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Interview with
MARVIN WINGROVE
December 6, 1978

Place of Interview: Las Vegas, Nevada

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Marvin V. Wingrove
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Marvin V. Wingrove

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Marvin V. Wingrove for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. This interview is taking place on December 6, 1978, in Las Vegas, Nevada. I'm interviewing Mr. Wingrove in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack there and at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Wingrove, 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. Wingrove: I was born in Tucumcari, New Mexico, on July 1, 1920, and I went to the Tucumcari schools. I graduated from Tucumcari High School in 1939 and started college at Las Cruces, New Mexico, which was the New Mexico College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts. While I was down there, in November, I was running for a football and ran off into an irrigation

ditch and turned my ankle, and I was on crutches for about a month. While I was home during the Christmas holidays, I decided to join the Army, which I did, on December 27, 1939.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Army?

Wingrove: Well, a lot of my friends had joined the Army, and I had spent three tours at Citizen's Military Training Camp at Fort Bliss, Texas. I was kind of oriented that way and enjoyed it. College was kind of fun, but I thought, "Well, there are bigger things going on, so I'll go out and jump into them with both feet," which I did.

We went down and got on a train and went to Fort Bliss, Texas, and went through the processing and everything, and I was going to be in the cavalry in Fort Bliss. When I was there, however, there was a notice on the bulletin board saying that they needed aircraft people in Hawaii, so I went in and signed up to go to Hawaii. Well, when I was about twelve years old, a bunch of old Keystone bombers came flying over Tucumcari, New Mexico, and at that time I told my mother I was going to end up being an airplane pilot. So I went to Hawaii . . . went out to Angel Island in San Francisco, where it was very cold and dank and damp. I went to Hawaii and arrived there sometime in January of 1940 and went to Hickam Field.

Marcello: Now, at this time you were still in the United States Army, and had you taken your basic training at this stage?

Wingrove: Not at all.

Marcello: This was standard procedure at that time.

Wingrove: You went to your final base, and then you got your boot camp.

Marcello: You usually went to your permanent duty station to take your boot camp or your basic training.

Wingrove: I went to Hickam Field and went through boot camp at Hickam Field, and it was with an outfit called the 17th Air Base Squadron, which had about 1,800 people in it. I think it was the biggest squadron in the whole world at the time. We lived in tents around the parade field, and that was while they were building the monstrous, big barracks at Hickam Field,

Marcello: Hickam Field was in the process of expansion at that time.

Wingrove: It was in the process of literally being built. I finished up at boot camp, and I went into the file room at Hickam Field and worked in the file room for a while as a file clerk.

Marcello: Was the basic training that you took there at Hickam simply the normal, ordinary Army basic training?

Wingrove: "Left, right! Left, right!" I mean, singing "One, two, three, four." (chuckle)

Marcello: How long did it last at that time?

Wingrove: I think it must have been a month or five weeks. I think it was about five weeks. We had a bunch of people who had been sergeants up at Wheeler Field that had re-enlisted as privates to come down to Hickam Field, and they more or less promised

them that they were going to be corporals and sergeants again. But I had charge of the tent, and I had all these old guys. I remember one guy named McDough, and he ended up being the fire marshal at Hickam--the enlisted master fire marshal at Hickam. I haven't heard of him since that time. While I was doing all this, I also got involved in a lot of grass mowing and hibiscus clipping and trimming of coconut trees and everything else that the 17th Air Base Squadron did at the time. I'd work as a file clerk for two or three days, and I'd go out and mow grass for two or three days, however it worked out.

Marcello: Up to this point, your Army career was not very interesting?

Wingrove: Oh, yes. I enjoyed it; I really did. It was outstanding. I had friends down at . . . one of the people that I enlisted with was a Marine mechanic, and he was at the rescue boat dock that we had down at the end of Hickam Field, right at the edge of Pearl Harbor there; and I'd go down and see him, and we'd go swimming and go over by Fort Kamehameha. We'd go out and dig around in the ocean and just have a lot of fun. I had quite a few friends at that time. We bought half interest in a little eighteen-foot yawl, and I'd met a couple of girls in Honolulu, which was hard to do at the time. There were 8,000 GI's and ten girls, it seemed like.

I enjoyed it very much, but I came back and I don't really know how I ended up in the finance department. It was probably

a guy in the PX one day, and I never could remember his name. But he said, "Why don't you go over and see Colonel Lenow and tell him that you want to be a finance clerk." It was Major Columbus D. Lenow. So I went over and gave him my smartest, snappiest salute and my friendliest smile and told him that I'd like to be a finance clerk. He gave me quite an interview at the time. It seemed to me like I was there about an hour answering all kinds of questions. He gave me simple little mathematical problems that came awfully easy for me, and he says, "Okay, on Monday, I'll have you transferred over." Well, at this time, I was a twenty-one-dollar private.

Marcello: And still in the Army as such?

Wingrove: Absolutely. A dollar-and-a-half a month went for laundry, and twenty-five cents a month went for the Old Soldier's Home, and four-and-a-half a month went for PX chits, which was a way of drawing part of your salary in advance to get cigarettes and what-have-you in the PX. So I went over, and Major Lenow, who later became Lieutenant-Colonel Lenow, made me a third class specialist. I was a private third class specialist, and I went all the way up to fifty bucks a month. I more than doubled my salary there in one fell swoop.

While I was over there I met all kinds of interesting people. There were about eight or nine people in the office at that time, and they were paying close to 5,000 enlisted men

and officer personnel, plus about 2,500 civilians. I can't remember the exact numbers, but it still astounds me that such a few number of people were able to keep all the records organized and face so many people.

Marcello: It seems to me that with so many people at Hickam Field, they could have perhaps found somebody better qualified than you to work in the finance office.

Wingrove: Oh, I'm sure they could (chuckle). That would have been no problem at all, but nevertheless, I fit in. I'm a work freak. In those days, we had three payrolls; every organization would submit three payrolls. One would be figured by one person and another one by another person and a third one. Then we'd have the totals all added up, and everybody would go around and compare them. That way we'd make sure we didn't make any mistakes.

To my dying day, I'll remember the man's name and his base pay and his subtractions and his G.P.L.D., which was Government Property Lost or Damaged. There was a whole column for that. You'd get to where you could almost do it automatically.

During that time, I made a lot of friends. We lived in several different places. One time just down from the PX, there were a bunch of little "hooches." I don't know any other way to describe them except as "hooches," but they were about eight-by-ten feet, and they had four bunks in there. You had a little

kind of a cabinet up on top of your bunk where you kept all your shaving gear and everything, and you had a footlocker. It just so happened that the footlocker would just exactly slide under the bunk, and you kept that locked with all your high-valued things in there. These had no windows at all--they were screened around--and they had roofs that overlapped so the rain wouldn't blow in too bad. It would still blow in; I mean, if you had a windy day, the rain would still blow in and get on your bunk. There were outdoor wash basins on the side of the building there, and inside were the latrines and the showers. They didn't last long. They replaced those with some that we actually walked inside, where we could wash and shave.

We lived in there for a while, and they decided to upgrade us by putting us into four-man tents. The four-man tent was nice, except that we had six and seven people in these four-man tents. There was Carl Gross and Bill Coffey and a whole bunch of us living there in these tents. They were down another one hundred yards or so away from the PX.

Marcello: All this time are you waiting for the permanent barracks to be completed?

Wingrove: No. We had no hope at all of ever getting in those barracks, because they were all assigned to the 50th Bomb Group and the 17th Air Base Squadron, etc. Oh, I lived in there. I lived

in those barracks for a while when I was in the 17th Air Base Squadron. I remember very specifically one day--this was before December 7th--that we were in there, and a plumber came in and worked on the plumbing. He got the hot water pipes and the cold water pipes switched around in the 17th Air Base Squadron's section. When people flushed the toilets, boiling water broke every crapping "john" in the place--every one of them (chuckle).

We had a .50-caliber machine gun above the finance office. The finance office was in the headquarters building over, I believe, on the east side, the side toward the PX. We had some training on how to operate this .50-caliber machine gun. There were four or five of us that were on this gun crew, and there was one staff sergeant . . . I can't remember his name, but he was the gunner, and the rest of us were to haul the ammunition or whatever and give him support.

Marcello: In other words, if there were some sort of attack or an emergency there at Hickam Field, this was in a sense your battle station?

Wingrove: Yes, that was it. We were supposed to report there. Now, when we'd have an alert, people would go and they'd set up their guns. Our gun was kept in kind of an attic, like a storeroom, at the top of the headquarters building on the east side. Now, there was another outfit--I don't remember who it was--that had a gun on the west side of the headquarters building.

On December 7th . . . in the meantime, we'd moved out of these tents into an office called the B-62 type barracks. The reason they called it the B-62 barracks was because it was a barracks that held sixty-two men. They had the "johns" downstairs, and there were two layers--downstairs and upstairs,

Marcello: I assume that these were an improvement over what you'd had up to this time.

Wingrove: It was all in how you looked at it. I didn't mind living in tents; they were kind of fun. We were sharing this building at that time with an ordnance group, and when we'd have alerts, these guys would all get decked out with their gas masks and their helmets and everything. They all had assigned positions to go to. This was the building that I was in on December 7th.

Marcello: How was it that you got from the Army to the Army Air Corps? Did this occur during this period prior to December 7th?

Wingrove: No. Everything was Army. It was Army and then Army Air Corps.

Marcello: You were still basically in the Army?

Wingrove: There was the Army and then Army Air Corps. It was all Army.

Marcello: How would you describe the morale in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army there at Hickam Field? Again, I am referring to that period prior to December 7, 1941.

Wingrove: Everybody had their own outlook. I thought it was pretty good. We all had a pretty good time. We had a good bunch of people, and everybody would work and do their job. As a matter of fact,

it seems to have gone downhill since then (chuckle).

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

Wingrove: We had a lot of milk, and we always had fresh vegetables in the mess hall over in the big barracks. You had an assortment of carrots, radishes, tomatoes, and lettuce, which I always enjoyed. The entrees usually left something to be desired. There was a lot of meatloaf, and I never could eat the liver, Somehow or other, I don't know what they did to the liver, but it ended up like a shoe sole and was so strong you couldn't eat it. Carl Gross and I used to go over there and stand in line, and we'd play mathematical games while we were standing in line, and he'd cheat--he'd cheat a lot (chuckle).

Marcello: What sort of mathematical games are you referring to?

Wingrove: Oh, let's see who can add a number from two to five, and the one who ends up on fifty wins, you know. He'd practice all night (chuckle). It was a lot of fun, and people were nice back in those days. They were always cooperative. Everybody was out to help each other. Very, very rarely did you find somebody who was really bucking the system. I thought the morale was good.

Marcello: What was the liberty routine like there at Hickam during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Wingrove: Well, you could get a three-day pass allegedly once a month, but it was usually on the order of every third month, because

we always had too much work to do to have one a month. You could get off . . . after we got what was known as Class-A Pass, you could walk out the gate any time you wanted to during non-duty hours. You could go from five o'clock maybe until seven o'clock in the morning if you wanted to. You had to be a good boy to get one of these; otherwise, you had to have a written pass from the first sergeant in the orderly room and all that. Being in the finance department and all, everybody had a Class-A Pass. Moke Naluai was our . . . he was a Hawaiian, and he spoke beautiful English until he got on the phone talking to his wife. Then he'd drop right back to pidgin English, and everybody would sit around and laugh at him (chuckle). But he was good, and we got the Class-A Pass.

Every now and then, we'd get hungry for something different. I mean, you'd want to go somewhere and do something different. So we'd get on a bus out at the main gate. They had a GI bus that went every hour on the hour, I think it was, down to the YMCA.

Marcello: That was, I think, a central gathering place. Everything seemed to gather or disperse at the YMCA.

Wingrove: Yes. You could go to town, and for thirty-five cents you could get a roast beef dinner down on River Street. So if you didn't have anything to do, you'd go down and get on the bus, go downtown and walk down to River Street, and have your roast

beef dinner or whatever you wanted. You could buy dog down there. I ate dog two or three times before I found out it was dog (chuckle). I really did, I walked by this Chinese place one day, and they were twirling these little bamboo skewers, and they would dip it in soy sauce, and they'd put it back down, I thought, "Gosh, that looks good," and I'd have one. It was the best beef I ever ate, and I think it cost a dime, which was quite a bit for three or four pieces of meat on a little skewer. I ate it about three times before this Chinaman said, "You like dog?" I never went back to eat anymore, but I never really felt bad about eating what I did. Then they had the Chinese soup, saimin, which was kind of a noodle soup. We used to go get that, and I think they used to charge that by the pennies. It was either seven or eight cents a bowl. It wasn't very much.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of the servicemen of that period talk about going into Honolulu, if for no other reason than to get a change of pace from the meals that were served back on the various bases or ships.

Wingrove: It was just different, and you'd get a pretty good hamburger for either ten or fifteen cents. If you went first class, you paid fifteen cents; if you went to the corner hamburger stand, it was a dime. A Coke was a nickel, naturally.

Marcello: Without getting too personal, what was the social life like

for a young soldier in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Wingrove: We used to--the finance people--used to get together, and they had a deal with quite a collection of records, I remember one of the guys had a record player, and he came in one day with a bunch of cactus needles and a little machine that would sharpen the cactus needles down to a point. He was using that on his record player because that gave it the softest notes--dulcet sounds, the very best sounds that you could possibly get. They were far superior . . . every other record, you had to take the needle out and put it in this little device and turn the handle, and it would go around with a little polishing wheel, and you'd polish the point of the cactus and then put it back in the record player again. It is funny how you remember things like that. I can almost feel that dumb cactus needle.

Marcello: Was collecting records a rather common practice during that period?

Wingrove: Not for me. I'd go listen to them, but I'd never buy a record. Carl Gross used to buy a bunch of them, and Goodwin used to . . . I guess he had fifty or sixty--quite a collection.

On Friday nights they used to have dances at the YMCA, and I'd go to those frequently. "Smitty" and I, who was one of the finance clerks there, he and I went down there frequently, and we'd dress up in shirt and tie--the whole "ball of wax"--and

go down there and go to the dance.

Marcello: Was this a military uniform that you'd be wearing or civilian?

Wingrove: No, they'd be civilian. At that time, you could go in uniform, which was bad news. You couldn't do anything in uniform. You just couldn't do anything, but even if you were in civilian clothes, they still knew you were a soldier. There were the houses of prostitution. There were the Bell Rooms, which was the most popular of all.

Marcello: The Bell Rooms was the name of a particular establishment?

Wingrove: Yes. That was the best. Massage parlors are the thing now, right? Well, back in those days, they had massage parlors, too, but they didn't just call them massage parlors; they called them electric massage parlors, and that was very charming (chuckle). Well, I met a girl at one of these dances, named Betty Serpa, and her father was a contractor, and she and I went together up until December 7th, anyway. I went with a girl that worked for "Hilo Hattie" for quite some time, too.

Marcello: Now, who was "Hilo Hattie?"

Wingrove: "Hilo Hattie" does the hula hop. Was one of the most famous characters in all of Hawaii. Surely you've heard of her. She used to come out to the base probably once every month. We'd have a soldier's dance down at the gymnasium, and "Hilo Hattie" came down there, and there was always some officer's

wife who had been taking hula lessons from "Hilo Hattie" that would get out and demonstrate her capacities. One of the majors that was in the 50th Bomb Group . . . I can't remember his name, but he was a super hula person. He was every bit as good as the natives. He'd get out and dance with "Hilo Hattie." We'd go to movies. There was this gal, Penny, that worked at the Bell Room. She and I got to be pretty good friends, and we'd go to movies when business was dull (chuckle) or what-have-you. She was an astounding . . . she was a real sharp lady. I never saw her . . . she came out to the hospital on December 7th when I was wounded, but I didn't see her after January. I think the last time I ever saw her was in January. She just disappeared . . . probably went back to the States.

Marcello: In our pre-interview conference you also mentioned that at one time during this period you owned a sailboat, and also later on you went in on a car.

Wingrove: Along with a guy, I bought this eighteen-foot yawl called the Lollipop, and it had a one-lung engine that would run on occasion. Most of the time, we were on sails. We had that thing for about six months, I guess, and during that six months, we worked our fannies off keeping it shined and polished and everything. We lent it to a couple of guys, and they rolled it over in a gust, but we got it all back up and repaired and everything. Six months later, we . . . at one time we had it

over at the boat dock at Hickam Field--before December 7th; we then took it down to the canal where it was, actually, on December 7th.

Carl Gross and I bought a "touring roadster," as the man who was selling it to us described it,

Marcello: Was this the Dodge that you were talking about previously?

Wingrove: I'm almost sure it was a Dodge. Anyway, it had a cracked block, and water ran out danged near as fast as you could pour it in. Finally the . . . there was some controversy about what we paid for it, but I think we paid eighty-five dollars for it and paid either ten or fifteen dollars down. The guy came out and recollected it after we'd left it in a parking place for about a month or six weeks, something like that. When you're at that age, hardships don't mean anything to you. I mean, living in the tents and the dumb little "hooches" and the B-62 type barracks was no real hardship, and it was very enjoyable. I don't look back on it with any chagrin at all.

Marcello: Probably what helped among other things is the fact that everybody else was more or less in the same situation.

Wingrove: Right. Nowadays, a man joins the Army, and he makes twenty times what we made (chuckle), just by showing up on the scene. For us to make private first class, which jumps you from thirty to thirty-six dollars, you had to work your tail off for that extra six bucks. You could get busted just in the blink of

an eye by going out and getting drunk or showing up late for work or even mouthing off at the wrong time.

Marcello: Rank moved very, very slow in that pre-World War service, did it not?

Wingrove: I talk to a lot of guys today, and if they just keep their hair combed, they get promoted. Some of them don't get promoted. But back in those days, you really had to knuckle down. If a guy made corporal, that was forty-two dollars a month. You were really getting up in the big money when you got up to corporal. He had a responsibility, and he really watched himself pretty carefully. If you got up to the staff sergeant, which was seventy-two dollars a month, then you were getting in the management area. If you were a "tech" sergeant, which was only twelve dollars a month more--seventy-two to eighty-four dollars--you were a man to be respected. If you made master sergeant, then you went all the way up to \$126. Now, \$126 was enough to support a wife and a couple of kids. Of course, the Army furnished your home and a lot of fringe benefits that they don't have now.

Marcello: You mentioned a wife and so forth. I know this was the case in the Navy, that marriages among enlisted personnel were discouraged.

Wingrove: You had to get the "Old Man's" permission and everything else to get married back in those days. If you were a staff sergeant, you were eligible to get married--that was all right. If you

were a staff sergeant, you could just go tell the "Old Man" you were going to get married, but if you were under a staff sergeant, then it was just out of the question. You had to get special permission and everything else. You practically had to get a girl pregnant, and she had to be the mayor's daughter or something like that. A staff sergeant, he had the authority to get married.

Marcello: We were talking about the social life of the Army during that pre-Pearl Harbor period. Many people like to say that a Sunday morning would be a good time for an attack by some enemy, because Saturday nights were times for a great deal of carousing, drinking, and all that sort of thing, and consequently people would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you answer an observation or an assertion of that type?

Wingrove: In those days, you really didn't have enough money to go out and get drunk on Saturday night. I mean, it was awful rare for a guy to even have enough money. They had a beer hall, and it was maybe a hundred yards from the PX, and beer was ridiculously cheap, a nickel or a dime for a regular-sized mug and a double-sized mug. Some people would go down there and drink their beer. But even at that, when you figure twenty-one, forty-two and fifty-four dollars, you can't go down there and just stay soused all the time. If I drank once a week in those days, it was pretty abnormal.

We went out one night and consumed copious quantities of beer, and we thought it was a whole bunch of fun to take a shot glass on this mug of beer and see if we could drop it in the mug of beer and it would still stay setting up when it got to the bottom. Well, about three or four of us went downtown and we got "fried" out of our minds. We did a lot of laughing and giggling, and we were going down River Street. These Japanese and Chinese signs were huge masses of neon, and with the sign lit we'd run and jump up and grab a handful of neon light and just ripped the whole thing down. They'd be snapping and sparking and everything. A couple or three blocks later, I mean, all of Chinatown turned out. The whole place turned out to catch whoever ripped off the signs. They finally decided it was a couple of sailors; it wasn't us at all. The cops brought us back. We were down at the little park waiting for the bus, and the cops collared us up and brought us back. A little old Chinaman came up and said, no, that it wasn't us at all, that it was two sailors, so they let us go. I'll never forget that.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that Sunday would have been a good time for an attack because it was more or less a day of leisure? It was a holiday routine, to use a service term.

Wingrove: In those days, that was absolutely the right time to attack, yes. But I don't really think it would have been a whole bunch

different than it was if it had been any other day of the week, I really don't.

Marcello: Why do you say that?

Wingrove: Well, people get up and go to work at a certain time during the week. I still don't think everybody was drunk and soused out and everything. They were there on their ships. I mean, the death toll on the Arizona proves that everybody wasn't in town. I don't think it would have been a whole lot different. Preparedness . . . unless there was an actual alert, there wasn't any preparedness.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, were you able to detect or note any change in your routine while working in the finance section?

Wingrove: None whatsoever! Absolutely none! There was no change at all.

Marcello: Did Hickam Field ever experience any additional alerts or anything of that nature during that period?

Wingrove: No. We had a certain number of alerts during the year, and I wouldn't say it was a bit different in 1941 than it was in 1940.

Marcello: Suppose an alert did occur. What would you in the finance section do?

Wingrove: I would go over the headquarters building. I'd go up and help set up this dumb machine gun and shoot the enemy down.

Marcello: Had you ever actually fired that machine gun?

Wingrove: No, but we'd gone through the complete drill, It was one of the old-style .50-calibers that had the circular backrest you'd lean against and fire away. The sergeant, he fired, The staff sergeant, he'd fired the thing--probably fifty rounds.

Marcello: Also, as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, did you and your buddies in any of your bull sessions ever talk about the possibility of a Japanese attack coming in the Hawaiian Islands?

Wingrove: Absolutely not. Oh, sure, the Japanese had been going into China, and they'd been written up all the time we were going through high school and everything else. The fact that the Japanese were cruel, if nothing else, impressed everybody because they'd seen the Shanghai massacres on the movie newsreels. But as far as them attacking Hawaii, the idea was completely remote to everybody. I'm sure nobody had given it any thought at all.

Marcello: Do you think this opinion prevailed mainly because of the distance between the Hawaiian Islands and Japan as much as anything else?

Wingrove: There was no thinking involved. Right now, suppose somebody came in here and started strafing and the bullets came through the living room window. That's remote, isn't it? Would you have given this any thought, that somebody could actually come in here and take a pot shot at us through the living room

window? You haven't thought of that, have you? We hadn't thought of it then, either--not even remotely. Just like you're sitting here right now, we were sitting there at that time then.

Marcello: As conditions and the relations deteriorated between the two countries, was there very much talk or thought about the possibility of sabotage being committed by the Japanese living in the Hawaiian Islands?

Wingrove: Not until after December 7th. Oh, sure, all day on the seventh, we were firmly convinced that the Japs were going to come jumping over the fence and come charging across the field any minute, but we hadn't given it any thought before that.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you conjure up in your mind during that period? Did you have a stereotype?

Wingrove: The little old guy that ran the saimin stand downtown and the people that had the vegetable stands down there. They always had the most beautiful vegetables you ever saw. I very rarely bought them, but they were nice to look at on the stands. I went to a photo class at the YMCA one time where they had Japanese girl models, but they were formally dressed and all that. At this time, nobody knew anything about the Japanese.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to that weekend of December 7, 1941, so let's go into as much detail as you can remember concerning

that weekend. Do you recall the events of that Saturday. That would be December 6th. Do you recall what you did and how you spent Saturday evening and so on?

Wingrove: Yes. On Saturday afternoon I went over to the library, and I was over there a couple of hours.

Marcello: Was this on the base or in town?

Wingrove: On the base. And then after that, I went over to the PX; and then after that I went to a movie, the base movie. I can't remember what was on at the movie, but I came back and there was a blackjack game going on. It was penny, nickel, and dime blackjack, and I watched it for a while. Then I went to bed.

Marcello: How come you didn't go into Honolulu that particular weekend?

Wingrove: I didn't have any money, I'm sure of it. You didn't go there every week. If you went there twice a month, it was about all you could hack, really. One of the guys, one of the sergeants who was with the other group that was there with us, took the paper. There was a paper boy that delivered the paper. He and I were fairly good friends. On Sunday morning . . . I went to bed reasonably early that night, and it must have been 10:30 or eleven o'clock, and I woke up at probably seven o'clock in the morning.

Marcello: It was really an uneventful Saturday evening so far as you were concerned.

Wingrove: It was the usual. I woke up at about seven o'clock the next

morning and went and got his paper. He was still sleeping.

Marcello: Could you have sacked in on that Sunday morning, had you so desired?

Wingrove: Sure. I mean, I'd gone to bed early, so I wasn't tired. So I got this newspaper, and I was reading the funnies, and I heard an airplane go by. I was interested in airplanes. They had the old B-18's and everything over there, and I was interested in them all. There was kind of a little balcony-like stairs upstairs in this old B-62 type barracks, so I went and got up on the bed and looked out there, and I saw these two Japanese planes just kind of gliding down in the harbor--no shooting, no noise, no nothing. But I heard these planes, and I was curious and went to go look. They dropped down behind the barracks across the street, and I saw them come out again. They got down over the water, and I saw one of them drop something. I thought, "Well, what's going on? What's happening?"

Marcello: But you really didn't know they were Japanese planes at that time?

Wingrove: No. Then there was an explosion, and then they really started hitting us. They started really coming in. Everybody came to the conclusion that the Japanese were attacking.

Marcello: Now, were these planes coming into Hickam Field at this time, or was all of this taking place over Pearl Harbor and Wheeler

Field?

Wingrove: They were coming over Hickam as they were hitting Pearl Harbor. The sergeant says, "My God, what do we do now?" I said, "I guess we'd better do what we'd normally do when we have an alert. I guess you guys ought to go out and do whatever you do, and all the rest of us ought to do what we do when we have an alert." (chuckle) So he had all of his guys put on their tin hats and their gas masks and everything and go zinging off wherever they went. I got together with a couple of people, and we were going to go over to the headquarters building, and I thought, "Well, I'd better call Charlie Miles."

Marcello: An alert as such has not been sounded then, is that correct?

Wingrove: No. It never was sounded that I ever heard. I never did hear an alert sounded.

Marcello: And who did you say you had to call?

Wingrove: Charlie Miles. I called him up, and I said, "Gee, what do you think we ought to do?" He said, "Well, you stay there until I call you back." In the meantime, it must have been Gerlech and somebody else; they decided they'd take off anyway. So I sat there by the phone, and I watched these guys come in and bomb, and I watched this flight of five at high altitude go over Pearl Harbor and dive-bomb in formation. The phone rang and Charlie says, "I guess you'd better go over to headquarters like you do on an alert and help with that machine gun." It had to

be after nine o'clock by then.

Marcello: In the meantime, can you observe any of the activities that are taking place out on the flight line there at Hickam?

Wingrove: Yes, I saw quite a bit of that, but I also saw the ships in Pearl Harbor. We were high enough to see the ships in Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Describe what you saw out there at Pearl Harbor from that distance.

Wingrove: The Arizona being dive-bombed and the Oklahoma, I had a friend on the Oklahoma, and he was killed. You could see all of that very plainly, very plainly.

So I decided I'd better head over for the headquarters building, and I started down the street. There were two guys in front of me, fifty or seventy-five feet in front of me, and we were running down the street. We get strafed, and the Japs killed those two guys, just stone dead. Astoundingly, it just dawned on me right then and there that you could get hurt. I had watched all this nonsense going on, and I didn't have any idea of anybody being killed or hurt or anything else. It didn't happen until those two guys got killed, and it impressed me.

Then I ran over and got behind the palm trees, and I'd run from one palm tree to the next palm tree and so on. To get down by the PX, I had 150 yards to run, out across the open ground, and that seemed like a huge run with those Japanese airplanes flying around and everything, but I finally buzzed out and took

off and went over there (chuckle).

When I got to the PX, they dropped a bomb. They dive-bombed a building that was about 100 yards from the PX, and I thought, "Well, boy, I'd better see about it." I got into the cafeteria part of the PX, and I was going to run all the way through the PX and then out the side, which was closest to the headquarters building. I got down by the coffee machine, and there was a big double coffee urn in there that stood out on kind of a shelf that was about big enough to have a mop bucket underneath. A bomb hit down at the end of the PX, so I went over and dived under this coffee pot.

Then a bomb hit at just about at the front door, I guess, or at least pretty close, and I got hit. One of the guys over by the coffee machine had his arm more or less torn off right at his shoulder. I don't know if I was in shock or what, but there was a blank period there until the truck came, and they said, "Well, there's some wounded in here." They came in and they threw us all on a truck and took us over to the hospital.

Marcello: Now, where were you hit and how badly were you hit at that time?

Wingrove: Oh, I wasn't hit bad. It wasn't bad at all--a little piece about the size of a lead pencil.

Marcello: This was a piece of shrapnel?

Wingrove: Bomb fragment. Surprisingly, it just instantly hurt, and then after that . . . I guess you're in shock.

Marcello: Where did it hit you?

Wingrove: In the calf of the right leg. So they took a whole bunch of us over to the hospital, and I sat there for three hours watching them bring in all the wounded and everything. They took me over to Tripler General Hospital.

Marcello: Did you have a chance to think or to ponder while you're waiting there for three hours and all this is going on?

Wingrove: You know, reflections don't come automatically. While all this excitement is going on, you really don't have time to sit there and ponder and reflect. Later on, you do; but at the time, no. So I spent some time in the hospital, and I came back and went to work.

Marcello: How long were you in the hospital?

Wingrove: It must have been about ten days. I think I got out on Christmas Eve or somewhere along there. I guess it was about two weeks.

Marcello: While you were in the hospital during that initial stage, what was happening over there? In other words, were things fairly well-organized by the time you got over there, or was there still quite a bit of chaos? How would you describe the situation there at Tripler?

Wingrove: It was complete chaos. They had long ago run out of morphine. I mean, they used that up right away.

Marcello: I would assume they really weren't too worried about you.

Wingrove: I was laying on the floor, and the guy on the bed died, and then

I got the bed (chuckle). A Chinese doctor--his name was Chang--who was a reservist, poked around and tried to get the bomb fragment out and about killed me. It hurt more than anything I had ever experienced. I had a fever--a real high fever. I don't know if it was reflex or what. Shock in itself killed more people than anything, I guess.

Marcello: While you were there at Tripler that evening, did you hear any rumors floating around?

Wingrove: Sure! Heck, yes! We were all going to be killed that night (chuckl

Marcello: Were you fully expecting the Japanese to land in the islands?

Wingrove: We were expecting the Japanese to invade that night, yes, Everybody did, I guess.

Marcello: I know that it is a part of the record that a great many of the Honolulu prostitutes actually came over to Tripler at one time during this period to help out. Did you observe this?

Wingrove: Penny came over there, yes.

Marcello: You did see Penny again?

Wingrove: Oh, sure. She was a very nice person, too, very nice.

Marcello: Did she tend to you personally?

Wingrove: Oh, she stayed there a couple or three hours. She was a real sharp gal. They helped as much as they could. Then later on, a gal who worked for "Hilo Hattie" came out there to do something.

Marcello: In the aftermath of the attack, how would you describe the

morale at that point?

Wingrove: Everybody was ready to fight.

Marcello: Was the attitude one of anger more than anything else, do you think?

Wingrove: No! Heck, no! Nobody had any time to do any reflecting and things like that.

Marcello: But wouldn't anger more or less be an immediate reaction in terms of thoughts toward the Japanese?

Wingrove: No. Amazement, I'd say, would be a more accurate term than anger. People were just amazed that it even happened . . . and disbelief. When you see a battleship get bombed, you don't believe it. Did you ever see one get bombed? You've seen them on television and on the "Why We Fight" series and everything, but to actually see one with your eyes is something that is hard to believe.

Marcello: Describe what damage you were able to observe at Hickam in the aftermath of the attack. Now, of course, you were in the hospital for quite a while, so maybe that isn't a very fair question to ask.

Wingrove: Well, the old B-18's were wing-tip to wing-tip out in front of the hangars; they all just went in one fell swoop, it seemed like. In a matter of fifteen minutes, I'd say, they went from a nice, neat line of airplanes to a bunch of junk, and also the hangars. Bombs would go off inside the hangars and blow all the

junk up in the hangars. We were sitting up there watching all of this.

Marcello: Why was it that the B-18's were lined up wing-tip to wing-tip?

Wingrove: That was the thing to do--keep them neat and straight. There was no dispersal. If there was an alert, yes, they were dispersed; but we had no alert.

Marcello: I've also heard it said that it would be much easier to guard them against possible sabotage if they were lined up in nice, neat rows like that.

Wingrove: You've also watched the movie, "Tora, Tora, Tora," but I'd never heard anything like that. It might be true, but I'd never heard it.

Marcello: But then again, you probably wouldn't have been in a position in the finance office to have heard one way or the other.

Wingrove: No.

Marcello: Okay, Mr. Wingrove, is there anything else relative to the attack at Hickam Field that we haven't covered and that you think we need to get as part of the record?

Wingrove: No, that about covers it, I think.

Marcello: Okay. Well, I thank you very much for having taken time to talk to me. You've said a lot of interesting and important things, and I'm sure that scholars will appreciate your comments when they use them.