I was charge of quarters--CQ,

we called it--and I had to get the guys up to KP and everything.

Then Saturday morning we had a big inspection. After the inspection, the ones that didn't get gigs. . . everybody could go on pass, because we'd been on maneuvers in the field. Well, I issued passes to everybody that wanted to go to town. That was after twelve o'clock on Saturday.

Marcello: So in other words, this was a pretty routine weekend.

Dungan: Right, it was a regular routine weekend.

Marcello: But you had to stay at the base, because you were CQ.

Dungan: I had to stay there, right. I was CQ--charge of quarters.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened that Saturday night?

Dungan: That's Saturday, what few were left--we had a little PX down there, a canteen--they'd go down there, and they'd drink some beer, which we didn't have much beer over there; we had to go to Fort "Kam" to get most of it. They had a little beer, and some of them played dominoes or went out swimming, played softball on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday night a lot of them, come eleven, twelve, one, or two o'clock. . .well, the boat quit running to get them across the channel at, I believe, eleven o'clock.

Marcello: Oh, you had to take a boat from Fort Weaver over to Honolulu?

Dungan: No, to go to Fort "Kam."

Marcello: I see.

Dungan: See, you had to cross Pearl Harbor. . . the channel, the mouth of Pearl Harbor there. From Weaver to get to town, you had to ride this boat over to Fort "Kam" and then walk about ten blocks where you caught a bus to go to Honolulu, see. . . go through Hickem.

Marcello: I see. What were the conditions of the men coming back to Fort Weaver that Saturday night?

Dungan: Some of them was staggering a little bit but not too many of them.

Marcello: The vast majority of them were in pretty good shape?

Dungan: Yes, they was. Most of them had done sobered up. Of course, I imagine most of them had been drunk in Honolulu, which I don't know. But then on Sunday morning. . . that's all that happened Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday morning about 7:30, I come out of the mess hall blowing a whistle. I blowed the whistle trying to get everybody up that wanted to eat. I made my rounds; I went out to the barracks and everything; I was shaking everybody getting them out of bed for the last chow call, which the kitchen closed at eight o'clock.

Well, I got them all out that wanted to get up, and I started back, and I heard a loud noise. I looked around. I looked back towards Pearl, and I seen this black smoke boiling up. I thought to myself, "I don't believe we have

a notification that the Navy's having maneuvers." A plane flew over, and I didn't pay it any attention, you know. I was thinking about the Navy having maneuvers.

Marcello: Was the plane flying over low?

Dungan: Yes. So I run over to the bulletin board we had down in front of the office, and I couldn't see nothing about no Navy having maneuvers. . . and the Air Force. So I picked up the phone, and the phone was dead--no communications. I walked back outside, and the plane flew right over us . . . come over us. By that time . . .

Marcello: Was it coming from the direction of Pearl Harbor?

Dungan: No, it was coming into Pearl. There was a rifle range right up back of us; the Navy was out there and some of the Marines or some of the Army was out there firing machine guns and rifles and stuff. They commenced shooting. I looked up and seen this big rising sun on this plane. Well, I went back. Boy, I got in a hurry then!

I went over to supply and busted a lock off of it and got them all out and sent them out to the beach. Part of us were setting up some old water-cooled .30-caliber machine guns we had, and we had to load the belts. We started shooting at them with rifles, and another one come over us and waved at us. It went on in, and, of course, they were shooting at it up there. There was about five planes that

come over us and didn't nary a one of them drop a bomb on us. They wasn't worried about . . .

Marcello: Did they strafe the base or anything?

Dungan: No, they knew where they was going. They was headed direct for the harbor.

Marcello: Let's just back up here for a minute. How much time had elapsed from the time that you had seen the first plane until you broke open the arms?

Dungan: The first plane, I didn't know what it was. I say fifteen minutes.

Marcello: When you finally recognized that they were Japanese planes and that the military installations were under attack, did you have any qualms about breaking into the armaments locker?

Dungan: No, sir! Not a bit!

Marcello: Even though you knew this certainly wasn't a standard routine.

Dungan: Right. It didn't bother me the least bit!

Marcello: Okay, so by this time, were men already assembling up there where the . . .

Dungan: Right. I'd done got them out, see; I had them all out and sent some up on the beach. The others we put in trucks and sent them out to these stations I was telling you about. Then when the battery commander got there, well, then I went to Diamond Head. He took over--him and the 1st sergeant that came in. He was married, you know, and living over at Fort "Kam" over in housing over there for the first three-graders.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get everything organized during this period while you were still CQ there?

Dungan: Well, about an hour.

Marcello: How would you describe the reaction of yourself and the other men? Was it one of professionalism? Panic? Confusion? How would you describe it?

Dungan: A little bit of confusion and a little bit of a bunch of mad people.

Marcello: Mad in what sense?

Dungan: Well, some had old ammunition we had; you'd fire and it'd just fall out the end of the barrel from that old guard ammunition.

Marcello: What kind of ammunition was it?

Dungan: We used it for guard duty.

Marcello: Oh, I see--the old guard duty ammunition.

Dungan: It was old ammunition, see, that the Army had had for years.

Marcello: Did you actually fire at those Japanese with the rifles and so on?

Dungan: I sure did! I sure did!

Marcello: How many rounds would you estimate that you fired?

Dungan: I don't know. I was firing a .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun. I don't know. I know I fired at least a belt at them.

Marcello: Well, now this .30-caliber that you were firing. . . was it actually an antiaircraft weapon?

Dungan: No, this wasn't actually an antiaircraft weapon. You could use it for either one. It was actually for troops.

Marcello: Well, that's what I was wondering. Did it take some sort of special maneuvering?

Dungan: We could pick it up in our hands and fire it--put it over our arms. Two of us was using it. One of the boxers, Al Brown, who, I was telling you, was one of the champions, he and I was using it.

Then the battery commander got there. He just had his swimming trunks on; he'd been down to the beach house. He says, "Corporal, what's going on? I says, "The damn Japs is bombing us!" That's the exact words I used. He says, "Well, let me have it," and I said, "Yes, sir."

We got some trucks, and finally about two o'clock that afternoon we got some good ammunition. We loaded it in the truck and went away around back of Pearl and got on the highway and went by Salt Lake Crater, went by Punch Bowl, and then went to Diamond Head, which the Punch Bowl and Salt Lake Crater both had instruments in them . . . and Diamond Head.

Marcello: What did you do when you got up to Diamond Head?

Dungan: Well, I checked in with Pearl Harbor, Hickam Field, and my outfit. We kept a guy on duty all the time--night and day.

Marcello: How many were there at this station there at Diamond Head?

Dungan: Well, it was seven of us, seven from B Battery, and seven from Fort DeRussy. In other words, it was twenty-one of us, plus a major and a captain.

Marcello: And what did you do while you were up there?

Dungan: We stayed on these instruments most of the time. The ones that worked at night slept in the daytime. Then after it kind of quieted down a little bit, then we'd get some paint and paint the floor, you know. . . concrete floor.

Marcello: In other words, just anything to keep you busy.

Dungan: Anything to keep busy. We couldn't drill or nothing, because we couldn't leave the station.

Marcello: Now on your way up to Diamond Head from Fort Weaver, were you able to observe any of the actual damage that had been done at that point?

Dungan: I sure did.

Marcello: Where did you observe the damage?

Dungan: Hickam Field and Pearl.

Marcello: What did they look like? Describe what Pearl Harbor looked like.

Dungan: It looked like a junk yard. It was quite a confusion. We went right by the gate going into Hickam that we always went into going into Fort "Kam." I don't know . . . I imagine it was sixty, a hundred, maybe 200 bodies laying there that

they'd laid there for the ambulances to pick up and stuff to take them to the hospital. We come right by Pearl, see, on the backside, and everything was smoking and still burning and everything. It was just . . . in other words, in just plain-out English--it was one helluva mess!

Marcello: What sort of feelings did you have when you saw this whole thing?

Dungan: Well, I'll tell you, I kind of had a funny feeling. I was just proud it wasn't me. But at least I'll say one thing. The bunch that was soldiering with me over there was a pretty fair bunch of boys. They wasn't scared of the devil. They got guns. . . and those planes were flying over us, and all we had was just make-believe, trying to get something, you know, and they just kept shooting with those little old rifles and everything else. They didn't much get scared of them. Of course, all they had to do was drop one bomb, and it'd be the end of us anyway.

Marcello: Now when you saw this damage at Pearl and at Hickam and so on, would you say that you had a fear for what the future might hold, or was it more or less a feeling of hatred toward the Japanese? What sort of feelings did you have?

Dungan: It was hatred for my part.

Marcello: What happened that evening after you got up to Diamond Head? In other words, did you hear a lot of sporadic gunfire from trigger-happy GI's?

Dungan: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Was there any firing that took place up at Diamond Head?

Dungan: Oh, yes. We had guys who'd see a weed of something move and shoot at it.

Marcello: I'm sure it wasn't too safe to move around that night.

Dungan: No. We had these metal deals that we could raise up and close. It looked right out to sea. If anybody shot you, they'd had to shoot you from down towards the ocean, which was several thousand yards down there. See, the Navy had even sent some bunch up there that stayed with us, because they'd send these signals to these ships. . . challenge these ships coming in.

I know one time we had a pretty good alert after the bombing, you know. We was up there, and we picked up one of our own heavy cruisers out at the horizon, which was about 29,000-some-odd feet out there. We called Pearl and wanted to know if they had a heavy cruiser coming in. "No, we ain't got no heavy cruiser coming in." So we called back, and we got this chief petty officer. He challenged it, and he didn't get an answer from it. We called back in, and the major. . . Major Higgins was his name; he was from Tucson, Arizona. He was a reserve officer; he was in charge of that group. We was under him as far as being there. And he called back and says, "Well, if the Navy don't have that ship out there and

we can't get no command, somebody better do some alerting some guns around here." Well, they alerted all the 16-inch guns, which was four of them. Well, by that time, the Navy was kind of shook up pretty good, so Hickam got a couple of planes up, and they finally got in contact. It was one of our own cruisers. See, we didn't have no word of him coming over there or nothing.

Marcello: Now was this the night of December 7th?

Dungan: No, it was on up a week later.

Marcello: What sort of rumors did you hear that night?

Dungan: Oh, I heard everything you can think of.

Marcello: Can you think of any of the rumors?

Dungan: Yes. One I heard when I got home on furlough in 1944. I got home, and I heard about the Japanese driving a milk truck out to Hickam letting both sides of it down and shooting. . . just mowing them down with machine gun fire, which it did not happen. That was one of the biggest rumors I heard.

Marcello: But that particular night, what were some of the rumors that were floating around?

Dungan: Well, we didn't have nobody to talk to up there too much. But I know one thing; we shot some of our own planes down. I guess you've heard that story before.

Marcello: Did you actually witness that, or were you kind of far away from it?

Dungan: Well, I did from the station, yes. Those instruments. . . I was right on everything. In other words we got 360 degrees that we can traverse those instruments, and we could spot everything that was going on. That's what we was up there for.

Marcello: Were you able to see the harbor from Diamond Head?

Dungan: Oh, yes.

Marcello: I'm sure that it must have looked like the Fourth of July when those planes came in off the Enterprise.

Dungan: Oh, yes. Hickam Field . . . see, it all happened between Hickam and Pearl, you know, right at the mouth of the harbor.

Marcello: Somebody had mentioned that if it hadn't been so serious, it was actually a rather pretty sight--all those tracers and so forth.

Dungan: Yes, it was. There was a cross-fire, see. In other words, it'd make an "X" on that cross-fire--all those tracers going up. That's when they'd got some good ammunition then.

Marcello: Had you ever heard the rumors that the Japanese had landed somewhere in the islands?

Dungan: No, I never have.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Dungan, is there anything else relative to the attack at Pearl Harbor that you think we need to get as part of the record?

Dungan: Well, let's see. I can't think of anything.

Marcello: Well, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk to me. You've said some very interesting and, I think, very important things. I'm sure that scholars will find your comments most valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Dungan: Well, I'd like to mention this, too, while we are at the end of it. You've heard rumors of "why didn't we shoot at these people?" Well, we had orders that they had to shoot at us first. We could not shoot at those people before they shot at us.

Marcello: You're referring to the Japanese.

Dungan: The Japanese . . . or anybody that was coming at us. In other words, if it'd been the Germans . . . unless already war had been declared in the United States, they'd have had to shoot at us before we could shoot them. In other words, they said you had to see the white of their eyes before you could shoot them--you know, the old saying. But we had strict orders; we could shoot nobody like that unless they shot at us first.

Marcello: Well, once more I want to thank you for your comments.

Dungan: Okay.