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B. S. Reddig

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Place of Interview: Little Rock, Arkansas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: B S Reddig
(Signature)

Date: 8-5-78

Oral History Collection

B. S. "Bud" Reddig

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Little Rock, Arkansas Date: August 5, 1978

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing B. S. "Bud" Reddig for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on August 5, 1978, in Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm interviewing Mr. Reddig in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack there and at Pearl Harbor and at the other military installations on December 7, 1941. Actually, at the time of the attack, Mr. Reddig's unit, which was K Company, 21st Infantry, was out in the field near Haleiwa Beach at the time of the attack.

Mr. Reddig, 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. Reddig: I was born on May 5, 1919, in Plumerville, Arkansas; that's about fifty miles northwest of Little Rock. I attended

school in Plumerville until three friends of mine and I decided we wanted to kind of seek our fortune--back in the Depression days--and we left and went to the State of Washington. We stayed up there three or four months working for Johnson and Gunstone Lumber Company.

I kind of got . . . we all kind of got tired of that place, and I had a sister and a brother-in-law that lived down in Woodlake, California. So I left this group and went to California and stayed with my brother-in-law and sister a few months, working there until winter started coming on and work got a little scarce.

A couple of guys that I had met there and with whom I had become very good friends . . . well, we decided we would join the Army and go someplace (chuckle). This was the latter part of 1939. In fact, I was sworn in at Angel Island on December 9, 1940. These two friends and I went to Visalia, California, to the recruiting office and talked to the recruiting sergeant there.

Well, the only two bases they had overseas at that time was Hawaii and the Philippines. So we talked it over and couldn't decide which place we wanted to go, really, so we went out and ate lunch and came back, and we still couldn't make up our mind which place we wanted to go. So we had the recruiting sergeant to flip a coin to see whether we went to Hawaii

or to the Philippines. So the flip of the coin is the reason why I was in Hawaii instead of the Philippines. I've been very thankful a lot of times since then that I was there instead of the Philippines, because I doubt if I would have ever made it back from over there.

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

Reddig: At that time, it was about the only thing we could get in right then. We did go to the Naval recruiting station, and they apparently at that time didn't need anybody, so we went down to the Army recruiting station, and they . . . the only two things they needed at that time was infantry in Hawaii and coast artillery in the Philippines. All three of us went to Hawaii and was in the infantry.

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service, how closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs?

Reddig: Just about none. Not long before Pearl Harbor was attacked, we were put on alert and moved out into the field for a short period of time and were issued steel helmets--the first time they had issued steel helmets since World War I. Of course, we didn't know why we were out there. We stayed out in the field a week or two until we came back in the barracks, and everything was apparently over for whatever the reason we were moved out into the field

Marcello: Was that really the first time that you really thought about the country getting into war?

Reddig: Yes, it was. Of course, I really hadn't given it any thought at all before that.

Marcello: I assume that you took your basic training in the Hawaiian Islands.

Reddig: Yes, there at Schofield Barracks.

Marcello: In other words, you went directly from Angel Island to Schofield Barracks.

Reddig: Right. At that time, I was assigned to the K Company of the 21st Infantry. Throughout the whole regiment, the new recruits that came over were assigned to the company they would be with. In the morning when we fell out for drill, we all assembled in one place and went to a separate place for our basic training.

Marcello: How long did basic training last at that time?

Reddig: Six weeks.

Marcello: And it was the normal Army infantry basic training?

Reddig: Right. Mostly close order drill and, of course, map reading and compass reading and things that you would use in the infantry. It wasn't being up all night like the later years, when you heard a lot of troops say they were treated rough and everything. That was strictly a garrison outfit. Of course, after I was turned to duty, we pulled a lot of parades for . . .

well, any time a big shot would come to Hawaii, the infantry would pull parades for them. Close order drill and parades and stuff like this was about the only thing did then. Once a year we would go out in the field for maneuvers for a couple of weeks.

Marcello: For the most part, we have to remember that we are talking about a peacetime Army.

Reddig: Right.

Marcello: And it was pretty good duty there in the Hawaiian Islands during that period.

Reddig: It wasn't bad. We would fall out at eight o'clock and do about forty-five minutes close order drill. We would come back into the barracks, and we would have maybe some thirty minutes to forty-five minutes of map reading and the same amount on machine guns and things of that type. At 11:30 we had thirty minutes for the care and cleaning of our equipment. We had that thirty minutes to keep everything cleaned up. We were then through until the morning reveille again; it was just no duty or anything in the afternoons.

Marcello: Now, was this after you get out of basic training?

Reddig: Right.

Marcello: During basic training, I imagine that you were putting in pretty much of a full day.

Reddig: Yes, a full day during basic training. Of course, in the

afternoon we'd go back to our barracks. Of course, we didn't get any passes to leave the post or anything during that six weeks. Of course, after six weeks was up, everybody had a special privilege pass; you'd just go and come when you wanted to--just be there during duty hours.

Marcello: Schofield Barracks was a very large post at that time, was it not?

Reddig: Yes, it was. They made up the 24th and the 25th Infantry Divisions out of the people that were at Schofield Barracks. Before the war started, the 19th and 21st Infantry was put in the 24th Division, and the 27th and the 35th Infantry was put in the 25th Division. Of course, there was a couple of more infantry regiments that came over from the States that was added to each one of them. We had three infantry regiments in each division besides the field artillery and all the other branches that made up a division.

Marcello: Describe what your barracks and quarters were like here at Schofield.

Reddig: Well, we had three-story concrete barracks, and they were built in a square--a quadrangle. We had a big quadrangle out in the middle, and, of course, there was Headquarters Unit on one side and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions--three battalions--in a regiment. Of course, there was plenty of room in this big quadrangle out in the middle for everybody to fall out into

every morning for reports. We'd leave there and go to the drill field and what-have-you. It was a beautiful place--beautiful grass--and it was kept up good. People would be on fatigue duty or extra duty at that time and would get out in the quadrangle with a mess kit knife and dig out the little sprigs of grass that wasn't supposed to be there. Of course, the weather was perfect. We had beautiful flowers and plants and trees all around at all times.

Marcello: Now,were each of these quadrangles more or less self-contained? In other words, not only did you live there, but the chow halls and so on were also located there, were they not?

Reddig: Right. Each company had its own chow hall. Of course, before the war started, I think we had about seventy men in a company, which was way under wartime strength. I think a little over 200 was wartime strength. There were only seventy people in a company, and each company had its own mess hall and its own mess sergeant. We had real good chow. We always had a good mess sergeant. Of course, they drew . . . they were allowed so much for rations. Well, the mess sergeant ordered what he wanted to from the commissary, and it was up to him to do the best he could with what he was allowed. We had awful good chow.

Marcello: So you had no complaints at all about the food.

Reddig: No. It wasn't crowded or anything either, because like I say,

there was about seventy people in a company at that time, and each company had its own dayroom. We had, of course, magazines and the paper and the radio--that was before television came out--and a pool table. Of course, there was a swimming pool and a bowling alley and baseball and football fields, a theater, and everything on the post before the war started. I mean, there was plenty of places to go and plenty of things to do on the base.

Marcello: How would you describe your living quarters themselves? In other words, were they comfortable or uncomfortable?

Reddig: Well, we had single cots, and, of course, they had a decent mattress on them; they were comfortable enough. Of course, back in our younger days, you know, you could sleep most anywhere. We slept out on the ground a lot on maneuvers and stuff on the account of the weather being warm. But as far as being comfortable, I would say we were. We had plenty of room, too.

Marcello: Did you have sufficient space in which to store all your clothing and gear and so on?

Reddig: Yes. Each man had a wall locker and also a footlocker, and there was plenty of room in the two of them for our GI issues plus our civilian clothes. At that time, we had a couple of pairs of civilian slacks and "gook" shirts that we'd wear to town off the base, you know. We never would wear our uniforms

in Honolulu or around. Of course, everybody knew everybody was a soldier, anyhow (chuckle).

Marcello: What did you do after you got out of basic training? In other words, what was your particular assignment?

Reddig: Well, I was just . . . we didn't do or have any assignments other than just regular infantry training at that time. Like I say, we had about three, three-and-a-half hours each morning of duty, and that's all we did during the day. Everybody was off in the afternoons unless you were on guard duty or KP or extra duty of some kind. Of course, they went right down the duty roster on that; it was on rotation, and you would take your turn on being on guard duty for a twenty-four-hour period. On KP one day at a time was all we pulled of that, and that didn't come around very often.

Marcello: Am I to assume, therefore, that you were what was commonly called "tropical work hours" at that time?

Reddig: Yes, until the war started.

Marcello: You only put in a half-day?

Reddig: Right. From noon until reveille the next morning, we were on our own. Of course, we had so much free time that we wasn't gone all the time. We didn't have money enough to go anyplace in those days (chuckle). Usually, when you did leave the base, you would get out and hitchhike someplace and back. It was very far for anywhere you wanted to go.

Marcello: What part did athletic competition and sports play in the life of that pre-Pearl Harbor Army? In other words, was there a lot of emphasis put on sports and athletic competition?

Reddig: Yes, there was. In fact, just about all the ratings in any of the companies belonged to "jockstraps." We didn't have too many ratings then. In fact, at that time our squad leader was a corporal, and our platoon sergeant was a buck sergeant. Other than the first sergeant, that's the biggest rank we had in an infantry company, was a buck sergeant. Most of those ratings belonged to someone who played football or baseball or was on the boxing team or something like that, and that's about all they did. They didn't pull any duty; they were just on special duty.

Marcello: Did this cause any amount of resentment on the part of the other troops?

Reddig: Oh, yes (chuckle). Not too long after I was turned to duty, we went on the firing range, and I did real good on the firing range, and so I got the first PFC rating that came out after that. In fact, the PFC rating I got came from one of the cooks in the kitchen that "boloed" with a rifle on the rifle range. If you didn't qualify, that's what we called "boloing." Well, anyone that couldn't qualify in an infantry company, they transferred him to the pack train. I thought the infantry was about as low as you could go, but the pack train was lower (chuckle).

Marcello: What did you do in the pack train?

Reddig: That's where they kept the pack mules. I never seen them use them before the war started to amount to anything. Of course, they fed them and they kept the stables cleaned up. This guy--the cook--was transferred out of the infantry down to the pack train, and I got his PFC rating. Of course, right after that, I was acting squad leader, acting corporal. That's where all the catch came in on the "jockstraps"; everybody that was pulling duty was "acting" just about (chuckle).

Marcello: How rapid or slow was promotion in that Army before the war?

Reddig: It was real slow. I would say, oh, better than 50 per cent of the people that pulled a two-year hitch over there would come back to the States still a private, because there just wasn't any ratings hardly. Well, there was a mess sergeant and a supply sergeant that were buck sergeants and four platoon sergeants. So there was six buck sergeant ratings in the whole infantry company and four corporal ratings and maybe twelve PFC ratings, and that was it. Of course, some of the "jock-straps" would reenlist over there--stay longer--and so the ratings just didn't come open. There wasn't any; they were tied up.

Marcello: I understand there was even some rather heavy recruiting that was carried on for athletes.

Reddig: Well, I've heard that, and I'm sure there was. Of course, I

never had anything to do with the recruiting service back at that time. But each regiment at that time was just like your major colleges now. Boy, everybody wanted the best football team, the best baseball team, the best boxers; and any way they could get one, if they knew he was coming, they would try to (chuckle).

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about your liberty routine. How did it operate here at Schofield Barracks? Now, you mentioned previously that you did normally get off at noon and did not have to be back on duty until the next morning. What would you normally do when you had free time?

Reddig: Well, on payday we'd head for Honolulu.

Marcello: When was payday?

Reddig: The first of the month. We got paid once a month. Of course, most everybody went to Honolulu or Wahiawa--a smaller town outside of Schofield Barracks there. But most everybody went to Honolulu.

Marcello: Was it relatively easy to get into Honolulu from Schofield?

Reddig: Yes, we had taxi service and bus service there. The taxis was lined up, and you didn't have to wait. There were a lot of them up there on payday especially, because they knew everybody was going to town when they got out of the pay line. Of course, they had those limousine-type taxis--most of them were--and they hauled about eight--three in the back, three in the jump

seat, and a couple in the front with the driver.

And it was the same way coming back. Right in front of the YMCA there in Honolulu was where you'd catch the taxis back to Schofield Barracks. It was more like a taxi stand than a YMCA (chuckle).

Marcello: What did you normally do when you had liberty in Honolulu?

Reddig: Oh, kick around or go over and have a few drinks . . . sweat out what we could find, which wasn't very much. The town was overloaded with servicemen--Army, Navy, Marines--and there wasn't really too much to do other than go have a few beers or a drink or two and look around and see if you could find anything to pick up (chuckle).

Marcello: I guess as one gets closer and closer to December 7th, and as the build-up of the military accelerated on the island, downtown Honolulu was overcrowded with servicemen on a weekend.

Reddig: Well, yes. Right after the war started . . . of course, as soon as we started getting passes . . . we didn't or couldn't get a pass to go to Honolulu or anyplace for a while. Of course, they were bringing a lot of new troops in, and it was real thick. Of course, we were all issued these gas masks and helmets. We didn't have to wear the helmet, but you had to carry it with you everywhere you went on pass and what-have-you. Of course, we would strap the helmet around the gas mask, so walking up and down the streets, all you could hear was these helmets banging

together (chuckle) and sticking out on the side.

Marcello: Now, like you say, this procedure was followed after the attack occurred.

Reddig: Right.

Marcello: Do you recall what any of your favorite hangouts were in downtown Honolulu?

Reddig: I can remember the Black Cat Cafe.

Marcello: Everybody seems to know the Black Cat Cafe.

Reddig: That's right across the street from the cab stand. It's easy to get to (chuckle); it's the first place you see when you get out, unless you get out before you get down there. I remember Wu Fat's.

Marcello: What seemed to be the attraction at the Black Cat Cafe? Everybody mentions it.

Reddig: Of course, it was a cafe and a bar, and there was a few--if there was any--a few extra women around, and some of them hung out in there. Naturally, a young guy out like that was looking for somebody to get together with if he could find it. It just seemed to be more convenient, I guess.

Marcello: Was it a very big place?

Reddig: Yes, it was. It was a pretty good-sized cafe. As well as I can remember, it had a long counter with stools on it and booths and tables in it.

Marcello: Now, on a Saturday night in Honolulu, was there a lot of heavy

drinking going on? I'm referring to the group that you were most associated with.

Reddig: Not really heavy, no. I guess in the first place, it was too expensive according to the amount of money that we drew at that time. Most guys would go down and have two or three drinks or drink three or four beers, and they might have just about enough taxi fare to get back to Schofield Barracks (chuckle). That was about the end of the line.

Marcello: In other words, there would not necessarily have been a great many drunks coming back to Schofield Barracks on a Saturday night.

Reddig: Not really.

Marcello: Everybody would have been in pretty good shape to fight on a Sunday morning if the occasion arose.

Reddig: I'm sure they could have if they needed to, yes. We all had a few hangovers, but not bad enough to keep you from fighting, if you had to.

Marcello: Now, you mentioned another little town outside Schofield Barracks that you would go to on occasion.

Reddig: Wahiawa.

Marcello: Did you all go over there?

Reddig: Oh, yes.

Marcello: What was there to do over there?

Reddig: Just about the same thing as in Honolulu, only on a smaller basis.

It was a small town.

Marcello: Could you walk to Wahiawa?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: It was that close?

Reddig: Yes. I'd say it was two or three miles from the main entrance.

Marcello: I understand a lot of the businesses over there were Japanese-owned, as ironic as that might sound.

Reddig: Yes. From what I hear now, they own more of it now than they did then--a lot of your big hotels and stuff. We were over there a year ago this past December 7th, and we were told that the majority of those big new hotels over there were owned by Japanese. It don't even look like itself (chuckle).

Marcello: I guess at the time that you were there, the only hotels down on Waikiki were the Royal Hawaiian and the Moana.

Reddig: Right. The Royal Hawaiian was the big one; I believe it was three stories tall. Now, you get up on top of one of those twenty-five or thirty-story hotels and looking down, and it's completely lost. It's still there, but . . . of course, it's a landmark and always will be. But it surprised me--the amount of high-rise hotels and condominiums there is down in the area now.

Marcello: Let's talk about some of the training exercises or maneuvers or alerts that you would participate in during that period prior to the war. Did you notice that the seriousness and

the intensity of your training increased as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941? Could you detect any changes occurring in your routine?

Reddig: No, I couldn't. Not really. Like I say, it was mostly a garrison outfit, except when we would move out into the field on maneuvers or pull a problem for a day or two. But as well as I can remember, there wasn't nothing to indicate that we were training for a war or any kind of trouble.

Marcello: Did you have any alerts or manuevers prior to December 7th?

Reddig: Just the one time I referred to awhile ago, when they issued us steel helmets. It was the only alert we had been put on.

Marcello: When this alert occurred, did you go out into the field?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: Do you recall when that alert started?

Reddig: No, I don't.

Marcello: Was it a month before the attack or a couple of weeks before the attack?

Reddig: It would be hard for me to say. It wasn't long, though. I'd say it was somewhere maybe between two weeks and a month.

Marcello: Did you stay out in the field all that time?

Reddig: No, no. We were only out a few days--maybe a week--until we came back into the barracks.

Marcello: And when did you come back into the barracks?

Reddig: Probably a week after we had gone out. But now as far as dates,

it's been so long I can't remember.

Marcello: I guess what I was referring to here is, when did you come back to the barracks relative to the Pearl Harbor attack? The attack occurred on the 7th, so would you know when you got back into the barracks again?

Reddig: After the 7th?

Marcello: No, prior to the 7th.

Reddig: No, no, I couldn't say.

Marcello: What did you do when you were out in the field on this alert?

Reddig: Pull little problems. You know, we kind of chose up sides and tried to slip up on the enemy--you know, kind of like a little war game.

Marcello: Now, did you have a pre-determined position to which you went when one of these alerts occurred?

Reddig: Yes, out on the . . . one of the positions that we were to take up was out on the beach where we were December 7th. Another one was up in Pupukea Heights up in the mountains. Each company, of course, had certain places to go in case there was an attack; I mean, all this time we would have maneuvers and stuff, we would always go to the same place--each outfit would. That's where we did move out to after the war started for a short time.

Of course, then we moved around a lot, putting up barbed wire and building gun emplacements on the beach and up in the

mountains. There wasn't any gun emplacements of any kind before December 7th. That's where . . . we talked about the pack train awhile ago. They packed a lot of cement and lumber for building forms and things and carried it up the trails in the mountains on these mules in the pack train.

Marcello: But all this occurred after December 7th.

Reddig: After December 7th, yes. There wasn't a gun emplacement of any kind around the islands as far as I know. Well, I'm sure they had a few coast artillery batteries set up down on the other side of the island from us, but as far as any kind of gun emplacements to ward off an attack or anything, we didn't have anything like that.

Marcello: All in all, how would you describe the morale in that Army prior to December 7th, that is, before the war started?

Reddig: Well, morale wasn't too bad in my outfit. We could find a few things, you know, to kind of keep busy doing. Of course, when we went to Hawaii, we went over there with the understanding that we'd be gone two years and get out on a short discharge. Our time counted time-and-a-half at that time. Instead of staying three years in the States, you could get out on a short discharge with two years over there.

Marcello: That was considered foreign duty, was it not?

Reddig: Yes, it was at that time. And, of course, the weather was wonderful over there; you couldn't beat it anywhere you would go.

The people weren't too dissatisfied, even though they did kind of get maybe to where they wanted to go home or leave that place or go someplace else. But it wasn't bad duty.

Marcello: As conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, how much did you and your buddies in your bull sessions ever talk about the idea of a possible attack on the Hawaiian Islands?

Reddig: I don't think I ever heard it mentioned. As far as I know, I didn't myself and I don't remember any of us talking about an attack on the island or a war starting of any kind. As far as we were concerned, there wasn't any such thing as a war (chuckle).

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of person usually came to mind? Did you have a stereotype of the typical Japanese?

Reddig: Was this before or after?

Marcello: Yes, before the war.

Reddig: Oh, he was just a foreigner to me. I mean, I really didn't give it too much thought. Of course, everything over there was . . . there was so many mixed breeds and different nationalities over there. Of course, everybody was a foreigner, and I didn't think any different of the Japs as I would of any of the rest of them.

Marcello: Was there very much thought to the possibility of these Japanese

on the island acting as saboteurs or Fifth Columnists?

Reddig: I never heard it mentioned before the war started.

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

Reddig: Oh, yes, there was several of them. I guess the majority of them on the base were Japanese--in the laundry and in the PX and in the barber shop. Each regiment had its own regimental barber shop, tailor shop, and, of course, the PX and theaters and everything. I'm sure the biggest part of them were Japanese. Old Kemo had what he called Kemo Farm, and this was a beer joint on the base--the only one on the base that belonged to a civilian on Schofield Barracks. The name of it was Kemo Farm, and he would send old station wagons down just driving around through Schofield Barracks picking up anyone that wanted to come out to Kemo Farm for free. I understand he was about the first one they picked up when the war started. He had radio equipment and everything right there on Schofield.

Marcello: Now, this was strictly what you heard?

Reddig: Yes. I didn't see it (chuckle).

Marcello: I've heard that mentioned before, but I've never really heard . . . I've never talked to anybody that could substantiate that claim.

Reddig: Well, he was closed down right after the war started and then opened back up again.

Marcello: You do know that for a fact?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us up to those days immediately prior to the actual attack itself. Oh, there is one other question that I need to ask you. When you went into a town such as Wahiawa, which had a large Japanese population, did your officers or anybody ever caution you not to be too talkative when you went in any of those establishments and so on?

Reddig: Not before the war, no.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about that weekend of December 7, 1941. Do you recall what you did that weekend? Let's talk about that Friday and Saturday first of all.

Reddig: Well, like I said, my company was out in the field.

Marcello: When had you gone out?

Reddig: We went out either . . . I believe the Friday before, and we had been out there a couple of days. Of course, we weren't doing anything, really. We had our tents put up, you know, the larger pyramid tents that six guys slept in on cots. We just more or less . . . I think we had pulled a problem or two on Friday or Saturday.

Marcello: I'm sure there was a lot of bitching and griping if you went out there on a Friday.

Reddig: Oh, yes. Well, really not so much. Well, right now there probably would be. Seven days after payday, most everybody was already broke (chuckle). One trip to Honolulu and you'd come

back broke, so it don't really matter what you do the rest of the month--whether you're out in the field or in the barracks--because you don't have money to go anyplace again until the next payday. But I don't think there was too much griping about being out.

Marcello: So you were out on the beach, so to speak.

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: About how far from Schofield were you? You would have to estimate this, of course.

Reddig: I would say maybe ten or twelve miles--something like that. It wasn't very far.

Marcello: And did you say that you were rather close to Haleiwa Beach?

Reddig: Yes, not far up from Haleiwa Beach . . . I can't remember the name of this point. I would have to go look at a map to see.

Marcello: You were out there during that weekend of December 7th, then?

Reddig: Right.

Marcello: Okay, pick up the story on Sunday, December 7, 1941.

Reddig: Well, we had already finished breakfast, and, of course, we were out policing up the area.

Marcello: About what time was this?

Reddig: Well, we were out when the attack started, which was 7:55. Of course, we would line up at one end of the camp and walk through and pick up all the cigarette butts and what have you--no trash on the ground anywhere.

When we got the word that Pearl Harbor was being attacked . . . of course, we could hear the explosions. Of course, I imagine some of them we heard were at Wheeler Field, which was not too far away.

Marcello: What was the reaction when you heard these explosions?

Reddig: Well, we didn't know what the hell to do. You know, we wasn't expecting anything like that. Of course, they blew the alert . . . the bugler blew alert. We assembled and got down to the end of the camp back under the trees.

Marcello: Now, by this time, did you notice that an enemy attack had occurred?

Reddig: We got it on the phone from regimental headquarters.

Marcello: Which was back at Schofield Barracks?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that a wartime situation existed?

Reddig: Well, it was scary. We didn't have a round of ammunition with us.

Marcello: But did you have your weapons?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: But no ammunition?

Reddig: Yes. We always had our rifles with us any time we were out on problems or out in the field or anyplace. Back at the barracks, each infantry company had one case of ammunition in the supply

room--that was peacetime rations. Of course, the ones in the back of the barracks got in and got to shoot all the ammunition we had at the planes on their second and third runs--the bombing runs there over Schofield. They were strafing Schofield, too. Not long after we had moved back and took cover under the trees, we got the word from regimental headquarters that paratroopers were landing.

Marcello: Up until this time, you had not seen a single Japanese plane?

Reddig: Yes. Before we got this word, we did see two of them. I'm sure it was the P-40's that were on the little landing strip down at Haleiwa Beach. A couple of the pilots from Wheeler Field got in their car and went down there. These two planes were left over the weekend, and I don't know why. But they got up and got into a dogfight with the Jap planes. We watched that as much as we could see on our side of the mountain, when they would be over us.

You couldn't realize yet that we were in war. It was just not something that you thought about. Of course, there we were, without any ammunition, and they put out the word that paratroopers were landing, so we was standing around and looking up in the air and trying to see parachutes coming down. We couldn't even see an airplane much less paratroopers landing (chuckle).

Marcello: But you still had no ammunition?

Reddig: No. And it was after dark that night sometime . . . we had moved to this other area--a wooded area--and it was sometime after dark that night before ammunition was brought to us. Of course, we loaded down. I had my belt full and two bandoleers across each shoulder . . . pocketsful . . . . all I could carry. I carried that damn stuff around with me for three or four days, and it was cutting my shoulder in two, and I couldn't find anything to shoot at.

Marcello: So you didn't get any ammunition for seven or eight or nine hours?

Reddig: Oh, longer than that. I'd say it was twelve hours at least.

Marcello: In the meantime did you just scatter out in the surrounding area?

Reddig: Yes, we kind of scattered back under the trees.

Marcello: Did you dig any trenches or foxholes or anything of that sort?

Reddig: No, not that morning . . . not that day.

Marcello: What did you talk about or what did you speculate upon while you were waiting for these Japanese paratroopers to come?

Reddig: (Chuckle) It was kind of funny in a way, looking back on it. We didn't have any ammunition, like I said, and if had they come, I don't know what the hell we would have done--run, I guess. That's the only thing we could have done (chuckle).

Marcello: Beat them over the head when they dropped to the ground (chuckle).

Reddig: Yes (chuckle). There's another thing that I kind of look back

on that's kind of funny on that, too. Everyday, two or three times a day, we'd get reports on the paratroopers that landed. The third day after the war started, we got the report that they had all been hemmed up over in Mokuleia Pocket and either captured or killed. Well, hell, it was the next day before we really found out that there hadn't been anybody that landed on the island to start with (chuckle). I don't know why this report got to us that way, but it was just a known thing that they were there, and everybody knew it.

Marcello: What sort of day was December 7th in terms of weather and climate?

Reddig: Like most any other day. It was a beautiful, sunshiny day. Of course, up in the mountains it rains, I guess, every day. Every day it rains a little bit someplace on the island, but it don't last long; as soon as the sun comes out, it's dry and pretty again.

Marcello: Did it rain that night of December 7th?

Reddig: I can't remember if it did. I don't think it did where we were; I'm pretty sure it didn't.

Marcello: Now, by this time, you, of course, knew of the Japanese attack. At the same time, you were expecting to encounter these Japanese paratroopers. You were out there without any ammunition. Were you scared?

Reddig: Yes. Yes, we were scared (chuckle).

Marcello: What did you and your buddies talk about when you had a chance

to speculate about what was happening or what was going to happen?

Reddig: Well, of course, the biggest thing we talked about is wondering why we hadn't been brought some ammunition, because there was nothing we could do without any. Of course, there was a lot of bitching and cussing and hell-raising after we found out, you know, that they sunk all of our Navy and tore up Wheeler Field and Hickam Field.

Marcello: But, of course, you didn't know this until days later, did you?

Reddig: Oh, yes, we knew it that day.

Marcello: Oh, you did?

Reddig: Yes.

Marcello: Where were you getting the reports?

Reddig: Well, from regimental headquarters. Of course, we could hear all of this bombing and stuff down there, too, and we knew that it was taking place.

Marcello: I know that down around the various bases, there were a lot of trigger-happy servicemen that night. How were things out there where you were?

Reddig: Well, if we would have had ammunition earlier, I imagine . . . there was trigger-happy ones after we got ammunition, too, because it was supposed to have been total blackout. Well, there was a few lights shot at on automobiles and homes, too. I understand some of the people living there didn't know what

had gone on and didn't know they was supposed to be blacked out. There was quite a bit of shooting.

Marcello: Was there any sporadic gunfire in your particular area?

Reddig: Not right where we were, no. We were out in the woods in this area where there really wasn't much out there to cause any shooting to go on.

Marcello: I assume, however, that it wasn't safe to move around. You stayed where you were.

Reddig: Right. You had better stay down. I know we moved down to Hickam Field just a few days after the war started and took up ground defense down there for the airport. It was scary out on guard duty at night around there, because you just didn't know whether somebody was going to mistake you for a saboteur or what, because there had been quite a bit of shooting going on since the war had started.

Marcello: How long did you stay out in the field before you returned?

Reddig: I can't remember.

Marcello: Was it a matter of a few days?

Reddig: Several days.

Marcello: Less than a week?

Reddig: No, I believe it was more than a week. I know we were all mad when we did get back to the barracks. They had gone into our lockers and took all of our civilian clothes and everything and gave them to the Red Cross. They said we didn't have any

use for civilian clothes anymore (chuckle). They just about wiped us out on everything. Of course, a lot of the guys had personal things that they just didn't want to throw away. It burned them up pretty good on some of that stuff.

Marcello: So after returning to Schofield, is that when you went over to Hickam Field?

Reddig: No, we went to Hickam Field before we returned to Schofield.

Marcello: I see.

Reddig: We stayed down there a week or two . . . I guess it was about a week that we stayed down at Hickam Field and took up defense around there. We went back to Schofield, and we were in and out, in and out. Each time we would go out to the position that we would go to, we'd string a lot of barbed wire, and we barbed-wired all the beaches and built gun emplacements and barbed-wire around all of those . . . on the beach and up in the mountains, too. There was two ranges of mountains there that are real treacherous in places--high and just like a wall, some of them. Of course, we couldn't go straight up them, but we made a lot of trails on both of those ranges of mountains during the time I was there.

Marcello: When did you finally leave the Hawaiian Islands?

Reddig: Well, I can't remember the dates on that. Several months after the war started, I volunteered to go on a task force that left Hawaii and went down to Canton Island. That's a small island

down below the Fijis; it was just a small strip of white coral rock in a circle with a big lagoon in the middle. It was large enough on one side to have a runway built there for a refueling base for the bombers and transport planes. It was just a little strip of land with a big lagoon in the center, and I don't guess it was over 500 yards wide any place around it. It was nineteen miles around the island, and when the tide was in, about a third of it was covered with water. I stayed down there six-and-a-half months. They had one infantry company down there for guard duty around the airport. Of course, that's about all we did down there--pull guard duty.

It was kind of harassing down there. The damn submarines was around there all the time. Maybe once to three times a week--every night--they'd blow the siren or alert that the Jap submarines were in close enough that they put us on alert. They would lob a few shells out once in awhile, and part of the time they wouldn't. But they never did do any damage. They would just scare the hell out of you and make you wonder where the next one was going to hit. But it was just a harassing bunch, I think, down there.

Marcello: You mentioned that within a few days after the attack occurred, you had been sent down to Hickam Field to pull sentry duty down there. What did Hickam Field look like? Describe the damage

that remained.

Reddig: Oh, it was tore up something terrible. These barracks . . . I forget . . . I believe they were three or four-story barracks, and they had gotten direct hits from bombs on some of those, and the whole half of the barracks would be completely blown away. They were still doing a lot of digging with bulldozers and things around in that rubble when we moved down there. I don't think they had completely found everybody yet at that time.

Marcello: Had they cleared all the damaged and destroyed airplanes off the runways and so on by that time?

Reddig: Off to the side; off the main runway. But they were still piled up and battered around when we got down there. They hadn't salvaged any of them yet.

Marcello: What was the morale like in the aftermath of the attack now?

Reddig: Well, it was pretty low. We was kind of stuck there in a little island all out by ourselves and didn't know whether they were coming back or whether they was going to invade it with landing troops or what. Of course, we were crippled so bad without a Navy or Air Force--either. Everything was gone.

Marcello: You did realize more or less what the extent of the damage was there?

Reddig: Oh, yes. We were told, and we could see, too. Of course, down at Hickam Field, we could see Pearl Harbor and Hickam right there together, and we didn't have to be told. We knew the Navy and

the Air Force--both--was gone and didn't figure there was anything we could do if they wanted to come back and take the island, which they could have very easily. On December 7th, if they'd hadn't underestimated or wanted it . . . I don't know . . . they might not have wanted it, figuring they couldn't keep it (chuckle). I think they did a lot more than they anticipated doing..

Marcello: When could you finally get word home to your folks that you were alive and well?

Reddig: I believe it was about a week before I got access to something to write on and an envelope to mail it back in. It was just a short letter letting them know I was all right. Of course, I knew my folks were worried about me, and I worried about not being able to get in contact with them right away, but there wasn't too much you could do out in the boondocks.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Reddig, is there anything else relative to the attack that you think we need to talk about and get as part of the record? I have exhausted my list of questions.

Reddig: Well, since I wasn't right in the thick of it like they were at Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field and Wheeler where they did all the bombing, I don't have any big stories to tell like some of those guys would that was actually in it and was looking at it.

Marcello: Well, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. Regardless whether or not where all the action

was, you've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure that scholars will find your comments very valuable when they use them to read and write about Pearl Harbor.

Reddig: Well, I hope so. I really enjoyed talking to you and being interviewed for this thing. I've been hearing about it for a while and have been really looking forward to it.

Marcello: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity of being able to come here and do these interviews.