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Interview with  
HENRY N. BERGEL  
December 9, 1978

Place of Interview: Las Vegas, Nevada

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Henry N. Bergel  
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Henry Bergel

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Henry Bergel for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 9, 1978, in Las Vegas, Nevada. I'm interviewing Mr. Bergel in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the destroyer USS Schley during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Bergel, 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. Bergel: I was born on September 10, 1920, of German parents in North Saint Louis, Missouri. I went through Clay School--grammar school--and Central High School. About this time, it was pretty close to World War II, so I was called into the Navy.

Dr. Marcello: When did you join the Navy?

Bergel: I joined the Naval Reserve on June 9, 1938, at the foot of Ferry Street in Saint Louis.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Naval Reserve in 1938?

Bergel: My father worked with a man who happened to be in the Naval Reserve. We got to be friends; he used to come to our house quite often in those days. This is back in about 1936. One night he came by, and he had a uniform on. He happened to be a chief machinist's mate. I got to asking him about the Naval Reserve, and he answered a few questions, nothing definite yet.

I don't know--I guess about a year later, when I was about seventeen--I said, "Could I join?" He said, "Yes. Can I take you down there?" So I went down with him a couple of times to the Naval Reserve Barracks. Then after I'd been down there about three or four times, he said, "Hey, they are going to make a cruise this summer. Would you like to go along? You'd have to join, though." On June 9, 1938, I joined the Naval Reserve. How I ever got in, I don't know, because I'm color-blind. I think what it was is that my father also knew the pharmacist's mate that gave me the test. He probably passed that over.

Marcello: How hard was it to get into the Naval Reserve at the time that you entered? In other words, was there a waiting list, or were they selective or anything of that nature?

- Bergel: Oh, they were pretty selective. Other than being color-blind, I was pretty sound of body. I was in boxing; I was in judo at the time. I happened to be a football player, so I figure I was a pretty good physical specimen.
- Marcello: Did economics play any reason for you getting into the service at that time, that is, joining the Reserves?
- Bergel: No, because the pay for an apprentice seaman was \$21 a month, and you were paid for one day of \$21 a month, which is about 21/30 and is probably sixty-six cents a day. It couldn't have been economics. Let's say that girls admired a uniform, and I imagined I admired a uniform at the time myself. As far as loyalty to your country, when I was a little boy, they always talked about that this is a free country. You don't hear this anymore today. I imagine there was a certain amount of loyalty at seventeen years old, but I don't think there was that much.
- Marcello: What sort of training did you undergo while you were attached to this Reserve unit? In other words, did you have weekly drills?
- Bergel: Yes, we had weekly drills every Tuesday night from about eight o'clock until ten o'clock. Then a lot of times on Saturdays and Sundays we used to go down to Jefferson Barracks, which was the Army base at the south end of Saint Louis. We were taught there to fire a .30-06, machine guns, Browning Automatic

Rifles, and other weapons by the Army. Then during the summer, we went on cruises out on Lake Michigan. During my summers, I went up there on the USS Wilmette, the sub-chaser, 330; and I went on the Paducah, the old gunboat from China. Also, as part of my training, just before I left with our division going out to Pearl, I was transferred over to the East Coast to man old destroyers. We gave those to the British on September 8, 1940. Would you like to hear a little bit about that?

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute, because we're getting ahead of our story. How seriously was this Reserve training being taken by the people in the unit at the time that you joined it?

Bergel: At the time I joined, we had a sixty-nine-man division. The original purpose of these divisions was to man destroyers. These guys were all very serious. I would say that we took our training very serious, because when we went aboard the Schley, these were all very good seamen and very good sailors; they knew what they were doing, so we must have been trained very well. You mentioned Ben Dei Santi earlier. Ben came in about 1940, and he made a darn good sailor. We were both in the same rating; he was a machinist's mate, and so was I.

What more can I say about our training? They didn't send us to any special school, but we had classes at the Naval

Reserve down there, plus other things that I had told you previous to this.

Marcello: I guess what I was referring to is the fact that you all were still basically civilians. From my own experience in the Reserves, I was wondering just how seriously the training was being taken at the time you were going through.

Bergel: Like I said, it was very serious, very serious. When I went aboard these destroyers, from the books that I had been given and studied, it didn't take too much for me to catch on.

Marcello: When was the unit activated? When was it called to active duty?

Bergel: On December 17, 1940, just before Christmas.

Marcello: So it was just about a year before Pearl Harbor, then, that the unit was activated?

Bergel: Yes.

Marcello: In the meantime, how closely had you been keeping abreast of current events and world affairs and things of that nature?

Bergel: At this time, I was in high school and was playing football, playing baseball, but we kept up with it. My attitude was like most people's. We didn't think that the Japanese would go ahead and dare to declare war on us or want to have anything to do with us, because we thought, "We're Americans, and nobody would dare mess with us."

Marcello: Well, at the time that we are referring to, you probably didn't even think about the Japanese. Your eyes were probably turned

more toward Europe than they were toward the Far East back in 1930 to 1939.

Bergel: No, no. In the Naval Reserve, we knew that we were going to be in the Pacific, So our prime concern was the Japanese. We weren't positive, no; but I will give you another little example.

The day we were activated, a friend of mine and myself were standing at the Union Station, As we were standing down there, the newspapers took pictures of us. A reporter asked us, "How long do you think you will be on active duty?" My comment was, "Oh, I figure about a year. We will probably whip the Japanese in about six months." This was our attitude at this time. If you remember, they said that Japanese heads would roll. They wouldn't make good pilots, because they couldn't hold their heads up like this, see (gesture). This was just one thing we were told. We didn't know they were such good pilots. They kind of showed us that things were a little different.

Marcello: After the unit was activated, where did you go?

Bergel: We left Saint Louis and went down through Texas for about three or four days. We finally ended up at San Diego. We ended up at San Diego, and we stayed at San Diego for a couple of days. I don't remember exactly how long it was.

Marcello: When you got to San Diego, did you ever undergo any boot



training or anything of that nature?

Bergel: We had no training at all at San Diego; this was just a receiving station for us.

Marcello: Did you ever have any Navy boot training, as such, at all?

Bergel: I never did, no . . . I take that back. Just prior to leaving Saint Louis, I told you that I had been on destroyers in the Atlantic on the neutrality patrol, I think I mentioned that a little bit earlier. There were about twenty reservists from the Middle West that went aboard the USS Crowninshield.

Marcello: Did this occur prior to the time that the unit was activated?

Bergel: Yes, it did. They just asked for volunteers to go to the East Coast. There were about fifty from Saint Louis, and there were about ten of us from Saint Louis that went aboard the Crowninshield. I was a fireman at the time--fireman third class--and I was trained there. They had special training on operating boilers. I was in the fire room.

Marcello: How long were you on the Crowninshield altogether?

Bergel: I was on the Crowninshield from about June 9th to about November 11th.

Marcello: So all of the training that you received to become a fireman was basically on-the-job training?

Bergel: Yes. May I change that date? It was from about June 9th to September 8th. We gave her to the British as one of the Lend-Lease destroyers in 1940. From there I went to the

receiving station in Norfolk, and I stayed there until about November 11th, and then I was transferred back to Saint Louis to go with my own division.

Marcello: And then from there you proceeded on to San Diego?

Bergel: Yes. Now, we are all caught up.

Marcello: You said you were only in San Diego for a couple days, What happened at that point?

Bergel: Then we were transferred to the carrier Lexington.

Marcello: And this was your transportation over to the Hawaiian Islands?

Bergel: That's correct.

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

Bergel: Let's face it, my mother and father were not rich. My father at the time was an electrician. He wasn't rich. The prospect of being in the Hawaiian Islands at the government's expense thrilled me. I would have never gotten there any other way. So I figured, "Well, if we're going to the Hawaiian Islands, I might as well make the most of it," which I did.

Marcello: Did you have visions of the tropical paradise and hula skirts and all that sort of thing, like most young men did?

Bergel: Yes, I had visions like this, and let me say this, The islands at that time were a tropical paradise. I always called pre-war Hawaii as the "Model-T" days. If you remember here not long ago, they had the television program, "Pearl." Do you remember

the automobiles in there? Almost like T-Models. If you remember, in those days the Hawaiian music was slow, slow movement, and kind of tantalizing. Today it is all Tahitian, real fast; they want that fast movement. This was my idea of Hawaii. Having always been interested in botany, why, to me the islands were one big hothouse. In fact, today I raise plants that they have out there. I raise hibiscus; I raise orchids. It was what I expected--a paradise--and that's what it was to me.

Marcello: When you got to the Hawaiian Islands, did you pick up the Schley at that time?

Bergel: Yes. We disembarked from the Lexington, and I believe we went in big trucks, and we were taken directly to the ship. The ship was tied up, I believe, to Baker Two; I believe . . . Baker Two or Baker Six; it was in the Navy Yard, I was disappointed when I first saw her.

Marcello: Why was that?

Bergel: If you remember, a little bit earlier I mentioned being aboard the Crowninshield. She was a four-stacker, and she was a good-looking four-stacker. This old bucket of bolts I had just looked at, she was still rusty. Of course, she hadn't been out of the mothball fleet for very long. By the time we got finished with her, though, she was a good-looking ship.

Marcello: How long did it take you to get the Schley shipshape?

Bergel: She was able to run, but I would say it was a good month before they had a real good coat of paint on her. I was on the Schley from January of 1941 until August of 1943, and we were always improving her. We had worked her over, and by the time I left her she was a seaworthy vessel.

Marcello: Did you go aboard the Schley as a new crew, or did you go along as part of the expansion of the crew?

Bergel: They had had a crew aboard her that took her out of mothballs in San Diego. Then they left about twenty--what they called--fleet reserves aboard. These were guys that were called back, who had retired. I remember one man who had spent twenty-eight years in the Asiatic Fleet. This is just to give you a general idea of what we had. Then we had a few young rebels--regulars, and when I say rebels, I mean rebels, because they didn't like us.

I'll give you an example why. One young kid from Brooklyn-- I don't remember his name--he resented me because here I was coming in the Navy as a fireman third class. By the time I get aboard the ship, I am a fireman second. This was in rank. He had spent about two years in the Navy, but by the time I told him some of my experiences, he didn't hold it too much against me. They did resent us for a while, but after awhile the old fleet reserves were more like our father. When I went aboard, I was nineteen years old; I was a kid. Well, most

of these fellows were in their late thirties, and they were like fathers to us.

Marcello: Like you mentioned awhile ago, these fleet reserves had a great deal of experience in the Navy.

Bergel: Yes. They were the ones who taught us. When I say taught us, I could stand some more schooling on the ship there, too, although I will say this, they put me in the fire room being as I had had experience on a four-stacker destroyer aboard. I was kind of one of the nucleus of the crew, and I had to do a little teaching myself.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Schley?

Bergel: (Chuckle) I'll give you an idea of, say, breakfast. Wednesday and Saturday morning traditionally was beans and prunes; we had beans, prunes, cornbread. A lot of guys would say, "I couldn't eat beans for breakfast." You take a young fellow, myself, nineteen years old, you put him on a watch from 0400 to 0800 in the morning, and get him up at 0330 and don't feed that man until 0800, by 0800 he would eat anything. To me, after awhile, beans and prunes were one of my favorite breakfasts. On Sunday morning, we generally had sunny-side-up eggs. Maybe on Monday we probably had "collision mats," that is, pancakes, pork sausages. Tuesday and Thursday was generally "SOS." Do you know what "SOS" is?

Marcello: I sure do (chuckle). It is basically chipped beef on toast,

but we know what "SOS" stands for [shit-on-the-shingle].

Bergel: That was our breakfast, and, let's face it, I would never eat chipped beef on toast. After we get finished with this interview, if you would care to hear the story on that, I will tell you, but I could not tell this story talking to that thing [tape recorder]. The food was basically good. I would say that sometimes it could have tasted a bit better, but it was good.

Marcello: Would monotonous also be a way of describing the food? You more or less knew what you were going to be having on a particular day?

Bergel: On Wednesday and Saturdays, we did. Maybe on Tuesday and Thursday we did, too, but Mondays and Thursdays were for "SOS." This was generally what we had. It was, you might say, monotonous, yes.

Marcello: Did you have to serve a tour as mess cook aboard the Schley, or did you escape that because you were a petty officer third class?

Bergel: No, I was one rank below a petty officer third class at this time. I went aboard the Crowninshield, and I spent one week as a mess cook. When they found out that I had played baseball, I got on the baseball team. They said, "You don't mess cook anymore." By the time I got to the Schley, I was up in the ranks a little bit too much then to mess cook.

Marcello: What rank were you when you went aboard the Schley?

Bergel: Fireman second class.

Marcello: How was the food served aboard the Schley? Was it served family-style?

Bergel: Yes. I stayed in the after compartments, and the food was brought down from the galley, which, I would say, was a hundred feet forward of the engineers' compartment. It was brought down in what was called a tureen. They probably had four or five tureens there, and we had twenty men at a mess table. Each meal was started at a different corner of the mess table. Up at one end they started one day, and down at the other end they'd start the next day. This way, they thought it was fair.

I've got to say this at this point while we're on food. We had two cooks on the Schley. One was Gil Engler, and one was Oscar Oswald, and we called him "Ozzie." These are two Dutchmen from North Saint Louis, and they were very good cooks. They could make a meal taste like something, and they took that extra little pain. As far as the food on the Schley was concerned, it was good.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were talking about the mess tables, and you said there were twenty men. I think there were ten men to a table, and didn't you handle two tables at a time?

Bergel: Ten men on each side, and that made twenty men to a table,

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like there aboard the Schley.

Bergel: When you figure a compartment was thirty-five feet wide, possibly thirty-five to forty feet long along the bulkheads or the outer wall--I say that because I knew some people may not understand what a bulkhead is--we had the bunks there, These bunks were two high. I would say that there were probably thirty men that slept in there. We had a row down the center forward of the hatch or ladder. I would say that in that compartment, which was thirty feet wide, thirty-five to forty feet long, there were probably thirty men that stayed in there. There were bunks one on top of the other. Below that we had our lockers, and that's where all your gear was stowed,

Marcello: I gather that these were fairly small lockers.

Bergel: The lockers were probably four feet long, two feet wide--big enough to get all your gear in. Everything I owned went into mine, except for my hammock, and this was the way you transferred your bedding in those days. Today they don't do this anymore.

Marcello: Did you ever actually swing a hammock aboard the Schley?

Bergel: Not aboard the Schley, no. But I have swung a hammock.

Marcello: Were you glad that you didn't have to swing a hammock aboard the Schley, or did you kind of enjoy sleeping in a hammock?

Bergel: I can remember a few storms we were in that I wish I had been



in a hammock, because in a bunk you've got to lay on your tummy and put your arms around the edges of this bunk and spread your feet, your legs. That's the only way you can stay in them. In a hammock you sway with the ship.

Marcello: Let's talk about the training exercises in which the Schley engaged during that period prior to the actual attack itself. Describe what a typical training exercise would be like. What was the Schley's function? What were you designed to do? What was it supposed to do?

Bergel: After we were completely fitted, they put the Schley, the Chew, the Allen, the Sacramento, and the Ward into what was called the 80th Destroyer Division. The 80th Destroyer Division was in what was called the Hawaiian Sea Frontier. Our job was to patrol the islands, and the main function was to patrol from Diamond Head to Barbers Point. This was to keep the area clear of submarines or any other small craft. We got out there and we used to train on all kinds of drills while we were out there. Also, we made a few trips to the outer islands. We went to Maui; we went to Kauai; we went to Hilo. This was all part of our duties. I don't exactly know what we were doing in the outer islands, but I don't think we went over there just for liberty. We did patrol the whole area.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that the Schley was involved in a submarine work. Did you have any sophisticated gear aboard the

Schley? By sophisticated, I mean sophisticated for its time in 1940 or 1941.

Bergel: Oh, yes. We had what was called a sonar. Sonar was a big bulb, and it was in the bottom of the ship, and they could drop this thing down. I don't know exactly how far this would drop down, I would say it probably went down a foot or two below the hull, We could detect submarines, We also had a "bedspringer," I should say, a radar.

Marcello: That was uncommon for its day, then,

Bergel: We didn't get this radar until about the time the war started. We didn't have it when we first went on patrol in early 1940. There weren't too many ships that had it then.

Marcello: When you were patrolling the inner islands as part of the Hawaiian Sea Frontier, how long would one of your patrols usually last?

Bergel: Like I said, there were four or five ships in a division. We generally went out for ten days at a time. Then we'd come in, and we probably were in for three weeks,

Marcello: This was basically all inshore patrolling, was it not?

Bergel: What do you mean by inshore patrolling?

Marcello: Let's say you weren't getting very far from the Hawaiian Islands.

Bergel: Oh, no, no, no. We were always in sight of land--always in sight of land. We just patrolled down through the channels. In fact, if we had the patrol from Diamond Head to Barbers

Point, we were never more than ten miles at sea there. I remember many a time . . . prior to the beginning of the war, we only got one or two submarine contacts, but we used to get a lot of these little sampans from Honolulu. In fact, a fellow that turned out later to be my brother-in-law actually shot at one of these sampans.

Marcello: In other words, in this Hawaiian Sea Frontier, were there certain areas that were restricted and in which no vessels should travel?

Bergel: That's right. Only vessels that had permission to come into this area were allowed, and everything else had to keep out. We always had a few people that wanted to get in there, so we could run them down and turn them over to the Coast Guard. That was all we could do with them.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that the Schley would be on these patrols for two weeks at a time. I am to assume, however, that you would go out on a morning and then come back in the evenings . . . or you would stay out?

Bergel: We would stay out for about ten full days. We were out there all the time.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, could you detect any change in your routine at all?

Bergel: Approximately about two months prior to December 7th, we used to have to keep the watertight doors closed as if you were under battle conditions. Before that we never had a man on the gun. We always figured it was battle stations when you heard the battle klaxon, so you'd run to your battle station. Two months prior to that, we had a man on gun number one--the gun up on the forecastle--and I think we had a man on the two machine guns back on the after deckhouse.

Marcello: Did you perhaps tighten up in terms of security and so on as to checking out the various vessels that would be found within the area that you were patrolling?

Bergel: It was in that two months that we picked up more vessels. In fact, the thing that surprised me was that we picked up a few of these vessels, and they had Japanese sailors in them. Wait a minute. Let me clarify that. I imagine they were Japanese-Americans; they were of Japanese ancestry, anyway. I don't exactly know.

I remember one boat we picked up. The captain hailed the ship, and all the guy said was, "No speak English." That's all he said. So the captain said, "Put a burst over his head." The after deckhouse on the starboard gun put a burst over his head. You'd be surprised how well he learned to speak English. The man just said, "Sorry, captain, if we're in the wrong area, we'll get out." But when he pulled that "No speak English,"

and then he could speak good English, the captain called the Coast Guard to come and get him,

This happened many times. I guess our captain had orders to pick up anybody out there, and we did.

Marcello: Did you say that this activity did seem to increase as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, that is, the number of unauthorized vessels in this area seemed to increase?

Bergel: I won't say the number of unauthorized vessels seemed to increase, but I will say this. We stopped a lot more of them. I'll put it that way.

Marcello: Would you be working out there alone, or would you be working with some of the other ships on these patrols?

Bergel: Normally, we were working alone.

Marcello: I assume there would be several ships in this division out at one time, but they would be patrolling different sectors.

Bergel: Yes.

Marcello: And where did your sector usually run?

Bergel: One sector was from Barbers Point to . . . have you ever been to the islands?

Marcello: No.

Bergel: I'll say from Diamond Head to Barbers Point . . . as you look at a map . . . imagine a map. The upper part is north, the lower part is south, the right is east, and the left is west. At the bottom of the island, you have a concave line from

Diamond Head to Barbers Point. That was probably about twenty miles; I'm figuring the horizon as twenty miles. We had to patrol from five miles off of Diamond Head to five miles off of Barbers Point. That is about twenty miles. We just went back and forth at four to five knots all the time.

Then we went out in some of the other channels; we patrolled them. I don't know why; I couldn't tell you, I don't know what the Navy's thoughts were there. To go on from there, once in awhile we would go to some of these different ports on some of the islands. It wasn't just to give liberty. We were over there checking on something. That was our duties while we were there. I would say that was from 1940, early 1940, until about 1942.

Marcello: What sort of armament did the Schley have aboard?

Bergel: The Schley had sixteen 21-inch torpedoes; she had four 4-inch guns; she had one 3-inch gun on the forecastle; she had one 3-inch on the after deckhouse. We had--I couldn't tell you how many--machine guns along the side. Probably on each side, I would say, there were at least ten, but I don't know exactly.

Marcello: This was prior to the war that you had all of this armament?

Bergel: Yes. These were .30-calibers. After the war started, we went to 40-millimeters. Also, on the fantail--the back end-- we had two depth charge racks. I would say there were probably

ten depth charges in each rack. Then just forward of the after deckhouse, we had four T-guns,

I'd like to say something about the T-guns. During a submarine attack one time, we had a fellow aboard the ship named "Heinie" Miller. We had shot off one of the T-guns, and if you've ever seen any movies as to how these big splashes come out of the water, about this time one of these splashes from that T-gun came up on the starboard side. "Heinie" Miller picked up a depth charge, and he literally put it right into the T-gun. A depth charge weighs 300 pounds. It is 300 pounds of TNT, plus eight-five pounds of metal, plus that handle on there, and how much that weighs, I don't know. One man weighing 200 pounds done this. After this action, we asked him to pick one up, and he couldn't move it. That was just something I thought I would bring up there.

Marcello: Describe what your liberty routine was like when the Schley came in. How did the liberty routine work, and what would you do when you went on liberty?

Bergel: We had three sections aboard the Schley. If you had the duty section--let's say section one had the duty--you had the duty for twenty-four hours. Our liberty was generally from two to three o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. If I went ashore, I generally went ashore in one of these seven-man cabs. We picked them up at Merry's Point and went into

Honolulu.

Normally, the first thing we would do would be to stop off at the Blaisdell Hotel on Fort and Hotel Streets. I believe that hotel is still standing. We would stop in there for a drink. We'd have about two rum and cokes. Rum and coke was a popular drink then. In mine, I generally had two dashes of bitters.

Then I would go down to a curio shop, which is a little ways down the street, and I would see a Japanese girl named Gladys Nuromachi. She is a good friend of mine. I've told my wife about this girl. In fact, I tried to look her up when we went to our conventions back there. She ran this curio shop, and I would go by and talk to her for a little while.

Then a lot of times I used to go to Waikiki quite often and go swimming. We would stop in Ted Lewis's, and I got to where I liked the cottage cheese and pineapple salad. Ted Lewis is the old entertainer, if you remember. You're a little young, and I don't think you would remember him. He was the guy with the funny hat, and he kind of talked like a drunk, and he kind of talked like Jimmy Durante once in awhile. Anyway, sometimes you'd go to a movie.

We used to have some of the guys from the Honolulu Naval Reserve aboard. I remember a few times I was invited out to his house. I liked to go out there because he had a real



good-looking niece. She was half-Filipino and half-white, and her father was a commander in the Navy. She was a good-looking girl. Ed and I went to a few luaus with him and got acquainted with the local people, because if you'll take a look at me, you'll see that I'm kind of dark. If I were just three or four shades darker, I could pass for Portuguese. I was almost like a local boy there.

We used to go out to the Wagonwheel Stables, and they had a black mare out there, and she was one of the few horses that would get up and go. I guess that's just about what most of the liberties were. They had a good theatre there.

Marcello: I gather, then, that you didn't spend too much time down on Hotel Street or Canal Street and some of those places?

Bergel: No. They had the Wo-Fat's Restaurant there, and I used to stop in there. It is the same thing as they have on the television program, Hawaii Five-0. It was a nice restaurant. I didn't like too much of their Chinese food, but I used to go in there and get a good meal.

There's one thing I would like to mention here. A sailor could always go in and see Wo and ask him for something to eat. If you didn't have any money, he fed you. I will say this, on payday he had the biggest line there--paying him off. No one tried to cheat him or anything. They did pay the man because he was good to them.

Marcello: I guess as one gets closer and closer to December 7th, with the influx of military personnel on the island, downtown Honolulu must have been extremely crowded on weekends.

Bergel: Yes. Whenever the whole fleet was in, it was just wall-to-wall sailors on Hotel Street. In fact, it was not only on Hotel Street, but Fort Street, King Street. Fort Street crossed Hotel; King was the street down from Hotel. There was just nothing but wall-to-wall sailors.

Marcello: I've heard some servicemen say that they actually liked to avoid downtown on the weekends because there were so many sailors.

Bergel: I didn't actually hang around downtown Honolulu. This Chinese-Hawaiian fellow, his folks lived where the Ala Moana Hotel is. You went toward Diamond Head--one block from there. Now, his folks lived down there in a house that in Missouri or Texas they would call a barn or stable, but it was sufficient for what they wanted. It wasn't painted. It was like if you'd go out . . . I don't know about Texas, but in Missouri you'd have this old worn lumber on the barn, and that's what the house was like. They had screens; they didn't need any heat. I spent a lot of hours in this house, and I was perfectly content. It satisfied them, and I was happy with it.

Marcello: This brings us up to those days prior to the Japanese attack. Let us go into this particular weekend in as much detail as

you can remember. Do you recall what you did that weekend?

Bergel: The weekend prior to December 7th?

Marcello: No, the weekend of December 7th.

Bergel: I had the duty,

Marcello: Was the Schley still not on patrol at that time?

Bergel: On the weekend of December 7th, the Schley was berthed at Baker Ten. Baker Ten is in the Navy Yard. We were in for our eighteen-month overhaul. At this point, I want to say that we didn't have a gun on her, and the engines were out. Boilers were there, but the Navy Yard workmen were overhauling the boilers.

Marcello: The eighteen-month overhaul is a major overhaul, isn't it?

Bergel: That's correct. For a destroyer, yes.

Marcello: So what you're saying, in effect, is that the Schley was in no shape at all to fight on such an occasion?

Bergel: No.

Marcello: What were you personally doing when the ship went into the yard and was undergoing this eighteen-month overhaul? What would you as a fireman have been doing?

Bergel: At this time, at the time of December 7th, I know there was no longer . . . I mentioned earlier that I had been in the boiler room. By the time December 7th comes along, I'm in the engine room. We were tearing down pumps--just small jobs. You see, the Navy Yard had taken over the big jobs. They

were overhauling the engines--the bearings and everything else. But the pumps, we could take them down and work on them. The main thing to do was to keep out of the yard workmen's way.

I've got to say this at this point. We were not staying aboard the ship. We were staying at the Receiving Station, which was up near the Pearl Harbor Gate. This will come into the story later on.

Marcello: Did you have any liberty at all that weekend?

Bergel: No. In fact, the night before Pearl, I went on duty. I went on duty at about six o'clock in the evening. I had what is called the "cold iron" watch. Everything was down--"cold iron." I had the duty until 7:30 the next morning.

Marcello: During that stretch, when you had the duty, did you notice anything out of the ordinary occurring that night? Were people louder or more boisterous than usual coming back aboard the Schley or anything of that nature? Or was it more or less an uneventful night so far as you were concerned?

Bergel: I had to make the rounds about once an hour. I went around through all the engineering spaces, walked up forward on the deck, then back aft toward the shaft alley in the two engineering spaces.

We had a bus, an old yellow school bus, that the Schley had purchased the year before. We had a welder cut out the

rear end so that it didn't have a door. You ask about what happened. What we had been used to doing was taking this bus and going around to . . . I mentioned the Blaisdell Hotel. We would make a stop there; we'd make a stop at Lau Yee Chai's, another nightclub or pub. Then they would . . . well, I'm trying to think of one or two other spots. What this bus did was go around and make certain stops.

Marcello: Now, had the crew chipped in to purchase this bus, or did this come out of the ship's funds?

Bergel: The crew pitched in, and then the small stores paid for part of it. What we used that bus for was going around and picking up the guys that couldn't make it back. Many a time, I went out on this bus, picked up guys. Maybe me and another guy would pick up a guy by an arm and a leg and pitch him in, pack them in like sardines. When we'd get back to the ship, we'd pitch them off and say, "Come on, let's get back to your bunk." I guess a few times I ended up on the bottom of the pile myself.

We generally parked this bus down there on the dock. We had this bus, and there were no more guys coming aboard drunk that night than there had been any other night. I know at one point there, when the bus came back . . . I'm trying to think of the quartermaster's name who was on watch. It was about eleven o'clock at night.

Marcello: This was on the night of December 6th?

Bergel: The night of December 6th. There were a few we carried aboard. There were a few that could walk, but we had to assist them across the gangway and take them down. I assisted in all this, and, like I said, it was at about eleven o'clock. I didn't have to stay up all night; I could catnap here and there, but I had to be available for the gangway watch.

Marcello: You mentioned that these people were coming back aboard the ship, but awhile ago you mentioned something about staying at the Receiving Station.

Bergel: We were staying at the Receiving Station, but some of these guys just happened to come aboard ship, see. What they did was, they had to take and report there, but also then they had to take them up to the Receiving Station to their bunks. A lot of them just wanted to get down to their bunks and lay down for a little while. Then they went up there, because we were sleeping up here, anyway.

Marcello: Would there actually be very many drunks coming back aboard the ship on a Saturday night?

Bergel: Let's say that in a crew of about 130, you might have ten out of that bunch. This is just a wild guess. Remember, this is thirty-five years ago. I would say maybe ten out of that group.

Marcello: So there really wouldn't be that many.

Bergel: No. We'd all had a few drinks, but drunks that couldn't walk in, maybe there were ten. They maybe could walk, but they couldn't do too good a job.

Marcello: This brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941. Again, I want you to pick up the story and go into as much detail as you can remember concerning that Sunday. What time was your watch over?

Bergel: My watch was over at about 7:30.

Marcello: And what did you do at that point?

Bergel: At 7:30, I was with three or four other guys on the gangway watch. There was a boatswain's mate on watch, and there were two engineers--myself and I don't remember who the other one was. We got on the bus, and we went up to the Receiving Station. What I was going to do, or what I did, is take a shower. Then I was going to go out to Ted Lewis's Restaurant and have pancakes, pork sausages, cottage cheese and pineapple salad. That was my favorite breakfast.

I was taking a shower, and I heard some machine gun fire. I got to thinking, "They must be practicing again this morning." They used to practice antiaircraft fire out there occasionally. So I went ahead and finished my shower, and I was drying off.

As you come out of the shower, there was a big window on that side of the building. I would say that window was probably ten foot square, no glass in it. By the way, it is now boarded

up. I looked out that window, and I saw a big plane out there. It was brown, and it had a big red ball on it. I looked at that plane, and I thought, "What the hell here?" That's exactly what I said to myself: "What the hell here? Are we now practicing and painting our planes to look like Japanese planes?"

I kind of followed this plane a little way, and I saw him drop a "fish." I looked around again, and there was another one. He's coming in, and he dropped a "fish." Then I looked to the left again, and about that time that torpedo must have hit the Arizona, because she seemed to lift up in the center a little bit and then to settle. This one didn't sink her.

Marcello: Did you have a pretty good view of Battleship Row from the Receiving Station?

Bergel: No. From the window, you had . . . from Merry's Point out there--the landing--there was a runway. About all I could see of Battleship Row was the Arizona, and right behind her was the Baltimore. This is an old ship that was the sister ship to the Admiral Dewey's Olympia. The Chew and the Allen were the other two ships in our division that were tied up there. That's all I could see of Battleship Row at that time.

I said, "Uh-oh, Hank, you'd better get out of here!" So I pulled on a pair of blue jeans, and all I had with me was a



pair of shower shoes, rubber shoes, I put them on, and I remember coming out and going down the steps, As I hit the door, there was a young fellow in front of me--I don't remember who he was or anything--and he was cut in half by machine gun bullets.

I hesitated and then I ran out. There were no machine gun bullets at this time, but from the Receiving Station, off to the left, was the Navy Yard. From the Receiving Station to the Navy Yard, I guess normally it would have been a ten-minute walk. They were putting a new sewer in, about halfway from there to the Officer's Club, which was about a city block from the Navy Yard.

We started running for the ship. I guess we ran a hundred yards, and pretty soon we heard machine guns; we could hear them behind us. We jumped into this ditch, There was somebody with me, but I couldn't tell you who he was. We stayed in the ditch a few minutes and looked up and came back out and started running.

Marcello: Was it a very deep ditch?

Bergel: That ditch, I guess, was four foot deep. They were putting a sewer in there. Anyway, I guess I was running into that ditch three or four different times before I ever got down to the Schley. Like I said, it was a ten-minute walk. It must have taken me twenty minutes to get down to the Schley.

When I got to the Schley, we knew she had no guns; we knew she had no engines. She was useless. I didn't even go aboard. The Honolulu and the Saint Louis were tied up right behind us, and I started running for the Honolulu, I thought, "Maybe I can help out there."

I got just about halfway down the Schley, maybe nearly to the after deckhouse, about thirty feet from the end, when there was a bomb that went through the dock there. That was the one that ruptured the plates . . . I believe it was the Honolulu that was inboard, and it ruptured her plates. I didn't know this at the time, but I figured, "Oh, hell!" I turned around, and I ran the other way,

When I started the other way, a fellow named Al Horn, who later turned out to be my brother-in-law . . . I don't know where the heck he got it, but there was a machine gun up on that after deckhouse. This is just fifteen or twenty minutes after this thing started, and they had a machine gun up there. He was supposed to have shot down one of the torpedo planes that was coming down that runway. We're still on that runway going out to the Arizona. He knocked off the corner of that building there, too, that was alongside of us.

I just started going up toward the end of the dock again, and when I got up there, I met a fellow named Harold Newberg. We stood there for a couple of minutes, not knowing what to

do, and then an officer hands us a .30-06. He said, "Do you see those two Filipinos over there?" Those Filipinos were about thirty feet from us. There was a tree there, and they were sitting down underneath there. They wouldn't dare move. He said, "You guard those two Filipinos."

We sat there for a few minutes, and pretty soon some guy comes by, and he says, "The Japs are invading!" I looked at Newberg, and I said, "Harold, I don't have a gun, but I'm going to tell you something. If one of those Japs comes down there, I'll kill you to get that gun." We have discussed this since many times, and now we laugh about it. He had since asked, "Hank, would you have killed me?" I said, "Hell, I don't know, I couldn't tell you." I stayed there with him for a few minutes . . . now, he stayed there, but I got tired of standing there in one spot, so I headed over toward Ten-Ten Dock.

Marcello: At this point did you more or less have a feeling of helplessness more than anything else, that is, the fact that you're not doing anything?

Bergel: Yes, This is why I went to Ten-Ten Dock. I started toward the end of the Schley to help the Honolulu there, but the bomb stopped me. I came back, and I was feeling helpless. This is why I started for Ten-Ten Dock.

By the time I got to the Ten-Ten Dock, there was some officer standing there, and he had a gun in his hand. Why

the heck he had a gun in his hand, I don't know. I said, "Come on, let's go over to the California and help them!" I stood there for a minute, and I looked at the Oglala, and she had already turned over. So we went out to the California.

Marcello: Is the bombing still going on at this point?

Bergel: Yes, and torpedoing was still going on, too. By this time, I figure that it was approximately maybe 8:30. We went out in this whaleboat to the California. I remember another whaleboat being there. The California had already taken, I believe, three "fish." She was down on her port side; her deck was already awash, just about.

I remember climbing aboard . . . I mean, I remember being helped aboard, and at this time I remember smoke coming from the battleships behind us. It almost choked us. We went aboard, and they asked us to go down (weeping) . . . we were asked to go down into the compartment. We found that this was the mess compartment. A division had been eating breakfast, and a torpedo had hit. Now, we were in water up to my waist.

Marcello: Was it dark down there? I'm sure the ship had no power or anything.

Bergel: There was no power. We had lights--lanterns. I remember one fellow sitting there burnt black. He was sitting there with his hands in front of him, both hands. I remember it was so

hot that the metal from the spoon he was using in his right hand had melted through his fingers.

We were asked to take these bodies out. We put these bodies in canvas. We took them to the topside, I don't know what it was, but I think it was another torpedo . . . another torpedo had hit the ship about this time.

Another thing that impressed me was the captain, The captain was with us. He had a white uniform on, and the man was black from his waist down, and he had what I think was blood all over him. How long we did this, I don't know (weeping). I couldn't tell you.

Marcello: When that second torpedo hit the California, did it affect you in any way at all? In other words, did it knock you over or anything of that nature? Can you describe that torpedo hitting the California?

Bergel: This was quite a jolt. The ship, I figure, at this time was listing probably twelve, fourteen, fifteen degrees or somewhere around there. I don't know. It was slippery down there. Like I said, we were in water probably almost up to our waists. When the torpedo hit, I think there were two or three of us down there--I don't know. We lost our balance, and it slammed me over against the bulkhead.

Marcello: Did you hear any sort of a noise or anything?

Bergel: It was a very loud noise--a very loud noise--but it was muffled.

It must have been quite a way down the ship, because we were fairly near the after end of the ship. I would say we were about a third of the way up the ship; that would be three hundred feet from the after end. This must have been farther up, I think. I'm not sure. It was muffled, and my first thought was, "Let's get out of here!" If it had hit us, it would have been too late, and we wouldn't even have thought that. We figured, "Well, we'd go ahead and go to work, because, let's face it, if the captain is standing there alongside of me, and if he can stay there, I can, too." How long we took these bodies out of this compartment, I couldn't tell you. I don't know. I lost all track of time then,

Marcello: Has the California settled to the bottom at this point yet? Was it sitting on the bottom?

Bergel: On one of my trips up topside with a sack--two of us were on a sack--I heard someone say that they were going to just flood the other side so that she would go down level. At the point I am speaking of right now, she was just down about to the gunwales on the port side. I don't know when they started flooding the compartments on the starboard side. I don't know.

Here, I lose time. I'm figuring now that I went aboard the California at maybe 8:30 or nine o'clock. I couldn't tell you exactly. How long I worked in this compartment, I couldn't tell you. I don't even know.

Marcello: And how old would you have been at this time?

Bergel: This was 1941. On September 10, 1941, I would have been twenty-one years old.

Marcello: You were growing up pretty fast,

Bergel: I might say this. This day was the day I started smoking. I smoked three full packs of cigarettes on December 7, 1941. Today I don't smoke.

Marcello: Did you continue to smoke cigarettes after that?

Bergel: I smoked until approximately ten years ago, when the doctor told me I'd better quit. That's what he suggested. He showed me a chest X-ray, and that's why I quit.

Marcello: Do you recall what you did that evening? Were you still working on the California that evening?

Bergel: Yes.

Marcello: Needless to say, food and things of that nature probably never entered your mind, that is, getting something to eat.

Bergel: Up to this time, I hadn't had anything to eat all day.

Marcello: And you probably weren't even thinking about it.

Bergel: No, food was of no concern. Like I said, I had lost all conception of time, but along about three to four o'clock in the afternoon a tug pulled up alongside the California. They asked for a machinist's mate. I think I was a fireman first class in the engine room. I told them that I was a fireman first class and that I was in the engine room on the

Schley, the destroyer. They said, "Come on. We need you."

So they asked the officer-of-the-deck if I could go. I didn't know where I was going, and I didn't much care.

Marcello: Anything would have been better than staying on that California.

Bergel: I guess I thought this--I don't know--but they needed help there. I went aboard this tug, and I think it was the Grebe. The Grebe had nothing but coffee on it, no food. She wasn't used to going to sea. She had a set of paravanes. I don't know if you know what paravanes are. Paravanes are for sweeping mines. We went out to the entrance.

I never noticed what was going on much during the raid. I was so occupied with what I was doing that as we pulled out from the California and went through the entrance of the harbor, I kind of looked around and thought, "Holy mackerel! What has happened?" I noticed the Oglala again; I noticed the Helena that had been hit forward of her; I noticed the Pennsylvania; I noticed the Shaw; I seen the Nevada there.

We got out to the entrance to the harbor, and I didn't know whether I wanted to go out there or not. "I'm here, so I might as well stay," I thought. We went out there, and I noticed that there were two or three others out there, and we joined on one. We stayed out there for three days, just going around through the Hawaiian Islands sweeping mines. We didn't get a mine, but we swept the whole area. I didn't eat



for those three days, either. We had coffee--all the coffee you wanted--and that was it.

Marcello: What sort of work did they have you doing aboard that ship?

Bergel: I run engines. I took turns on the engines. They were very simple engines on the tug. We stood four hours on and four off. My first few hours on that thing were just simply learning how to run these engines, and there wasn't too much to it. The main thing was just being attentive, just watching him.

There were the three of us, and we did have a destroyer escort. This was a two-piper destroyer, and I don't even remember her number. But she kind of stayed outboard of us all the time and protected us from Jap subs or something. At this time, I believe they knew that there were no Japanese ships in the area.

Marcello: Like we mentioned awhile ago, when you were referring to rumors, I'm sure that the vessel that you were on was probably one big rumor mill, was it not?

Bergel: No, no.

Marcello: It was not?

Bergel: No. Like I said, when I went aboard her, it was late in the afternoon. I'm saying it was probably three or four o'clock. We were all young fellows, except that there was an ensign aboard there and there was a chief. I guess there were six

or seven of us. I'm trying to think of that one guy, I think his name was "Hap" or something like that. In fact, I was the only man who wasn't a part of the ship's crew at this time. I guess they had one guy that had been ashore, and they were missing him. I don't know. This ensign, who was approximately about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, was a pretty level-headed fellow. We talked pretty serious about it, and we decided that if there was any invasion or anything like that, they would have known about it by now, We would have all known about it, and they would have had sailors and soldiers and everybody else out there and would have said, "Come on, let's get out there, and let's fight 'em!" We figured there was no invasion, but we didn't know where the Jap fleet was.

Anyway, I stayed on that ship for three days, and, boy, I was hungry! On the third day, the morning of the tenth, about ten o'clock, I walked aboard the Schley. When I got aboard, Lieutenant Sperry, the nephew of the head of the Sperry Gyroscope Company, was the officer-of-the-deck. He said, "Hank, where the hell have you been?" I was the last guy to report to the ship. I told him where I had been, and he said, "You'd better explain that to the captain."

So I went in, and I talked to the captain for a couple of minutes. He said, "How long has it been since you ate? How

long has it been since you've had anything to eat or slept or anything?" I said, "I catnapped for three days, and I haven't had anything to eat." He told the officer-of-the-deck, "You get this man something to eat." I did eat, but I couldn't eat very much. I had a cup of coffee, and I think they were going to have fruit salad that day. That's all I ate.

Then they told me that I had been counted Missing in Action, so they asked me to sign a little card that they had, a three-by-five card. I don't remember too much about this card, but you had to sign your name on the bottom. On there it said, "I am well. I am sick. I am in the hospital, I've been wounded." I never paid any attention to it. I put the lines in the wrong place, and they sent this to my folks. In the first place, I was counted Missing in Action; in the second place, I made this thing all wrong. This is December 10th, and it took me until June to get this all straightened up.

My father wanted to come out to Pearl Harbor and go to work. Finally, by June, I finally convinced him and said, "Why the heck don't you stay back there. You are too damn old. Let the young fellows out here do it. Everything is okay, and that's all you've got to worry about."

I guess after that I slept for a couple of hours; that's all I could sleep. Then I woke up, and the doctor called me up. He said, "Hank, I'm going to give you this." He gave

two small bottles of brandy, and I went back to sleep for a few more hours. He said, "That's the way it is going to be for a while, Hank, You're just going to have to get used to sleeping again."

Marcello: In the meantime, are they trying to get the Schley shipshape again?

Bergel: They had a normal procedure that would have taken, I believe, about a month-and-a-half. They had us going in three weeks again. Don't get me wrong; we weren't that important. The Honolulu behind us was a lot more important, and she had a lot more yard workmen. Before December 7th, they were working eight hours a day, but then they started around-the-clock. Within approximately three weeks, we were out.

Marcello: And how much longer did you remain aboard the Schley?

Bergel: I was on the Schley until right after the New Georgia landings, which was approximately July of 1943. You see, we had been converted to what is called an APD, and we used to take the men from the 4th Marine Raider Battalion and take them. We made an invasion on New Georgia at Rendova. The New Georgia Islands are a little group located just north of Guadalcanal. That is a story in itself; that was something up there. It was another one of those deals where you stayed awake for two or three days at a time.

I would say this, after I left the Schley, I went to an

LSD Six, Lindenwald. I have never served aboard a crew like I did aboard the Schley. Of course, let's face it, this was people I knew here. I've got to say this, as far as a crew goes, the crew in efficiency was 4.0, as compared to other ships I've been on. They were all good sailors. We fought and bled together, and we came home. Of course, a lot of them haven't joined the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. I wish they would have, and I wish they still would. There was a comradeship aboard that ship, and I think that December 7th made us even closer, like brothers.

Marcello: Mr. Bergel, 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 you went into the type of detail that we're looking for in these interviews. I'm sure that scholars are going to find your comments very valuable when they use them to study Pearl Harbor.

Bergel: Did you get any of that crying on there?

Marcello: We can take that off.

Bergel: You don't have to.

Marcello: We can do it whichever way you want it.

Bergel: You don't have to. If you've got it and you want to leave it there, you go ahead. I'm not going to do like some people. One guy says, "I'll sell my story to Dr. Marcello for \$1,000," but I won't be that way. As far as the crying, I'm an emotional

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man. I don't mind you having any of that. You just go ahead.

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