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Interview with
Howard Featherling
July 8, 1978

Place of Interview: Corpus Christi, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: *Howard Featherling*
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

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Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Howard Featherling 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. Featherling in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron One over at the submarine base at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941. Mr. Featherling's boat was PT-22.

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

Mr. Featherling: Well, I was born in Sinton, Texas, in 1918. I joined the Navy in March of 1936.

Dr. Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Navy?

Mr. Featherling: That's a good question, because I had a good job. I was

roughnecking in the oil fields, and at that time I was making fantastic money. I guess I come from an old seafaring family. Two of my great uncles were square rigger sailors. I was inclined to love the salt water anyway, so I guess that had a bearing on it.

Marcello: Yes, it's rather unusual for somebody to have had a good job and then enter the service, because many of the Pearl Harbor veterans that I have interviewed have stated that economic reasons determined their joining the service.

Featherling: Well, that's right. That was back in the Depression times, and I was one of the fortunate few that had a good job. Most of them were just living from hand-to-mouth in those times.

But I don't regret it. I stayed in twelve years and then stayed in the Reserves and balanced out the Reserves with forty-one years altogether.

Marcello: You were in the Navy forty-one years altogether with your Reserve time?

Featherling: Right.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Featherling: I took my boot camp in San Diego, California.

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

Featherling: (Chuckle) Well, not the normal Navy like you would consider

it today. It was pretty rough and rugged in those days. Their idea was to make a man out of a young boy overnight. Most of us in my company of 150 men were Texans or Oklahomans, and we'd all been down the road and was pretty rugged, anyway. They didn't pull any punches in those days. They'd break you out in the middle of the night--any hour of the night--and put you out on the grinder and work your butt off and then wake you up at five o'clock in the morning and work you all day long. They'd take you to the rifle range, and you went to the rifle range at double time--fourteen miles out there and fourteen miles back--with a full pack weighing 150 pounds and a rifle, too. The old chiefs who were in charge of each company were pretty darn salty; all of them had at least eighteen to twenty years in the Navy. They were fair, but they were mighty, mighty tough.

Marcello: Rank moved very, very slowly in that peacetime Navy, too, did it not?

Featherling: Oh, yes, it sure did. It was unheard of for a man to make chief in five years. I made chief in five years, but it was something that was unheard of. Seniority in the Navy counted a whole lot toward your next rank. The majority of the men that made chief had anywhere from twelve to sixteen to eighteen years in. It was pretty easy to make it up to third class, but then after third class it was pretty rough.

We didn't have correspondence courses and so forth in those days at all like they do now.

Your education you got on your own, and if you wanted to know something about engineering or gunnery or anything like that, you bought your own correspondence courses. The test for advancement in rating was made up on a ship or the local base by old hands themselves. They didn't have specialty rates like they do now. Chief machinist's mate or a machinist's mate in the Navy had to know the whole darn engineering department in the ship--electrical and mechanical--in those days, and you had to get it on your own. Of course, the old hands would teach you, but it was pretty rugged taking the test.

Now when I went up to chief, there was 728 of us that took the test fleetwide, and there was only three rates open. As young as I was and with no more time in the Navy than I had, I had to make at least a 3.7 on my exam to be even considered. I was fortunate; I made number four on the list, and the three guys were rated in July. Well, there was another vacancy that came open in September, and I was at the top of the list so I got it. But like I say, everything you got then, you had to get it yourself.

Marcello: And as you mentioned, not only did you have to pass the test--a written examination--but there also had to be openings.

Featherling: Oh, yes. Not only written examinations, but they had practical

tests, too. Now, they took me off of an old four-stack World War I destroyer and took me over to the USS Altair, which was a much, much bigger ship. It was a destroyer tender for a division of destroyers. For my practical work I had to get that destroyer tender Altair . . . I had to prepare it to get underway. In other words, I had to light off the engine rooms and all the auxiliaries and everything that it took to get that ship underway and ready to go to sea. Of course, the only time I'd been on the Altair was to pick up supplies or stores or something like that.

The night before my practical work, I had to break out the blueprints and everything on that ship and learn the piping systems and where the auxiliaries were and where everything was, and find out who was in charge of this and who was in charge of that so that I could give the necessary orders to the right man and this and that and get everything shipshape and ready to go. Now this practical work took three days, and the written test took two days. And when I say two days, that was two eight-hour days. But the practical work was from "can to can't." They might pull something on me in the night, and I would have to get up in the night and go do it.

Marcello: What did you call that? The practical work was what?

Featherling: (Chuckle) The practical work was from "can do to can't."

Marcello: From what you say, I gather that you were a machinist's mate striker.

Featherling: No, I was a first class machinist's mate going up for chief machinist's mate.

Marcello: But when you get out of boot camp, you obviously were a machinist's mate striker.

Featherling: No. When I went aboard the destroyer, I was a seaman second class. I was the leading seaman on this destroyer for two-and-a-half years.

Marcello: What was the name of this destroyer?

Featherling: USS Boggs, number 136. It was an old World War I four-stack destroyer. Before I transferred from the deck force to the engineering force, I was the leading seaman on the forecastle or the bow of this destroyer. I wanted to be an engineer, so on my time off and on weekends when I didn't have the duty, I went down in the engine rooms and fire rooms and learned how to do all that stuff. Finally, they saw that that was what I wanted to be, so they transferred me into the engineering force.

Marcello: Did you find that the old hands down in the engineering force were quite willing to teach you the trade if you were willing to learn?

Featherling: Oh, gosh, yes! You see, every ship was undermanned at that time. We had a seventy-six-man crew on that old destroyer,

and the normal complement was 150. Every ship in the Navy was that way. It was way, way undermanned because there was no war activity or anything like that. Consequently, each division and each unit of the ship helped one another out in their work. The engineers would help the deck force, and the deck force would help the engineers. It was really a big, happy family. The officers were the same way. So I was fortunate in being on a destroyer, because everybody was so close.

On a big ship--I say a big ship--battleships and cruisers, different divisions were just--oh, how do you say it--they just lived in their own little world. They tolerated the other divisions, but there was a lot of friction and so forth. But on that destroyer, we lived so close together and everything that we were a big, happy family.

Marcello: How would you describe the morale in the pre-Pearl Harbor Navy, that is, in the peacetime Navy prior to the attack?

Featherling: The morale was excellent. Of course, they had started pulling some of the people in--draft, I guess you'd call it--and some of them had started volunteering for it and so forth. Now, they were giving these guys rates according to what they done on the outside. Like, if a guy was a mechanic, well, why, he generally got a third or second class rate. Okay! He'd come out of civilian life working on automobiles and stationary

engines and things like this, and he was good at it. But there's just an awful lot of difference coming aboard ship and working on engines and so forth on a ship than one that's stationary out on land. And then he's not very used to living confined like it was. And discipline, he wasn't used to that. So it took them quite some time to transpose over into a sailor.

Marcello: What was the food like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Featherling: I have never been on a ship that the food wasn't just excellent. You knew what you were going to get every meal, every day, every week, but it was well-prepared, and it was good, wholesome food. Of course, now each engineering force had their own mess where they ate; the deck force had their own mess where they ate and so forth. They had the mess captains and mess cooks to take care of the dishes and get the chow and all this and that. Everybody chipped in a half-buck or a buck or whatever they could afford every payday, and the mess cooks would go ashore and buy fancy foods for us. But that was our own doing.

Marcello: Now, at the time you were aboard the destroyer, were they still serving family-style yet?

Featherling: Yes. Yes, they were still serving family-style.

Marcello: And you had mess cooking duty and that sort of thing?

Featherling: Oh, yes. I had mess cooking duty, and I had latrine duty, like they called it in the Army. Of course, we called the toilets and showers the head and so forth. Yes, I had my tour of that.

But that was only for a three-month period of time.

Marcello: Is it not true that if one did a good job as mess cook, normally he would be tipped by the people that he served? Didn't this happen on occasion?

Featherling: Oh, yes. Every payday, if a guy was on the ball, they had a bowl there on the table, and the standard was to put at least a dollar in it. Most of us put two dollars in. Then they had the other bowl for any "nicies" that we wanted for them to go ashore and pick up. Oh, yes, we always tipped the mess cook. It really didn't make any difference whether he was an outstanding mess cook or what. He didn't have any watch duties or anything like that, but he had long hours and we appreciated him doing it.

Marcello: Now . . .

Featherling: Now, you see, from this destroyer . . . I left the destroyer and went to the USS Honolulu, which was a light cruiser. But I was only on her a short time and the Bureau of Personnel ordered me to PT's by name. The original PT boatmen were picked out of the Navy--don't ask me how; I don't know--and ordered by name to Bayonne, New Jersey, to Elco Boat Works. Now, this is where the PT boats were made.

Marcello: Now, all this was occurring before you ever got to the Hawaiian Islands, is that correct?

Featherling: Oh, yes. This occurred in . . . well, I went to PT boats in

February, 1940, and nobody knew what a PT was, not even old Admiral Kimmel out there. He was on the Honolulu. In fact, I was his . . . well, I was the coxswain of his barge--his boat--that he traveled in when he went ashore or wherever he had to go. He didn't even know what a PT boat was. They wanted me to stay on the Honolulu because I was in charge of all auxiliaries on there. I was the first class machinist in charge of all the auxiliaries. Anyway, they couldn't get my orders changed.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of moving over to PT boats?

Featherling: Oh, hell, I was curious. I was ready to go. I'd been out in Honolulu long enough anyway, and I wanted to go back to the States, and this was a chance to go back to the States. Then I had thirty-four days delay in orders in reporting to New Jersey--Bayonne, New Jersey--and that gave me plenty of time to come by home and fart around and so forth and so on. Yes, I was for it.

Marcello: So what happened when you got to Bayonne?

Featherling: Well, I had to report in to the Brooklyn Navy Yard for further transfer to Bayonne, New Jersey. The old USS Seattle was a receiving ship in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I went from the Honolulu climate to almost zero weather in New York, and when I reported aboard the old Seattle, they didn't have any bunks for anybody to sleep in. Of course, if I remember, along about

this time, too, we still had hammocks and sea bags, and this was the way we traveled. We lashed that sea bag and hammock together and put it on our shoulder and took out with it. We didn't have suitcases and so forth, and we lived out of that sea bag. So the only place they had for me to bunk down at three o'clock in the morning when I reported in was on a tile floor in the shower room. Then when five o'clock came, they roused you out.

Well, I stayed aboard the Seattle about two weeks before the rest of the men that were going over there got in, which was five altogether counting myself. At that time, that was a crew for a PT boat.

Then we went down to New Jersey and reported into the Elco Boat Works. They had converted an old house that was there by the yacht club--an old frame house--into a bunk room for us. It had steam heat in it, but it didn't have anything but Army-type cots--the old canvas-type cots--and it was pretty cold there.

And we roomed down at a Hungarian boarding house. They charged us fifty cents a day to eat there for all three meals. Well, that was pretty good because Uncle Sam was paying us \$1.95 a day subsistence, so we come out pretty good. We were there for three months while they were building our boat.

Marcello: What were you doing in the meantime during that three-month

period? Were you learning the workings of that PT boat?

Featherling: Believe it or not, we were . . . yes, yes. You see, they built the PT boats just like they build rowboats; they built it upside-down. They had just started ours--just had the frame work up for ours--so we stayed with that boat and learned it and learned how it was put together. We even helped them install the engines and so forth.

At the same time, with no officers around, we learned one another's job so that in battle, if one guy got knocked out, the other guy could step right up there and take his place no matter what he was--whether he was radioman, whether he was signalman, whether he was gunner, whether he was an engineer or what . . . or cook. This is the way we operated the PT's, too, later on. As we would go along, well, I might be up there on the radio, and the radioman would be down in the engine room; or the gunner's mate might be down in the engine room, and I might be up there on the guns. This was the way the original PT sailors were trained. Of course, after the war came and got going and everything and the guys were changing over so much, there was no way you could train them that way. But the original PT sailors were real intelligent, sharp men.

Marcello: How did you get that PT boat from Bayonne, New Jersey, to Honolulu or to Pearl Harbor?

Featherling: Okay, we went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and they loaded us aboard . . . they had regular iron cradles for them to sit in, and they loaded us aboard a tanker--upon the deck of a tanker--and there were six boats to a tanker--oil tanker. We went down and through the Panama Canal and stopped in Los Angeles for about three or four days and then on to Honolulu. This is the way they took them from Honolulu to the Philippines--the same way. The Brooklyn Navy Yard and Honolulu and Cavite Navy Yard in the Philippines were the only ones that had a crane big enough that could pick one of them up.

Marcello: I gather from what you have said that you had already been over at Honolulu and Pearl Harbor previously, is that correct?

Featherling: Yes, I had sure had (chuckle). It was kind of a 'second home to me, because we were there, oh, approximately a year-and-a-half before I went to PT boats.

Marcello: Is this when you're aboard both the Boggs and the cruiser Honolulu?

Featherling: Both the Boggs and the Honolulu, yes.

Marcello: How did you like the Hawaiian Islands?

Featherling: At that time, they were fine. It was really nice. The weather and everything . . . the temperature doesn't vary ten degrees year around out there. The people are excellent.

Marcello: There was not an influx of tourists at that time.

Featherling: No, no, definitely not. I don't like it now; I wouldn't live

there for nobody. It's too much like a big city in the United States--just expressways and everything. But back then it was real nice.

Marcello: Well, okay, so you went back to the Hawaiian Islands with your PT boat and several others, I guess, and from our pre-interview conference, I gather that these PT boats were based over at the submarine base.

Featherling: Not based there. We were tied up at the submarine base dock. There were twelve boats there; six of them was to remain in Pearl, and six were scheduled to be shipped by tanker to the Philippines to finish out Captain Buckley's--John D. Buckley's--squadron. He already had six boats out there, and we were the balance of his squadron--six boats that I was with. We were to sail Monday morning.

Marcello: And we are talking about Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron One.

Featherling: We're talking about Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron One, right. Half of it was at Pearl, and half of it was at Cavite Navy Yard in the Philippines.

Marcello: And your group was scheduled to leave when?

Featherling: Monday morning.

Marcello: December 8, 1941?

Featherling: December 8, 1941. In fact, we had two boats on the dock--Ten-Ten Dock--and in their cradles and ready to be loaded aboard the tanker. Two boats were already loaded aboard the tanker. Our

two boats--the PT-22 boat and the PT-26 boat--were scheduled to go across the channel and be picked up and put on the tanker on Monday morning.

Marcello: What tanker was it that was to take you over to the Philippines?

Featherling: Really, I have thought and thought and thought, and I just can't remember.

Marcello: It wasn't the Neosho, was it?

Featherling: In the back of my mind, yes, it was the Neosho, but I could be wrong.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about a typical training exercise that this Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron One would undergo there at Pearl Harbor in those months prior to the actual attack itself. How would your training routine operate? In other words, when would you go out; how long would you stay out; what would you do when you went out; when would you come back in? I've asked you a series of about four questions.

Featherling: The way you put it--a training operation--we had no training operations at Pearl. We were trained; we knew what we could do. Mostly, when we went out from Pearl, it was to give the VIP's a ride or this or that which was awful monotonous, and we didn't care about it. The officers didn't care and we didn't care, but it was one of the necessary evils of the Navy.

We did finally gang up and put a stop to it. We had several doctors and ranking officers . . . by ranking I mean

commander then was a high rank, and a couple of captains. The doctors, of course, were all officers. It wasn't nothing to do, but they had to ride the boats. Our officers tried every way in the world to get out of taking them out on them, because you have to be experienced and know how to ride a PT boat without getting hurt. One of the "no-no" things is do not sit down; if you sit down you're hurt, because they were rough-riding when they were running fast. You had to ride them--I guess--like a surfboard with your knees. You didn't sit down; you stood up.

Marcello: What sort of a range did those PT boats have?

Featherling: Well, we carried 3,000 gallons of 100-octane gas in three tanks. The motors--we had three Packard V-12 motors in them--burned 186 gallons of gas an hour per motor at wide-open speed. Cruising at ten knots on one engine, we could travel approximately 900 to 1,000 miles. At three-quarters throttle--three-quarters wide-open--we could run about 250 miles. Now, this is 250 miles; that's not 250 miles out there and 250 miles back--that's 250 miles. So our big concern always was to conserve fuel.

Marcello: So you wouldn't be running wide-open or with all three engines going unless it was absolutely necessary.

Featherling: Right, right, unless we were just fooling around like out of Honolulu and around the islands and stuff like that.

Marcello: What sort of a maximum speed did those PT boats have?

Featherling: You know, I've heard lots of stories about how fast they would go and how fast they wouldn't go. In 1940, between Miami, Florida, and Key West, Florida, we were on training maneuvers and were running wide-open in a smooth, calm sea; and we cracked one up by running into a freak wave which occurs at times in the ocean. We ran through it, and our speed was registered at seventy-five knots. Now over a squadron, the average speed truthfully, I would say, would be fifty-five knots. There were boats that would run faster than that and boats slower than that. It was all according to the man that was handling the motors on them as to how fast they would run.

Marcello: What sort of armament did those PT boats have?

Featherling: Originally, I think we had two twin .50-caliber mounts--turrets--side by side; we had four Mark 21's, old World War One-type torpedoes that were fired by a charge out of a tube. This was the armament. Originally, their idea was to go like hell into a ship, slow down to ten knots, fire the two "fish," and then run like hell to get out of there. This didn't work--charging in like a mad bull--because they threw a "rooster tail" out behind them about eighteen or twenty feet high, and in the water out there it looked just like a big sign coming in. So we learned mighty quick to idle in within our armament range for the torpedoes, which was 500 yards--it took them that

far to travel to arm themselves--and fire a "fish" and then run like hell toward the ship and run down the side of the ship so they couldn't deviate their guns down on us. Of course, when we come out the end then, well, we caught hell.

Marcello: Now, how many crewmen were aboard a PT boat when it was at full complement?

Featherling: You got to understand that I'm talking about the original PT boats, which were the seventy-seven-foot Elco boats. We had a seven-man crew by the time we got out to Pearl and two officers, which was nine men. Later on, they carried a thirteen-man crew and three officers. Later on in the war--not too much later, but later on in the war--they extended the length of them to eighty-three feet and put a bigger crew on them and more armament, too. But before the attack, we had a seven-man crew and two officers.

Marcello: Where was your battle station aboard the PT boat?

Featherling: I was the engineer in charge of the squadron; and I also had my own boat, and I had two enginemen under me. I was in a machine gun turret. Fortunately, I was very accurate with the twin .50's, and this was my battle station. Then, our ship's cook on all the PT boats, their job was passing ammunition--keeping ammunition to the gunners.

Marcello: Like you say, everybody aboard those PT boats had several functions to perform.

Featherling: Oh, yes. That was the reason Buckley was so efficient with them out in the Philippines when the Japs invaded out there and also in getting MacArthur out and this and that. It was because his men could do anything; each man could do anything on that PT boat. Most of his men--the ones that wasn't killed--did get out of the Philippines one way or the other.

Marcello: Did your training routine change any as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate? Could you detect any change at all in your training?

Featherling: No.

Marcello: It was business as usual right down to December 7th?

Featherling: Yes. The way I understand it by shooting the bull with guys before December 7th and so forth . . . I'm talking about immediately before. That Saturday night on the beach when shooting the bull with the guys in the bars and stuff like that from other ships, it seems as though they had an admiral's inspection coming up on Monday morning, and this was one reason for the fleet to be in. It was standard practice throughout the Navy, if they were going to have an admiral's inspection on Monday morning, to get the ship ready Friday so that they could go ashore and enjoy the weekend. Consequently, the battleships had their double bottoms open, and this was one thing that contributed to so many of them being sunk so quick right off

the bat.

Marcello: In other words, there was very little watertight integrity maintained.

Featherling: None! When the action started, there was no way to get it all shut up and closed up.

Marcello: What was the liberty routine like there at the submarine base where your PT boat was tied up? How did the liberty routine work for you and the rest of the people in your squadron?

Featherling: Our liberty was wherever we wanted to go and whenever we wanted to go. Myself and Joe Violette . . . he now lives in San Diego, California, and retired from the Navy as a lieutenant commander; and also now he is retired from the Sheriff's Department in San Diego, California. He was a first class radioman . . . and Q. P. Hayes was my second class machinist's mate. Believe it or not, I had a Model A Roadster I'd bought off a submarine sailor over there. I gave him \$150 for it, and this is what the PT sailors used to go to town and so forth.

Well, Joe and Q.P. and myself were coming back that morning and had just pulled in or started to pull into the submarine base gate . . . and, of course, all of this was on the air, "This is no . . ."let's see, how did they put it?

Marcello: "This is no drill!"

Featherling: Yes, "This is no drill!" (Chuckle) Damn right, it wasn't no drill! They shot the windshield out of my Model A and one tire

out and tail light off of it, and, of course, we bailed out of it and went to running then toward the boat.

The guys on the boat told us later that they was machine-gunning the three of us going across the parade ground where the softball and hardball games and all this and that takes place, and we were just heading out across there. It was about three or four blocks across it, and these planes were machine-gunning us while we were running across there. We wasn't scared . . . the reason we was running so hard was because we wanted to get that damn boat and get it away from the dock.

Marcello: Okay, let's back up here a minute because we're not quite at that point where we want to talk about that yet. Again, I gather from what you say is that you had liberty just about whenever you wanted it when you were tied up there in Pearl Harbor.

Featherling: Right.

Marcello: Now what did you normally do when you went on liberty? How would a typical PT boat sailor spend his liberty?

Featherling: Like any damn sailor (chuckle). I'm . . . no, I don't say that, because we didn't spend liberty like any sailor. I had become acquainted with a lot of people in Pearl by being there before. We had some friends out in Saint Louis Heights on the far end of Honolulu, and whenever I hit the beach . . . well, I always had a little old apartment behind their house--a

garage apartment--and it was real nice. So when I'd go ashore--and was usually it was with three or four guys--we'd just head out to that apartment, and then we'd take it from there. We'd go to nightclubs or go swimming or surfboard riding or what-have-you. We'd take out from that apartment, so we had a place to come back and sleep if we were going to stay all night and so forth and so on. There was so damn many things to do out there in those days. You just didn't go ashore . . . if you knew where you could find them, you just didn't go ashore and get drunk and raise hell and so forth like that.

Marcello: Well, in your case, you would have been at the submarine base most of the time anyway, so going ashore was not a big deal for you like it was for somebody on one of the larger ships that maybe had been out for a week or ten days or whatever.

Featherling: Right. Well, you see, the majority of these ships had just come in on Friday before the blitz on Sunday morning. So the ones that could go ashore were ashore, and the ones . . . there was a lot of them that could just go ashore until midnight, and then they had to come back.

Marcello: I assume that there were no restrictions on when you had to be back during the night.

Featherling: No. You see, nearly all of us were rated men. In fact, all of us were rated men and from second class, first class, and chief,

so there was no restrictions on us. Our officers were awful fine men. They were Academy men with the exception of three of them that were what we called "ninety-day wonders." So they knew how to get along with us, and we knew how to get along with them. We took care of the officers, and the officers took care of us.

Marcello: From what you've said, I gather that you look back upon your days with those PT boats with a great deal of fondness.

Featherling: Oh, yes.

Marcello: You just talked about the close-knit crew aboard that destroyer, but I gather these PT boat sailors were just as close-knit and maybe even more so.

Featherling: Any of the small vessels, they were just one, big, happy family--any of the small vessels. What made it so nice on the PT boats is that the majority of them had come off of small ships, so there was no problems at all of getting along. Oh, we had little squabbles and stuff like that, but it was kept in the family; and when it was over, it was over.

Marcello: Now, as one gets closer and closer to December, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, did you and your buddies ever give very much thought to the possibility of an attack on the Hawaiian Islands? Did this ever come up in any of your bull sessions?

Featherling: Not really, no. We knew that eventually we would have to fight

the Japanese. From past experiences before I went to PT boats, yes, we knew we would have to fight the Japs. As far as them attacking Pearl, no.

Marcello: Probably you thought more in terms of the Philippines Islands or something like that.

Featherling: Yes. Not necessarily the Philippine Islands, but we thought more in the terms of ship action.

Marcello: You mean gun against gun, so to speak--big ship against big ship.

Featherling: Big ship against big ship--destroyers, cruisers, battlewagons, aircraft carriers. Not against islands or home or the United States itself.

Marcello: If you got into a war with the Japanese, were you and your ship-mates fully confident that you could take care of them in pretty short order?

Featherling: You had better believe it! You had better believe it! And we would have if they wouldn't have knocked out everything at Pearl.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to those days immediately prior to the actual attack itself, Mr. Featherling, so what I want to do at this stage is have you go into as much detail as you can remember about that weekend. Do you recall your activities on the weekend of December 7th? Let's start with either Friday or Saturday. Now, you mentioned, for example, that you were going to be leaving on Monday for the Philippines, so am I to assume that perhaps you were going to have one last fling in Honolulu on Friday or

Saturday night?

Featherling: Not necessarily, not necessarily, no. I was fixing to put two new engines into my boat before we were loaded aboard the tanker. I had removed one engine and put a new engine in its place--I hadn't hooked it up or anything--and this is ordinarily about a five or six-hour job of hooking an engine up after you set one in place and getting it ready to run. I then decided, well, we wouldn't put the second engine in. This is what I was doing Friday and Saturday.

So we put the canopy back over the engine compartment and bolted it all down in place and everything, and I told the skipper, "Well, when we get aboard the tanker now, I'll just button these engines up and get them ready to run and everything; and when they drop us off at Cavite, then we'll be ready to go." He was a "ninety-day wonder," so he didn't know the difference: "Okay! Sure! Anything you want to do!" So actually, I had two engines out of commission. I had the center engine out of commission and the starboard engine out of commission, which left me with a port engine that would operate. So this is what I did Saturday; I got all that prepared and everything. Then Saturday afternoon about four o'clock, the guys said, "Well, heck, let's go ashore!"

Marcello: What did you do when you went ashore that night?

Featherling: We went to the apartment. Then . . . let's see . . . we went

to Lai Chi's that night--that's a Chinese food joint out there. It was a real nice place to eat, dance, and it had a bar and everything in there.

Marcello: I gather a lot of the sailors liked to go ashore just to get a change of menu, so to speak?

Featherling: In our case, yes, because, you see, while we was at the sub base, we each had our own galley aboard the ship--a little galley--and we were supposed to do all our own cooking and everything. But when we was at the dock or something like that, we'd go to the submarine base and eat on general mess or go ashore . . . go out the gate and eat somewhere out there.

Marcello: I've heard it said that the submarine base had the best chow over there.

Featherling: Yes, delicious! And, of course, there was a bar there at the Enlisted Men's Club, and if you wanted to drink, you could go up there and get your beer and stuff. There were good movies on there. We had softball games, hardball games, and everything else there. Any kind of recreation that you wanted. So other than to just have a fling or something, there was really no sense in going ashore.

Of course, most sailors had to have a gal around, you know. I was single at that time. I had a couple of gals on the beach that I knew for quite awhile.

But that night we went to Lai Chi's. I guess we must have

left there about midnight or a little after. I don't remember. We went back over to the apartment, and we rolled out about, I guess, five o'clock and headed back to the ship.

Marcello: In other words, you were in fine shape when you left the apartment or even when you returned to the apartment.

Featherling: Right, definitely! When we three were together, very seldom would you see any of us even half-drunk. We drank but we didn't get out of line or anything.

Marcello: Why did you decide to head back toward the submarine base at five o'clock? Was there any particular reason why you went back that early?

Featherling: No particular reason, no. Myself, I always went to mass on Sunday morning. Joe Violette was a Catholic, and as a rule whatever Joe Violette and I done . . . Q.P. Hayes was an old boy from Kentucky, and it was just alright with him, and he'd go with us even though he didn't really go to any church. But Joe and I were going to church, and he was with us, so, well, he'd go, too. The best place in the world to go to church was back at the base.

Now this wasn't the particular reason we went back, but we hadn't planned anything for Sunday, and we were going to go aboard the tanker on Monday morning. There was little things that had to be done and so forth. Sunday . . . it didn't mean anything to us whether it was Saturday, Sunday, holiday, or what. If

we had a job to do, we done it.

Marcello: Okay, so you get up relatively early, and do you head directly back toward the base?

Featherling: Oh, yes. It's eleven miles from Pearl to Honolulu, and we were approximately four or five miles farther into the City of Honolulu on the other side. Where Saint Louis University is, they call that Saint Louis Heights. So we were approximately sixteen miles from base. The road at that time back to the base was what we called the Model T. Road. It was just slim with two-way traffic around it, too, and so you didn't travel very fast on it. In a Model A, thirty-five or forty miles an hour was a pretty good clip, see. So as I say, we were going along back to the base, and instead of going through the main gate at Pearl, we always came back around and came in through the submarine base--through big oil tanks there and everything--and there was a road down to the base.

Marcello: So it was a drive of several hours then.

Featherling: Oh, yes. Not necessarily several hours, an hour-and-a-half. But, too, traffic got kind of congested right about that time, because at the same time--about the time we got to the gate--this is when the planes started strafing.

Marcello: Now, by the time you got into Honolulu itself, had you already heard word of the attack?

Featherling: Now, wait a minute now. You said, "By the time I got into

Honolulu itself." Oh, you mean coming from the apartment?

Marcello: Yes.

Featherling: Oh, no! It hadn't hit yet.

Marcello: Well, this is what I was trying to establish awhile ago, because you said that you either got up or left the apartment around five o'clock, and you mentioned that it was about an hour-and-a-half drive, so are we talking about 6:30 or seven o'clock?

Featherling: On the way out, of course, we did stop at a little old roadside cafe there and had coffee and doughnuts and stuff like that, and this is where we heard it on the radio. We were still ten miles from the base.

Marcello: So this must have been getting on close to eight o'clock, then, by this time?

Featherling: It was pretty close to eight o'clock.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens at this point? You're in this cafe, and you hear this news on the radio. What did you do at that point?

Featherling: Then we cranked that Model A up and . . . when we came out of the cafe, you could see smoke coming up out there. Actually, very little damage had been done by the time we hit the PT boats.

Marcello: What did you talk about while you were heading toward the PT boats?

Featherling: Gosh, I don't remember. I don't remember. Really, I don't remember.

Marcello: So you get to the gate, and you actually don't pass directly

through Honolulu to get there.

Featherling: No.

Marcello: You kind of go around it. Okay, so you get to the gate. Now, pick up the story at that point. You had mentioned some of these things earlier, but let's just recapitulate again.

Featherling: Just before we got to the gate--I was a thousand yards from the gate--one of these airplanes started strafing at us. I say us, they were strafing all the vehicles coming and going. My poor little old Model A Roadster, they had hit the windshield and, of course, away it went.

Marcello: Now, did they hit the windshield while you were in it, or had you jumped out?

Featherling: Yes, while we three was sitting in the front seat. It had a rumble seat, but nobody was in it . . . a canvas top. They shot the windshield out, and about the same time one of the tires went out--they had shot it out. The tail lights, I learned later, were shot completely off; they were gone. There was bullet holes all over that darn thing, evidently from the time the windshield busted. We talked about it later, and how we even got out of the damn thing, we don't know. But as soon as the windshield went, we left it sitting right there on the road, and down through the gate we went--just hell for leather.

Well, really, I don't know how far we had to run, but it was quite a ways--four or five blocks, anyway, altogether. But

we had to go through the parade ground where they have softball games and any kind of activities; they had tennis there and everything. It was just a wide open, big flat area about three blocks square.

They were trying to get my boat away from the dock when we was running to the boat. I noticed that it was out away from the dock, and we all made a flying leap, and I guess we would have set a broad jump record if we could have measured it. Anyway, we all hit on the boat, and the guys told us that the planes were just strafing us and shooting all around us as we were running across there. And even on the dock--a big cement dock a hundred yards wide--they were just "zing-zing-zing" all around us.

Marcello: They actually weren't doing any bombing or anything, however, in that area, were they?

Featherling: No, no, no. Now the first thing I done was jump down in the engine room, because there was no officers around the boats at all. We had a chief machinist's mate by the name of K. O. Sell, and he was a radioman . . . no, I take that back; he was a quartermaster. He was on the steering wheel of the boat and had one engine running. But you had to have two engines running to maneuver a PT boat, because they had racing rudders on it and couldn't guide it at idling speed or low speed with those rudders.

Marcello: These are called "racing rudders?"

Featherling: Yes. They're real small rudders, and they're only used at high speeds. So K. O. was all beside himself. My center engine . . . I could operate it if I could start it; but the starter was off of it, and there was no way to get the starter back on in time to start it up. Well, they'd always told me that you couldn't drag a motor in through the water like you push a car to start it. But I was always a smart ass, so Sell and I had experimented several times in the past to see if it could be done, and it could be done. He and I could do it. None of the rest of them . . . he tried it with other guys, and they didn't know how. They just couldn't grasp how to do it. So I hollered at Sells and told him, I said, "Kick those throttles wide open, and I'll drag that center engine!" So he did. He kicked it wide open. Then I said, "When you hear it start, well, shut them down and then I'll kick it out of gear!" I said, "We might be right up the middle of that dock, but I'll stop it!" So that's what we done.

I kicked the starboard engine in gear and the center engine in gear, and old Sells hit the throttle up on the bridge, and away we went--heading right toward the dock. We caught it just in time to stop it from crashing into the dock. Well, he had control of the boat then; he could maneuver it. So we were facing toward the way the airplanes were coming across. We could deviate the guns low enough to shoot at them, so he spun it

around and backed out to the edge of the channel.

And while he was backing out to the edge of the channel, we started shooting at the planes. And, of course, we ran out of ammunition. We just had the belts of ammunition that was in the machine guns. We had plenty of ammunition aboard, but we had to belt it up.

Marcello: This evidently was the case of a great many ships? 100 5

Featherling: Yes. So when we run out of ammunition, well, we jumped out there on the deck. In the meantime, the gunner's mate had dragged these boxes of ammunition up and the clips where you clip them together-- .50-caliber ammunition--and this press deal that we used to press these clips and make them hold together and everything. The gunner's mate and I went to belting ammunition. I let the old ship's cook . . . Guy Mills, we called him "Ma." He went to passing them up to a couple of the guys that was on the machine guns. This is the way it went.

We backed out of the slip and went over and started over toward the battleships, and then we started picking up survivors. We found right quick that we could run into that fire, and the bow of our boat . . . the wake . . . the bow of our boat running at about four or five knots would push the fire ahead of us. So we could get up in the fire by keeping going and grab those guys that was in there, and we saved quite a few lives.

Marcello: What was the surface of the water like as you were going out

there to pull some of those people out of the drink?

Featherling: From the way you talk, you imply that it was waves and stuff.

Pearl Harbor is a cove actually, and there's never no waves.

Marcello: Well, I wasn't referring to waves; I was referring to the oil and so on in the water.

Featherling: Well, hell, it was just oil all over everything.

Marcello: That's a thick, gelatinous oil, too, isn't it?

Featherling: Yes, and, of course, it was all on fire. We're looking at a mile of fire, three or four hundred yards wide. When I say a mile of fire, this is down at what we called Battleship Row, right down along Ford Island where the battleships were tied up. This oil had poured out there, and the way the breeze and the wind was blowing and so forth, it was pushing it out in the channel.

Marcello: What was the condition of the men that you were pulling out of the water? Were most of them burned and things of this nature?

Featherling: Most of them were burned real bad. A majority of them did die. A lot of them that we pulled out were already dead. How many our boats picked up, I couldn't tell you.

Marcello: Were you doing this most of the rest of the day?

Featherling: No, not the rest of the day. We were doing this most . . . oh, I'll say to ten o'clock.

Marcello: Ten o'clock in the morning?

Featherling: Yes. Then we were ordered . . . by then other small craft got into

the action, and we were more vital other places. By then they ordered us to go to the torpedo base, which was back up a sluice and way back up in the one end of the harbor, and take on depth charges.

Marcello: Oh, the PT boats could handle depth charges, too?

Featherling: (Chuckle) Yes, we could handle them. We put them on deck and pull the pin and roll them off the stern. That's the way we did it. So we went up there, and each boat picked up six 600-pound depth charges.

Marcello: Did you have your torpedoes at this time?

Featherling: Oh, yes. Of course, they was no good to us.

Marcello: Were those torpedo tubes loaded all the time?

Featherling: They were loaded with torpedoes, yes.

Marcello: But not armed.

Featherling: Not armed. We had practice heads on them; we didn't have warheads on them. So then we picked up the depth charges, and by then they had picked up submarine sounds in the harbor. The USS Curtiss had shot through the conning tower on one of them and sunk it. We found out later that was midget subs. Then we sunk one in the harbor--the PT did.

Marcello: Several PT's together claimed credit for the sinking of one of these midget submarines?

Featherling: No.

Marcello: Just your PT?

Featherling: Just my PT. We're talking about a big area about like Corpus Christi Bay with an island sitting out in the middle of it. So our PT's were scattered all around there--not maneuvering around necessarily, but scattered all around. What the rest of them were doing, I don't know. Some of them were helping guys off of sunk ships; some of them were picking up guys swimming in the water and taking them to this place and that place.

The dead we all took to Hospital Point. That was a big dock there, and that's where all the dead were assembled--stacked up like cordwood, actually. The reason they were stacked up like that was because there was just so much space, and they had them coming in, and they couldn't handle them fast enough and so forth and so on. The doctors there could determine whether they was alive or dead, so this is the way they were handled.

Marcello: I'm sure that was a rather gruesome sight there, but at the same time you were probably so busy that you really didn't take full cognizance to it right away.

Featherling: The only thing really that you noticed is actually the things that you were doing and that was happening right around you. There was no man out there that can say, "Well, I saw them doing this, and I saw them doing that," clear across the harbor from him. What he's talking about is "I heard," hearsay. The guys could only tell you what was happening right around them.

Marcello: Describe a little bit more of the depth-charging of that midget submarine.

Featherling: Well, as we were loading depth charges, they gave us a sounding device that we could drop over the side and listen for sounds under the water with a pair of headphones on our head. This is all that one guy done. So we come back . . . and there were four boats that had these on it, so we spread out around the harbor. As we came back in the vicinity of the battleships that were now sunk . . . however, there were still planes coming in and strafing and horizontal bombers still dropping bombs. We went on with our so-called patrol down around Battleship Row. We did pick up some "pings." Now, we were just idling along at two or maybe three knots, and we would pick up a "ping" or something. We would stop the engines, so we could really determine what it was.

So we picked up this "pinging" noise and reported it to the CINCPAC. The old admiral said, "Depth-charge it!" So we backed off . . . we'd have to get up speed to about thirty-five or forty knots, anyway, to get away from the depth charge because we're shooting 600 pounds of depth charges in about ninety feet of water. So we set the depth on this depth charge at seventy-five feet--there was a dial on the side of it that you could turn. And they had a forked pin, and we had a lanyard on these pins; and when we would roll them off, we'd just hold onto that lanyard,

and that would pull the pin. We backed off down there a ways . . . actually, we had our bearings and everything for exactly when to roll it off. Well, we goofed. We rolled two off instead of one. We couldn't stop the second one, so we grabbed the lanyard and just pulled (chuckle) two of them off. We blew this thing to the surface--the midget sub. It came up and then went right back down. Well, after disturbance and everything had settled, then we came back in the area and couldn't detect no more sounds.

In the meantime, one of our destroyers that wasn't hurt made a run in that area, and it was all quiet. I guess it was a month or so after the action and everything, when things had calmed down, that they went out there, and they sent a diver down. It was a midget sub, and it was raised to the surface. Later on, it was put on tour in the United States and this and that.

That was the first one and then another one ran aground out on Bishop's Point, and there was another that run aground someplace.

Marcello: So what did you do then the rest of the day? You were on patrol and . . .

Featherling: Okay, we were still on this anti-submarine patrol. Well. Hospital Point is right on the inside entrance of the channel going out to the ocean.

Marcello: That's right over there where the Nevada beached itself, right?

Featherling: Opposite of where the Nevada beached itself. Okay, so we're cruising along off of Hospital Point with our little old auxiliary sounding gear, and we hear this "pinging." Really, it does sound like a submarine going through the water--the propellers--it really does. So we make two or three runs on it before we decide to report it. Now, this is about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Everything had settled down as it could be; it settled down. So we reported it to CINCPAC--of course, everybody is gun-happy, anyway--and he said, "Well, depth-charge it!"

Okay, we go out to the mouth of the channel, and they open the submarine net for us. We go out to the mouth of the channel, and we come charging down through there, and we rolled off two depth charges. And then we come back and check it out, and there was no more "pinging." So we reported to CINCPAC. "Well done," and all this and that we get.

In the meantime, they told us to tie up at the submarine net--the dock at the submarine net halfway up the channel from the mouth. We go up there and tie up, and we no more than get tied up and old CINCPAC calls us, and we learned that we hadn't sunk a submarine. We had depth-charged a 13-inch fresh water line going to Hospital Point (chuckle). The whole Hospital Point and all the facilities in that area no longer had fresh water (chuckle).

Marcello: I'm sure there were a lot of activities of that nature taking place that day.

Featherling: In the meantime--I don't remember what it was for--we made a depth charge run right after it. But we were tied up at the net, and we had a first class machinist's mate on the boat next to mine--there were two of us tied up there--by the name of Sheldon B. Hurley. I was later with him after we both left PT's in 1945. We were together again in '46 and '47 in Florida. Anyway, old Hurley was like me on his boat; he was a machine gunner. So we was sitting there, and we were both on watch with the machine guns, and here comes this B-17 from the wrong direction.

Marcello: This is still daylight, right?

Featherling: Sure, it's still daylight! Hell, yes! But he was coming in from the wrong direction, and we had orders that anything that came in from a certain direction was friendly; any other direction, shoot it down. Here comes this old B-17. He was out of gas--we was to find out later--and he had to come in that way and he was low. Well, old Hurley, he don't back off from nothing; he just cuts loose on them. He puts a stitch of bullets right down the side of it. By the time he threw a burst at the plane, then it dawns on him that it's friendly, you know, that it's our own. I'm hollering at him all the time across two boats telling him, "It's a B-17! It's a '17! It's a '17!"

(Chuckle) Then we don't shoot at it anymore.

Oh, about two or three hours later, a guy comes down--an Army officer--comes down on the boats. We're sitting up on the deck eating some cold sandwiches, and he said, "Hey! The machine gunner that shot at that plane, he sure done some good shooting!" Old Hurley says, "That's me! That's me!" This is the pilot of that plane (chuckle). That was a first class ass-chewing, I'll tell you for sure (chuckle). Man, he was a mad pilot!

Marcello: Incidentally, when you were out there in the harbor depth charging that submarine, you mentioned that the attack was still going on. Did your PT boat come under any direct attack itself while you were there?

Featherling: As far as I know, no. Now, we had holes in our PT's in the decks and so forth, but this was from trash . . . civilians call it shrapnel, but actually it was trash from our own shell bursts and so forth up in the air shooting at the Japs--the 5-inch guns and so forth.

Marcello: All that shrapnel has to come back down again (chuckle).

Featherling: Yes. We caught quite a bit of it. All the boats did. One reason that it went through the decks was because it was still hot, you see. When it hit the deck, it more or less . . . the force of it and the burning hot, too, made it go through the decks. I've often thought why we didn't get hit, but not a

PT sailor got hurt--not one! There was places where this stuff went through the deck where they would have been standing. So I guess the Good Lord was just watching over us.

Marcello: Now, in the meantime, had you taken steps to arm your torpedoes and so on in case you would have to get outside the mouth of the harbor and meet any hostile ships or anything of that nature?

Featherling: When we went over to pick up the depth charges, we changed torpedoes. We took the old ones out and put warhead torpedoes in. That night we did go out on patrol to the outer part of the island; and the next day we depth-charged a submarine off the mouth of Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: So this is the third actual depth-charging that you participated in?

Featherling: Yes.

Marcello: The midget submarine, the fresh water pipe, and now a submarine.

Featherling: Right, the next day.

Marcello: Did you feel that you got any results on December 8th?

Featherling: On the third day, yes! I think we got results. There were four of us depth-charging it. There were four PT boats and a destroyer. There was trash and stuff that came to the surface; there was oil that came to the surface; and the destroyer could not make contact with it. Now on the outside, we wasn't using our little depth-finder or sound gear out there; we were patrolling with the destroyer, and he would give us our bearings where to

drop depth charges and stuff. We would make the initial runs on it, and he would come in behind--the destroyer would.

It's kind of . . . it's really hard to remember bad things that happened. I guess it's human nature to remember the funny things that happened.

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

Featherling: Really, we wasn't close to anybody to hear rumors on the PT boat--not like on a big ship where you would be tied up on a dock or something like that.

Marcello: Did you perhaps wonder whether or not the Japanese were going to make a landing?

Featherling: Not really; not really. Most of the time, we didn't have time to wonder about things like that. We were just too busy; they just kept us too busy.

During the action, we went alongside the . . . during the initial action, we went alongside the USS West Virginia and took five men off of it--off the West Virginia. They just jumped over on our boat. It was sunk and we went right in alongside the deck, and they jumped over onto our boat. Where we could see guys on those ships that were sunk and crippled that couldn't get off, all the PT boats done their level best to get over there and pick them up. Ninety-nine per cent of the time we did succeed in getting them--the guys that were

trapped. Two of the guys that we took off the West Virginia, we retained; they wanted to stay in the PT squadron so we took them in. Some of the other boats took a few other men off the other ships and kept them in their squadrons. If their ship was sunk and no place for them to go, we had them transferred way after the battle to our outfit.

Marcello: Could you detect any changes in the morale of the people after the attack? We mentioned awhile ago that the morale of the personnel in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy was rather high. Could you detect any change after the attack?

Featherling: Not other than just being a mad bunch of guys at the Japs.

Marcello: This seems to be the general feeling, that is, it was more one of anger than anything else.

Featherling: Yes. We was going to get them and this and that. A lot of the guys had the opportunity to go around to different places and look things over and this and that after the attack--like going over to Hickam Field and seeing what had been done over there or going over to Aiea and seeing what had been done over there and even across the islands and so on to the seaplane base and so forth.

We didn't have that opportunity. From the word "go," we were on patrol because that's all Uncle Sam had, see. That was all the Navy he had, was the small craft, see--the PT boats and a few of the old destroyers that were left and this and that.

So we were constantly on guard duty--if not at Pearl then out at one of the islands on submarine patrol and lookout and so forth.

Nobody had liberty or could write home or anything for two weeks after Pearl. Everything was restricted; I mean, it had to be because there was too much to be done. My dad even got a telegram from the War Department saying that I had been killed in action at Pearl. Of course, I didn't know this until a long time later. But he told my mother, he said, "Aw, that boy isn't killed! There's something screwy here!" He never believed it. By the time my letter--a note--got to him from me, I guess a month had passed.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Featherling; is there anything else relative to the Pearl Harbor attack that we need to talk about and that we haven't mentioned at this point?

Featherling: This is the hardest thing in the world to remember. I remember other battles I was in later more than I do Pearl. The things I saw would be like the old Oglala. When we come out of the submarine base and made our turn, she was starting to roll over. I saw that. She sunk right down on her side.

The Cassin and Downes--right ahead of the Pennsylvania--was burning in dry dock. There was what we called the floating dry dock, and the destroyer Shaw was in her. Well, we went by her and she had her bow blown off, and she and the dry dock--

both--were sinking.

By then we were so darn busy trying to help people and watching for planes and trying to shoot them down and this and that that I really don't remember too much about it. There were other things on my mind. I do remember when old K. O. spun that boat around, and we started shooting at torpedo planes that were coming right by us. We were shooting right into Officers' Country across the channel. The reason we were shooting right into Officers' Country across the channel is because it was kind of a hill that went up there, and the higher officers' homes were built up there. There was a boat landing right down below where the people going on liberty from other ships docked and so forth. We didn't realize at the time because we were too busy tracking that plane. We didn't know that we were shooting into Officers' Country. Later on we got to talking about it, and it dawned on us then that we were shooting right into those officers' houses.

Marcello: Like you say, it is so easy many times to remember the funny things more so than the serious things.

Featherling: Yes. There was always two officers that were more or less on duty with a squadron of boats when we were tied up in port like that. We got to looking for them--I say "we"--the guys got to looking for them, so they could get their boats underway, and they couldn't find them anywhere. It wound up that they

were under some cars. I don't think they was under them because they was afraid; I think they was under them because they couldn't get to the boats. They were maybe a hundred yards out there where their cars were parked, and with all the strafing and everything that was going on, I don't think they had a chance.

Nearly every boat--I guess every one of them--had one of the senior men--enlisted men--on the boat that got it underway from the dock. Then we went in later on and picked up our officers. During the action, if we could break away, we would go in and pick them up.

The Saint Louis was breaking for the mouth of the harbor, and we went in and picked up our two officers at the sub base off the end of the pier. We just whirled the back end around, and they jumped on and we took on off; we never did stop. Well, this one officer--a lieutenant--jumped on with our two officers, and he come running up there and told Sells, "Catch the Saint Louis! That's my ship! Put me on the Saint Louis!" Cato looked at him, and he said, "That's tough shit! We ain't got time to fool with you!" There was no time to put up with foolishness like that. If he was so damn important, that ship would have waited for him.

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

and very important things, and we really do appreciate your detail. I'm sure the scholars will find your comments very valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Featherling: What always amazed me is that I have reminisced with a lot of men in the Navy that were at Pearl Harbor, and you would be surprised at how many airplanes were shot down at Pearl Harbor when there was very damn few.

Marcello: Well, the official count is that there were twenty-nine Japanese planes shot down.

Featherling: Right.

Marcello: Again, I want to thank you very much for having participated.