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Interview with  
MANNIE E. SIEGLE  
December 7, 1978

Place of Interview: Las Vegas, Nevada

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Mannie Siegle  
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Mannie E. Siegle

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

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

Mr. Siegle: I was born on July 2, 1919, in Ellenville, New York. I attended grade school there and high school. I graduated from high school in 1938 and went to U.C.L.A. for two years. At U.C.L.A., I joined the Air Force and was sent over to Hawaii, and I was stationed at Wheeler Field.

Dr. Marcello: Let's back up a minute. Where did you say you were born?

Mr. Siegle: Ellenville, New York.

Marcello: You mentioned that you went to U.C.L.A., and it was from there that you joined the Air Corps. Why did you decide to join the service at that time?

Siegle: They started drafting people, and I thought that if I enlisted that I would have the branch of the service that I wanted to be in. That was one of the reasons. Six fellows enlisted, and some of us were sent to Hawaii, and some remained in the States.

Marcello: You enlisted directly into the Army Air Corps?

Siegle: That is correct.

Marcello: At that time, is it not true that you usually took your basic training, such as it was, at your permanent duty station?

Siegle: Yes. From there I went to Fort Slocum, New York. At Fort Slocum, being that I was athletically inclined, I guess I just missed most of my basic training by playing basketball in the wintertime there. We were supposed to ship out in January, and I think we were in, as I recall, a playoff tournament, so they kept me there. I shipped out on February 21, 1941, to go to Hawaii from Brooklyn Navy Base.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast with world events and current affairs at that particular time?

Siegle: Pretty much so. A friend of mine who is attending this convention here in Las Vegas with me is from Binghamton, and he would read the paper thoroughly every day--the Honolulu

Star-Bulletin, I believe it was. His name was Chester Olender, and we called him "Chicken" because he was so small. He said we were getting close to war. We're still good friends after thirty-some years, or forty years, when we got over there prior to the war. Every day he would say, "You know, we're going to get in war." I said, "'Chicken,' you're crazy!" But I guess he was right.

Marcello: But back there when you left Fort Slocum in February of 1941, did you at that time think the country would possibly be getting into war?

Siegle: I did. I was maybe a little more educated than most people, going to high school and graduating, since at that time there were poor times. Going off to college, I personally felt we would have a war.

Marcello: Is it safe to say, however, that your eyes were turning more toward Europe than toward the Far East at that time?

Siegle: That is correct.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of being stationed in the Hawaiian Islands?

Siegle: As I stated before, I was athletically inclined. I played basketball and baseball over there and was doing just part-time duty until the war started. I enjoyed the islands, enjoyed our passes and things like that. It was a jock-strap Army prior to the war.

Marcello: When you got to the Hawaiian Islands, I assume that you did go directly to Wheeler Field?

Siegle: That is correct, I was assigned to Wheeler Field.

Marcello: What did Wheeler Field look like from a physical standpoint? Describe it as best as you remember it.

Siegle: It was a beautiful airfield. As you entered the main gate, the officers' homes were on the right side, and the runway was to the left. The first thing that you came upon as you came inside as you entered on the left-hand side was the Headquarters Building. When I arrived, they had just completed a new 600-man building for soldiers. Then you went along the hangar line and then the first three-graders' homes. About a half-mile down was the end of the airfield. It was a nice, little airfield nestled in the valley of Oahu.

Marcello: What sort of airplanes were based there at Wheeler?

Siegle: We had P-40's.

Marcello: In other words, they were those pursuit planes, as they were called at that time?

Siegle: Pursuit planes, right. We had numerous pursuit squadrons. I can't name them all--72nd, 6th, 19th, 45th, 47th . . . the 318th came later, I believe. Then at the Headquarters Building was the 18th Headquarters Base, which I was assigned to.

Marcello: You were assigned to the 18th Headquarters Base?

Siegle: Right.

Marcello: What was your particular function when you were assigned there?

Siegler: I went to work . . . again, with more education I seemed to get an office job, and I ran the quartermaster supply there. I was in charge of ordering all supplies for Wheeler Field within two months after I arrived at the base. I enjoyed my job.

Marcello: As you mentioned, you really had had no basic training as such?

Siegler: I never had any basic training at all, period. I never got a rifle issued to me until after December 7th.

Marcello: You actually never fired one until up until that time?

Siegler: That's correct.

Marcello: Certainly not while you were in the military at least?

Siegler: Right.

Marcello: I gather that that peacetime Army was not a bad place to be. It was a rather leisurely pace and so on and so forth there-- a place like Wheeler Field.

Siegler: It was a leisurely place. Yet the people that were on the hangar lines . . . the mechanics and the fighter pilots and enlisted men . . . even though it was a peacetime Army, it was well-informed as to what their positions were and what they had to do on the field. We had good fighter squadrons that were well-trained, and they all did their jobs, even though they were more interested in sports than being fighter

pilots and going off into war. They were well-trained, and the officers were good officers, and I think enlisted men were well-trained, also. There were a few times involving Army men when the younger fellows came along with the education and would pass them in grade. They didn't like that too much.

Marcello: You mentioned this subject, and let's pursue it just a little bit further. Promotions came very, very slowly in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army, did they not?

Siegle: True, but I seemed to get mine pretty fast (chuckle). I went from private to . . . and at that time, they had from first grade to sixth grade before you became a sergeant. I never was a PFC, but I went right directly to first class, which was the equivalent to the pay of a buck sergeant. Then I was promoted to buck sergeant on up through the grades.

Marcello: How do you explain getting these promotions this rapidly?

Siegle: I suppose it was because of the job I was doing and the education I carried, which was more than some of the other fellows that were in the outfit.

Marcello: Were you continuing to participate in athletics while you were there?

Siegle: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Do you think that perhaps that might have had something to do with it, also?

Siegle: No, it did not.

Marcello: It is true that in some of the bases over there that the athletes did seem to advance a little bit more quickly in rank.

Siegle: At Schofield Barracks, if you played football, you had it made. You were automatically a buck sergeant, I believe, or better. Again, the infantry were well-trained. I know a lot of fellows up there that played sports and that didn't play sports, and some of them are good friends. From there, the 24th Division went to Guadalcanal, and they were good athletes, and they all lost their lives over there.

Marcello: I gather that athletic competition played a very important part in that pre-Pearl Harbor service, did it not?

Siegle: It did. Men stationed away from home, I believe, had to have some activity. We didn't have the athletes like they've got today. It was done by fellows like myself who were athletically inclined. Sports were good for you. They kept you out of trouble, I'd say that much.

Marcello: I gather that the various units and so on were very, very proud of their athletic teams and so on?

Siegle: That is correct.

Marcello: There was a lot of competition between units?

Siegle: Especially the infantry, more than the Air Force. They always beat Wheeler Field. We didn't have that many men to choose

from. Some of us boys, though, did play pretty good ball,  
The infantry was tough.

Marcello: I gather that these athletic events were very, very well-attended  
by the personnel, both officers and enlisted men,

Siegler: Ten thousand people or more. As many as they could get into  
the stadium. A lot of betting went on.

Marcello: I've heard that the so-called boxing smokers were very, very  
well-attended and very popular at that time.

Siegler: Right. We used to have some good fighters at our base. A  
friend of mine from Pittsburgh was in my outfit, and he used  
to box up there. He is one person I am still looking for.  
I am still looking for him--a very close friend. His name  
was Edward A. Petruski, and he changed it to Edward Patterson;  
and if you ever come across that name, get in touch with me.  
He is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Marcello: What was the chow like there at Wheeler Field in that pre-Pearl  
Harbor period?

Siegler: Good. We had good chow. There were things we didn't get,  
like, pancakes, which we got that December morning that I  
didn't get to eat. They weren't often served. Being from  
the East, I like pancakes. We didn't get pancakes until after  
the war, and then we got them practically every day, I guess.  
The food in general was good.

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like there at Wheeler

Field.

Siegler: I lived in one of those big wooden barracks, and I had a room to myself. It was a good, clean living. Maybe guys didn't like all the first three graders having to room by themselves, but I was fortunate enough to be one. The guys did a good job keeping the place clean. I was in a real good outfit.

Marcello: All in all, how would you describe the morale there at Wheeler Field in that period prior to the coming of war?

Siegler: I think our morale was high.

Marcello: What do you attribute that high morale to?

Siegler: Sports, any sports things. I think that's why sports played such a big part in the Army at that time. You had to have something for the guys to look forward to. Movies were routine. For fifteen cents, you could go to the best movies if you had eight chits left at the end of the month. Gambling was big, too, as you know. It still is.

Marcello: You mentioned that there was a great deal of gambling that took place there at that time?

Siegler: Oh, sure. We used to gamble as long as the money held out. If you were lucky and it would last all month, then you would play all month. Around the fifteenth of the month, it would drop off, and then you started to go to town to spend it.

Marcello: Let's talk a bit about the social life that one could participate

in there at Wheeler Field and the surrounding area in that period prior to the war. How often would you have liberty?

Siegle: Actually, you could go on a pass any time, but most of the fellows would go on pass on the weekend, so they would either stay down at the YMCA in Honolulu or one of the hotels like the Moana or Waikiki Beach hotels if you had enough money. Most of the guys would stay at the YMCA. I forget what we used to pay, but I think it was \$1.25 a room or \$2.25 for a room for two or something like that. You had the swimming at the YMCA, which was real good.

Marcello: How far was Wheeler from Honolulu?

Siegle: Twenty-seven miles.

Marcello: Was it very hard to get in there?

Siegle: You'd get into one of those cabs, and they'd pile you in there--seven at a time--and take you down there in thirty minutes.

Marcello: And they would usually drop you off at the YMCA?

Siegle: Right, that was their job, unless you got off before that, which they probably did,

Marcello: When you went into Honolulu, what would you normally do?

Siegle: As I was telling you, I'd either go to movies, walk the streets. As you know, the houses of ill-repute were there, and you'd get in line like the rest of the fellows. That was about it.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of fellows say that they liked to go into

town just to get a change of pace in terms of meals.

Siegle: That is true. I have a menu at home from one of the restaurants, and I think coffee was a nickel; a hamburger was fifteen cents; a steak was ninety-five cents. If you had ten dollars and you went on pass, you were a millionaire, and you'd go out and get a steak and stuff like that. They had different food--Chinese food, if you like it, which I did. They had big, nice shrimp there for a nickel apiece. It was a different routine of food.

Marcello: Within the space of the month, how often might you possibly get into Honolulu?

Siegle: Probably two or three times.

Marcello: We have to consider that you weren't being paid too much at that time?

Siegle: No, twenty-one dollars a month at first. I think when I got to Honolulu, it went to thirty dollars a month, but we would draw chits so we could go to the canteen. I didn't smoke, so I saved some money there. Two dollars for insurance, two dollars for laundry. When you went through the pay line, I think you got thirteen dollars, and you were a millionaire. There wasn't much money to spend, so it was usually gambling; and once you made the hit, you just got up and left. We always would say we'd start on the top floor in the quarter and the half-dollar blackjack game and work down to where they

were playing for the dollars. Then when you'd win something, you'd go into a poker game (chuckle).

Marcello: What was there to do on the base there at Wheeler Field? Were there very many recreational facilities there?

Siegle: Not really at that time. We could play basketball; we played a lot of volleyball between the barracks. That's about it. We didn't even have a basketball court. We had to go off to Schofield Barracks to play in the big gym up there. We'd go up there, four or five guys--a team--and play some guys from there. I think they had four or five courts up there. We would work out in the gym. I was in a little better condition than I am right now--about 160 pounds.

Marcello: Schofield Barracks wasn't really that far from Wheeler, was it?

Siegle: Just a mile. We used to run it. Now, I don't think I could jog it in two hours (chuckle).

Marcello: I guess, essentially, Schofield was more or less dependent upon Wheeler Field for its defenses and so on, was it not?

Siegle: Yes, for the air defense. They would both take care of ours with the infantry and artillery which they had up there, and the hospital, too. We had our own medics, but if anybody would get sick, we would go to the hospital at Schofield Barracks.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to

worsen, could you detect any change in your routine or any change in the routine of the people around you, so to speak?

Siegle: Yes, we were on alert for one thing. Secondly, we were trying to get the supplies in from the States. We were bringing everybody up to full strength with every kind of supply possible. In case of war, we'd have the supplies in Honolulu, and we'd be able to give it to the troops if they had to go on out in the field. There were a lot of things that we were short of, like tents. In the outfit, they never had enough tents or pup tents. Even toilet articles, which the men normally didn't care to have or they figured they didn't need, we had to make sure we had it there in case something happened. We were building up supplies for something, but we didn't know.

Marcello: You could see a definite increase, then, in the quantity of material that accumulated there at Wheeler Field.

Siegle: Right. As we were ordering it in, we'd get the records out and make sure the outfit was complete with all their equipment if they'd have to move out. Why, we didn't know.

Marcello: Evidently, then, you did see an increase in your budget?

Siegle: That's right.

Marcello: You talked about these alerts awhile ago and how they perhaps were occurring much more frequently. How would these alerts

take place? Describe what one of them was like.

Siegle: When we had an alert, only half of the outfit could go on pass at a time. We had to just tighten up defenses around the field.

We had made one mistake that morning in bringing the planes up on the hangar line that Saturday morning because we were afraid of Japanese sabotage. We had to make sure that we had enough pilots around and that they all weren't on pass at the same time.

Marcello: What would you specifically do when one of these alerts were called? What was your function?

Siegle: Well, to report to my office immediately.

Marcello: And what would you do there? Just stand by for whatever orders were given?

Siegle: Right. To see that the men would go to the warehouses and contact with them in case anything had to be moved in case of an emergency or anything like that.

Marcello: You brought up the subject of Japanese saboteurs awhile ago, so let's pursue this just a little bit further. As the war clouds continued to gather, did you and your buddies in your bull sessions ever talk about the possibility of a Japanese attack in the Hawaiian Islands? Did the subject ever come up?

Siegle: It came up but we'd always make the remark, "Oh, you're crazy!"

How are they ever going to get here?"

Marcello: In other words, you were thinking in terms of that distance?

Siegle: We'd think they were so far away and how they were going to get here. I knew personally that we had the radar setup just prior to December 7th. Whatever the hill, they finally got the radar set up where they would know about it. We could pick up anything, we thought, which they did, but they didn't believe it. We were always thinking, "They'll never get in! We could get our fighter planes off!"

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that pre-Pearl Harbor period, what sort of an individual did you usually conjure up in your own mind? In other words, did you have a stereotype?

Siegle: No, we really didn't because the few I knew that worked on the field were conscientious, and they were loyal Americans, which they proved later on. I think that people made more out of it over in the States than they did over there. There were a lot of mixed marriages, and they were really loyal Americans. Right after the attack, they came to work just as if nothing happened. They were marked to let us know who they were, and they continued to work faithfully for the United States.

Marcello: Evidently, there was some fear on the part of the higher echelons that those Japanese did represent a threat in terms

of sabotage, or at least a potential threat.

Siegle: I suppose there were some spies there that they had their eyes on, and they thought there were enough of them. But I don't think there were enough of them. They had those Japanese gardens where you would go get these massages and stuff, and they'd ask questions. Some guys would answer when they shouldn't have been talking. Some guys would say that there was another fighter squadron or an infantry outfit and tell them what the strength was, but I think it was just mere talk. Those people were found to be real faithful later on.

Marcello: But like you did mention, they did line up all the planes there at Wheeler in the nice, neat rows.

Siegle: Right. They brought them out of the revetment area, and they lined them up. They figured they were safer lined up, but they found that they weren't safer.

Marcello: Did you ever go on liberty to any of the smaller towns around Wheeler?

Siegle: Oh, sure--Wahiawa, Haleiwa, and all those places . . . Pearl City.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of people mention Wahiawa. Did you go there very often?

Siegle: Oh, sure. It was next door. We could walk to Wahiawa. We'd take the bus to the gate, you know, the bus on the base.

We'd get off of the bus and walk into Wahiawa and have some beer or ice cream or something. We'd just walk the streets and talk and then walk back to the base. You had nothing else to do. Usually, you were broke when that happened.

Marcello: In other words, if you had a lot of money, you went into Honolulu; if you didn't have very much money, you went to Wahiawa.

Siegle: Right. There in Wahiawa there was the Kemoo Farms that was a very good restaurant. It was just outside the gate of Schofield Barracks, and we'd walk through the gate and eat at Kemoo's a lot of times. When I went back to Honolulu, I took my wife there, and we went to eat. She really enjoyed it.

Marcello: This is kind of getting ahead of our story just a little bit, but wasn't there some speculation that the individual who ran Kemoo Farms was actually a member of the Japanese military or a spy or something?

Siegle: He was supposed to be in the Japanese Navy, and after the attack they supposedly--although it was not official--picked him up in a Japanese uniform. He said, "I surrender as a spy," or something like that. He was supposed to have let them know about Kole Kole Pass and Wheeler Field. But it was hearsay, and I never really knew if it were true or not.

Marcello: This brings us more or less up to that weekend of December 7,

1941, so let's go into a great deal of detail in talking about it, Mr. Siegle. During that weekend, do you recall whether or not Wheeler had any alerts or anything of that nature at all?

Siegle: Believe it or not, our outfit went off alert that weekend. Why, I don't know. But all the fighter squadrons were still on alert, but our colonel said we didn't have to worry about it, and we were taken off alert that weekend.

Marcello: When had the alert actually begun?

Siegle: I think a week before. It went from Saturday to Saturday or something like that.

Marcello: So then it was called off on Saturday at noon or something like that?

Siegle: Right. I think it was either called off Friday afternoon or Saturday. They posted on the bulletin board that we could all go to town if we wanted, because there was no alert for us any longer.

Marcello: What did you do that night?

Siegle: I was in town.

Marcello: Do you recall what you did in Honolulu?

Siegle: No. I just went down there to the movie. I think we went to the boxing matches. I can't think of the name of the arena where they had the boxing matches. Some of the fellows from Schofield Barracks were fighting down there. We went

down, and I got back at about 11:30.

Marcello: Did you notice anything out of the ordinary happening in downtown Honolulu that night?

Siegle: Just the same, normal things. It never changed one bit. There was no indication that anything could happen, if there were Japanese involved or anything.

Marcello: Was it crowded in Honolulu?

Siegle: It was crowded.

Marcello: Was this typical, also, for a weekend?

Siegle: Just a typical weekend, right--a crowded weekend. Guys were walking the streets and looking and finding souvenirs, getting tattoos, sending souvenirs home, and stuff like that.

Marcello: Normally, on a weekend would you have very many drunks coming back into Wheeler or any of the other military installations, or is this generally an exaggeration?

Siegle: We had a few. We had a few that would go to town, and they'd come back drunk. There were not that many--maybe four or five out of a 300-man squadron.

Marcello: They were certainly the exception rather than the rule?

Siegle: You could expect them drunk all the time. When they'd get done working, they'd go right to the beer tents or the NCO Club and get drunk and go back to work the next morning.

Marcello: Why would any Sunday, in your opinion, be a good day for a surprise attack?

Siegle: For one thing, the men were sleeping late, and everybody was relaxed after having a good time on Saturday night, so that would be a good time.

Marcello: In other words, Sunday was a day of leisure?

Siegle: Right.

Marcello: If you didn't have the duty, you could stay in the sack for perhaps as long as you wanted and write letters and things of that nature.

Siegle: That is true.

Marcello: This brings us into that Sunday morning, so why don't you describe your routine?

Siegle: Usually, I never get up for breakfast on any Sunday morning. A fellow by the name of Phillip Appicci came knocking on my door because he worked at the mess hall. He says, "You know, we have pancakes this morning." I says, "Don't bother me." Finally, he knocked on my door, "Come on! Get up and go with me!" I did get up to go eat breakfast that Sunday morning.

We were walking up, just prior to getting in the mess hall, and we heard the drone of airplanes. We looked back and we saw them coming over Kole Pass, which is part of Schofield and catching the lower end of Wheeler Field,

Marcello: What sort of airplanes were they?

Siegle: I couldn't tell; they were too far away. We'd just walked

into the mess hall, and we stood in line, and I was arguing with a guy for two bottles of milk when we heard the first bomb fall. We thought it was some explosion on the airbase. We ran out and looked from the porch and would see the planes flying hangar-high, flipping their wings, and waving their wings at us. You could actually see the pilots.

Marcello: Describe what they looked like.

Siegle: You could just see them looking through their goggles, and they were actually smiling. People were running from all over, jumping out of the barracks three-stories high, and landing on the ground and taking off. It is a miracle how they didn't get killed jumping out of the barracks.

Appicci and I both ran off, and we landed in this lumber pile about a hundred yards from the barracks where we used to eat. About that time, they hit the hangar line up by headquarters, and all the dirt came over on us. We got up and we ran toward Leihua School, which was a public school just off the airbase, where all the children would attend-- the children of the officers and the NCO's.

There was this fence there about four feet high, and we were jumping that fence. Believe it or not, women who came out of the NCO quarters in their pajamas and even naked were just coming over the top of that fence. We laid down in this hedgerow. I don't know why everybody ran there.

The Japanese saw us run there, but I think they were too much interested in getting the hangar line and the fighter planes. If they would have ever come through there strafing, they would have got hundreds of people laying right in a row there.

As soon as they stopped, or after the attack, we started edging between the buildings to get back to our own building to see what was going on. By the time that we got there, believe it or not, they had rifles out. They were in cosmoline. We were lucky that some guys that were in our outfit had been transferred down from the infantry prior to December 7th, and they knew how to clean off a rifle. Otherwise, I still think we'd be cleaning them off today.

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute now. You mentioned that you heard this explosion while you were in the mess hall, and you ran outside and saw that there were Japanese planes. Was this initial attack being carried out in terms of bombing, or was it strafing?

Siegle: Bombing and strafing. One came through and dropped the bomb, and right behind him came a bunch. Immediately, they dropped their bombs, made their turn, and they came back strafing. I think the strafing part came so they could keep us in the barracks--preventing people from getting out to gun positions and things like that, or get down to the hangar line where the planes were being strafed. As they strafed them, they

blew right up. That was about when the strafing part came in, and it kept a lot of the guys from getting out of the barracks.

We had a new squadron formed. I believe it was the 72nd, which was in "Tent City." I have a picture where they went and strafed the tents. They caught fire, and the complete tent is burning; but the only thing intact is a light bulb. I have these pictures at home, and they are valuable to me.

A friend of mine--his name was Creech, from Kentucky--was the first one killed on December 7th at our field. He was running up the hangar line road, and they strafed him right in the field, and he was just cut right up. In fact, I have a newspaper at home that was given to me by people who had saved them from December 7th. They were not survivors or anything, but the papers mentioned that he was the first one killed.

Marcello: Were you able to observe the action that was taking place over there on the flight line from where you were? You mentioned that you got behind that lumber pile, and then later on you got behind that hedgerow. Were you able to observe what was happening down at the field?

Siegle: Oh, we could see them strafing the field and the planes blowing up one after another.

Marcello: What sort of thoughts were going through your mind when you

saw that?

Siegle: Believe it or not, the first thing that came to my mind was my brother's birthday. It was the first thing that came to my mind. Why, I don't know, I had never even thought of his birthday prior to that day. Just as soon as the attack, I thought, "My gosh, this is my brother's birthday!"

Marcello: How many waves of planes hit Wheeler?

Siegle: They kept us under attack for fifteen or twenty minutes, I think. It was a good fifteen minutes that we were up there lying in the hedgerow before we could get up--between the bombing and the strafing. They just went flying around--just taking pictures--and nobody dared to get up while they were flying around just looking at us.

Marcello: What were you talking about while you were up there at that hedgerow? Were you talking or were you just looking or what?

Siegle: I don't remember a sound, now that you mention it, I don't think anyone uttered a word. I think we were stunned, really stunned.

I do remember one thing. A woman was hollering that she left her child in her home. She ran out and her husband had gone to the hangar line. He was a master sergeant, but I don't remember his name. He went toward the hangar line, and she ran out toward the hedgerow, and she left the child in the NCO quarters. All she said was, "Go get my child!"

We had a hard job keeping her down. That was about all I remember. Otherwise, it was very quiet. Why, I don't know,

Marcello: Did the Japanese seem to know what they were doing? In other words, did they concentrate just about all their action on the hangar line and so on?

Siegle: That's what they did.

Marcello: In other words, they didn't bomb or strafe any of the unimportant buildings, so to speak.

Siegle: Where they dropped the first bomb, a week prior to that is where the ammunition was stored. We moved it from that building to another building. So they were informed where the bombs and ammunition were. That's where they dropped the first bomb, but there was no ammunition there. It was just an empty building at that time. They were pretty well-informed where everything at Wheeler Field was.

Marcello: Now, the bombing and so on is over. What happens at that point?

Siegle: Like I said, we tried to edge our way, but we didn't know if they were coming back. We got back to our barracks, and they brought down the rifles and the ammunition. They were cleaning them off right out in the open. I went to the office, and things were in kind of a turmoil for a while. Within a couple of hours we were back to normal, you know, trying to get reorganized.

As you know, we had one fighter squadron out at Haleiwa.

Has that ever been brought up? They took off from Haleiwa, and I guess they were riding as fast as those old cars could go--fifty-five miles per hour--to get out there. They did get off, and we saw them fly for a few minutes.

Things seemed to get back to normal. Certain guys were moving ammunition; the infantry had come down and set up their gun emplacements around the airfield. But the damage was already done.

Marcello: What did you personally do over there in the office?

Siegle: We started giving out supplies, replacing stuff that had been blown up, to the fighter squadrons and base squadrons.

The colonel came down . . . I hate to say this. I remember I did get back to the barracks, and I came back. We ran out behind the barracks, and there was this big banyan tree. We had a guy by the name of Marco, who got in there. The colonel came down--I forget his name--and told Marco to let him get in this big, old banyan tree. The colonel said, "Marco, this is my second world war!" Marco said, "This is my first! I'm staying right here! I'm not getting out!" They were strafing that tree. Now, they did come back and strafe--now that I come to think of it--after we got back to the barracks.

Marcello: What did you actually go back to the barracks for? Did you go to the barracks from the hedgerow?

Siegle: Right, to the barracks and then back to the office, In the time that we got back, we were being strafed again.

Marcello: Describe this.

Siegle: Like I said, we'd just gotten back to the barracks, and they wanted to keep us undercover so we couldn't get out. They did come back and strafe, and by that time the colonel had come down from his office to get the men together and get started on what we could do. We couldn't do too much until we'd found out what the damages were and orders came from headquarters to see what was going to take place. We knew we didn't have any fighter planes to get up in the air from there. The mechanics, as soon as the fires were put out, I remember them taking a wing off of one plane, a propeller off of another. They were getting planes put together so they could fly by that evening. We had planes by that evening that could fly, believe it or not. You wonder how they did it, but they really did it.

Marcello: When you get back down to your office, were most of the personnel there by that time, or did they eventually drift in?

Siegle: Some drifted in but they were getting there pretty fast. A lot of them had never gone to breakfast, so they didn't have too far to go to the office. They were right down there.

Marcello: As you mentioned, you were reissuing and replacing equipment and so on and so forth. Were all of the usual procedures still

followed or not?

Siegle: Automatically dropped! Just come and get it! Everything was expendable five minutes after that first bomb had fallen. As long as you had a need, we had it.

Marcello: What seemed to be the greatest need? Do you recall offhand?

Siegle: Tents, They had to move off the field; the squadrons had to get on to other places, Believe it or not, tents were the big shortage. We didn't have tents so we had to go to Schofield Barracks and I think to Fort Armstrong. We sent trucks down to get tents, so we could get men out in the field.

Marcello: Incidentally, had you been issued a rifle?

Siegle: Prior to the war?

Marcello: No, after the attack. You mentioned that prior to the war you didn't have one.

Siegle: I got a pistol, It was lucky that I knew how to fire one because most people didn't.

Marcello: What did you do during the following days after the attack?

Siegle: Just getting organized. During the week, we had people coming in from the States, and we had to get them supplied, They were just shipped out right away. They didn't pick up anything. So we got out into the field, and replacements of men came in. I don't know how they got them in, but they were probably on the West Coast, and they sent them right out. We had

replacements coming in to bring all the squadrons up to strength, so all our squadrons were brought up to strength, and it was the same thing with the infantry. We started to make sure we had enough things on hand.

Marcello: I guess that the base must have been one hell of a mess in the aftermath of the attack, especially the flight line and so on.

Siegle: The flight line was the worst, where the fires were. The hangar lines were all burned. There used to be bullet holes in the Headquarters Building, but they were patched up. A bomb fell into the 6th Pursuit Squadron, I think. In some of the pursuit squadrons, the bombs went right through and missed the hangar line but hit the buildings where the men were sleeping in their quarters. Each squadron had their own mess hall, and that is where they fell in. The PX was destroyed completely. I don't know why they did that. They had the beer tent next to it for privates and corporals, and that was gone. There were a lot of fires. The fire department got out, and it didn't take long to get the fires under control. It was unbelievable. Everybody just pitched in. If you didn't have anything to do with your own outfit, you went someplace else where they needed your help.

Marcello: Did you ever actually see any resistance being put up there at Wheeler Field, that is, in terms of people getting out with

small arms and firing at planes and so on.

Siegle: Oh, yes, we had guys get out, In fact, the guy that was in the guardhouse went from there to a silver star that morning. He shot one of the Zeros down, They had a machine gun on top of the fire station. The guardhouse and the fire station were together, He went out and got himself a silver star for getting a plane. I guess he was picked up for being drunk or something or got in a fight. He was in there for a couple of weeks. We always kid him about how he got a silver star that morning.

Marcello: What was the morale like there on the base in the aftermath of the attack? I am referring to the days and weeks thereafter.

Siegle: The morale was high. I don't think the guys felt that we were going to lose the war even though we knew of the damage down there. Everybody pitched in and did their job, and I thought the morale was real good,

Marcello: Would anger be a way of perhaps describing the attitude of the men? Anger at Japan or the Japanese or something along these lines?

Siegle: You mean, to build up our anger?

Marcello: No, in terms of the emotions that were felt in the aftermath of the attack.

Siegle: Oh, yes, there was anger towards the Japanese. Even after the attack, when we went to town, we would always make a remark

about them. Even though they were faithful--it wasn't them--it was just like anything else. There was anger toward them, but a lot of people felt that the local Japanese, like I mentioned before, were faithful. Within a month or two, when they were back working on the bases, that attitude kind of just disappeared,

Marcello: I guess, in a sense, we can say that December 7th brought an end to an era. The Army would never be the same thereafter.

Siegle: That is correct. It just changed. Within minutes it changed. It went from a jock-strap Army to an Army that would fight for its country.

Marcello: Incidentally, what sort of an appetite did you have that day?

Siegle: I didn't eat the rest of the day. I know I didn't eat the rest of the day. It was maybe the next day before we even got out to get food. They did come out with C-Rations that was in the cans, and I'm not much for that. I don't think I ate at all.

Marcello: Did you spend that night back in the barracks, or did you have to go out in the field, too?

Siegle: I was on guard with the one I mentioned before, Olender. This is an interesting story, and I don't think you'll get from too many people. The Japanese sub was in Pearl Harbor--those little subs that you heard about. They started shooting in the air. As soon as one person shot, everybody shot.

Even the coast artillery started, Everybody was shooting in the air. At what, I don't know. This was, in fact, quoted by a Japanese person later, you know, how they messed up with all this firing going on in the air while the subs were in Pearl Harbor. Then one outfit would start, and, of course, the artillery started and then the infantry. Then everybody was shooting. Even around our field, they all started shooting in the air.

While we were standing guard, we got scared and we laid down in this ditch, Chester Olender and I did. We discussed this the other day. There was a broken water main, and we didn't even know we were laying in water until we got up because we were so scared. You know, you don't realize what to do at that time. We just laid down in the ditch, and the water was coming through the ditch. We could have moved to the side, but we laid down in the water and just lay there.

Marcello: I'm sure that you must have heard sporadic gun fire all night while you were on guard duty.

Siegle: All night long. I pity the guys that were on guard because they were shooting. The officer-of-the-day and the sergeant had to change guards, and they had to be real careful.

Marcello: This fireworks that you discussed a moment ago must have been that which occurred down at Pearl Harbor and so on when those

planes off the Enterprise were coming in.

Siegle: Part of that was that, too, right. They were shooting at their own planes.

Marcello: I'm sure that the base just must have been one big rumor mill in the aftermath of the attack.

Siegle: All kinds. They said that the Japs had landed at Kahuka. Just one rumor after another. The rumors were just unbelievable. We heard that one of the divisions was already wiped out. While they were at our base, we heard they got wiped out at the northern part of the island at Haleiwa Beach or someplace like that where the Japs landed. You see, those were level beaches, and they supposedly were all wiped out. A lot of people realized that it was just rumor, because if it were true, we'd be out there fighting ourselves. But that's how the rumors spread. Kahuka was the point where the Japanese supposedly had landed.

Marcello: Mr. Siegle, is there anything else relative to the Pearl Harbor attack that you would like to talk about? That exhausts my list of questions, but if there is anything else you wish to say, please feel free to do so.

Siegle: I don't know what else I could add. I'm trying to think in my mind, because you bring everything out. I just am sorry that this wasn't done thirty years ago by the government or somebody. So many things are being wasted by not being able

to remember--little things that took place that day. I'd like to have a lot more to tell you, but it is hard to think back thirty-seven years, you know, I can't even remember a person's name after I meet them the first time, so how are you going to go back thirty-seven years? I think that is true of most of the survivors,

Like I mentioned before, I can't think of anything else besides being woken up that morning and going to breakfast. When I ran out of the barracks, I was just looking at them that time. The one just above the hangar line, I could see his face as he tipped the plane toward the barracks. There were two of them in the plane--I suppose a gunman and a pilot--and the gunner was back there smiling. This really always sticks out in my mind to see that.

Marcello: Mr. Siegle, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure that scholars will find your comments quite valuable when they use them to study about Pearl Harbor.

Siegle: Okay. Thank you a lot.