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Interview with  
FRANK APALATEA  
August 5, 1981

Place of Interview: Eules, Texas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved:

Frank Apalatea  
(Signature)

Date: August 5, 1981

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Oral History Collection

Frank Apalatea, Jr.

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Euless, Texas

Date: August 5, 1981

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Frank Apalatea for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on August 5, 1981, in Euless, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Apalatea in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Schofield Barracks as a member of the 25th Infantry Division during the Japanese attack there and at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Apalatea, 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. Apalatea: I was born on August 7, 1918, in Kern County in California, which is near Bakersfield, California. Mother died when I was six. I joined the Army when I was twenty-one.

Dr. Marcello: What education do you have?

Mr. Apalatea: I went through high school.

Dr. Marcello: When did you join the service?

Apalatea: October 17, 1939.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the service?

Apalatea: Well, the draft was coming up. The war in England had started, and I knew that there would be a draft, and I was twenty-one. So I decided that I wanted to go where I wanted to go, and that was to Hawaii.

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

Apalatea: I don't know (chuckle). It just happened to be handier, I guess. That was in Los Angeles,

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you had a choice of duty stations. Do you want to explain this?

Apalatea: Well, see, then they gave you credit for foreign service, and this is peacetime. You went and signed up for two years and would get credit for three if you decided to stay in, see, and that is the reason I picked Hawaii.

Marcello: I gather that a lot of those people had a choice between the Hawaiian Islands or the Philippines. Did you have that choice?

Apalatea: Yes. Right, right.

Marcello: Why did you select the Hawaiian Islands?

Apalatea: I just wanted to see Hawaii (chuckle).

Marcello: Like most people, I assume that you didn't take any basic training, as such, there in California,

Apalatea: No.

Marcello: Okay, describe the process, that is, of how you got to the

Hawaiian Islands,

Apalatea: I signed up in Los Angeles and went down to Ft. MacArthur, which is near Long Beach, and from there I went to Angel Island, out near Alcatraz, and I stayed there for two months and went over on a ship and took my basic in Hawaii.

Marcello: What did you do those two months that you were on Angel Island?

Apalatea: Oh, they marched us around and got us up and hiked us around the island. Then we could have leave pretty near anytime that we wanted it. We'd go into San Francisco.

Marcello: Do you recall the name of the ship that took you from San Francisco over to Honolulu?

Apalatea: No, I don't remember if it was Leonard Wood,..it might have been the Leonard Wood.

Marcello: How long did it take, that is, the trip?

Apalatea: About ten days, it seems like. It seemed like forever (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you get seasick?

Apalatea: No, I didn't get seasick.

Marcello: So you land in Honolulu. What happens at that point?

Apalatea: Well, then we were put on trucks and went up to Schofield Barracks, which was about twenty-seven miles away from Honolulu. There we were assigned to the unit that we were going to be in. I went to G Company, 35th Infantry. There was no 24th or 25th Division then. They were formed in 1941.

Marcello: But those divisions were formed before December 7, is that correct?

Apalatea: Yes, they were formed sometime in 1941.

Marcello: The reason that I ask you that was because I had an interview with a gentlemen last night, and he was under the impression that those divisions had been formed in 1942.

Apalatea: No,

Marcello: And my information was that they had been formed in 1941.

Apalatea: They had the old "square" divisions, and that is when they had brigades and all that sort of thing. When they streamlined it, they had the infantry divisions, plus attachments to the 25th Division, let's say. And they had three regiments, where they only had four before in the "square" divisions.

Marcello: So when you got to the Hawaii Islands and were assigned to Schofield Barracks, you went into G Company, 35th Infantry. Describe the basic training that you received there at Schofield.

Apalatea: Just the old boot camp (chuckle). We learned "how to mind," you know, taking orders, and marching, marching, marching, how to use the gun and bayonet, and how to take a machine gun apart and how to take a rifle apart. I think there was only six or nine weeks of it then.

Marcello: And what happened at that point? In other words, where did you go and what did you do after you got out of boot camp? What kind of a speciality did you go into?

Apalatea: Well, luckily, I knew how to type (chuckle),,and I took all of the basics and everything we had to have. We even shot rifles

in the building, you know, .22's and machine guns, also, in the building. I took all of that, and I knew how to type, so they put me down in the office. That was why I didn't like to go marching off all the time, you know, way over yonder and back (chuckle). It just so happened that I was in there then-- at this particular time,

Marcello: So you really get into the administrative aspects of G Company.

Apalatea: Yes,

Marcello: We hear about Schofield Barracks. Describe what Schofield Barracks looked like from a physical standpoint. If you can think back to forty years, what did Schofield Barracks look like?

Apalatea: Well, they had what they called quadrangles. Headquarters and Service Company was over on the..,well, let's just say the north side. We will call this side number one, and then the side number two, which would be going to the right, had A to D Company. Where I was at was in the third part of the quadrangle, and that was E, F, G and H Companies. H Company was a heavy weapons company, and so was M and whatever the other one was. I don't remember. They were heavy machine guns, .50-caliber machine guns, and all that sort of thing. That is what it consisted of, and the others were the rifle companies,

Marcello: So these barracks, then, were three stories high?

Apalatea: No, I think that they were two...well, three, counting the floor. I think that it was three.

Marcello: Didn't they usually have supply and most of the administration offices and the day rooms and things like that on the ground floor?

Apalatea: Yes, the kitchen and the...you know, where you ate, the kitchen, dining room, and the offices were on the ground floor.

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like there at Schofield Barracks,

Apalatea: Oh, if you went to the first floor...it was three stories, counting the ground floor. They were just bunks, you know, just one on top of the other, you know, like kids sleep in, except they were metal. There were just whole rows of them about four rows of them, I guess, and you were assigned a bunk and a locker, and that was what you took care of. Of course, you had your rifle, but they were locked up at night.

Marcello: And where were the rifles located.

Apalatea: I really can't remember, but I think that they were by the door somewhere. Usually, the sergeant opened them in the mornings.

Marcello: What was the food like there at Schofield in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Apalatea: To me it was good. You see, I was a country kid, and I could eat anything (laughter). I ate good. A lot of people didn't like it, but to me it was good,

Marcello: How would it have compared to the food and the diet that you had



in civilian life?

Apalatea: Oh, there was just more of it in the Army (chuckle).  
I just didn't know if it was vitaminized or what, but I think that it was better food than we get today. It is better prepared at home now, like the wife prepares it, you know.

Marcello: What role did athletic competition play in the life of that pre-Pearl Harbor Army?

Apalatea: It was very strong. It was very...I mean, that was part of your training, actually. Now myself, I...do you want me to tell about myself and what I was in?

Marcello: Yes.

Apalatea: I was in jujitsu--wrestling--and in mile running and swimming, but especially wrestling. I was an amateur wrestler. That was my hobby.

Marcello: I understand that the other sports were relatively popular, too.

Apalatea: Football and track, yes.

Marcello: How about the boxing smokers?

Apalatea: Oh, that was a big thing over there. You wouldn't know, but Glenn Lee's brother, Donald Lee, boxed over there. Glenn Lee was up for the middleweight championship or whatever it was, and he was a good boxer. He was almost a pro.

Marcello: What kind of competition was there among the various units?

Apalatea: Every other regiment played every other regiment in whatever

it was--whether it was boxing, football, or whatever. It was among the Army. Every once in awhile, you would go down to the University of Hawaii and play them in football and one thing or another.

Marcello: How well-attended were these athletic meets?

Apalatea: Oh, man, they were filled! Every seat was filled!

Marcello: How slow or rapid was rank or advancement in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army?

Apalatea: It wasn't real fast because I went in when they were only giving \$21 a month. For me it was fast because within two or three months I made first class, see, and you usually can't get that.

Marcello: When you say first class, do you mean Pfc?

Apalatea: Yes, that means private first class. If you weren't in administration, you know, if you weren't a clerk or you weren't a draftsman or whatever, it took about a year to make that. Like, again, I made corporal in eight or nine or ten months, but I didn't make it in G Company. I was transferred to the 2nd Battalion, Headquarters. That is where I stayed most of the time--not all the time but most of the time.

Marcello: Now when did this transfer occur?

Apalatea: Well, about the first year...somewhere in the first year.

Marcello: Was it before December 7, 1941?

Apalatea: Oh, yes. I was in the 2nd Battalion when they hit over there.

Marcello: And why did you transfer?

Apalatea: Because I had...(chuckle) a friend of mine...well, he wasn't a

friend of mine then. He was a staff sergeant, and he kept coming...he knew that I could type and everything. I got along good with him, and he wanted me to transfer into the 2nd Battalion. He was a sergeant major, in other words. So I transferred over there and stayed there for most of the time.

Marcello: How hard was it to get a transfer from one unit to another?

Apalatea: It wasn't too hard if you qualified, you know. You had to qualify first.

Marcello: Qualify in what way?

Apalatea: Well, like, if you...well, let's just say that if they wanted a machine gunner going from G Company to H Company--you know, H Company handled heavy weapons--and if he was a good machine gunner, there wouldn't be no trouble getting over into H Company. But, see, if he didn't know how to run a machine gun, then he wouldn't go. My case was administrative, so I was more than qualified.

Marcello: Do you know approximately when you went over into the 2nd Battalion?

Apalatea: Oh, I would say sometime in 1940. I would say 1940 or early 1941, but I would say 1940.

Marcello: As you look back upon life in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army, how would you describe the morale of you and your buddies?

Apalatea: Oh, it was good. Most everybody there didn't have too much money. They ran on the script system, you know. Do you know

what I mean?

Marcello: Explain it, anyway.

Apalatea: Well, on the first of the month, everybody gets paid, but by the 15th most everybody is broke, so they would get show checks, you know, to go to the show with, beer checks...oh, I forget what the other one was. But that's what they would use for money. Then they would draw a partial pay if they wanted it, you know. I was never short of money (chuckle),

Marcello: What do you think was responsible for the high morale?

Apalatea: I don't know whether it was high or low, but it was just a bunch of guys in the Army (chuckle). That is all that I can say. They got along together; they had fun together; they fought each other, you know. You know what I mean. You know, they had brawls once in awhile, but mostly they got along real good. You know, it was just the regular Army life.

Marcello: What did you normally do, and where did you normally go, when you were off duty?

Apalatea: I went to Honolulu. I later bought me a bicycle, and I would go bicycling. Or I would go swimming. You see, we used to go swimming on Saturdays and Sundays, and I was always swimming.

Marcello: Would you normally go down to Waikiki to go swimming?

Apalatea: Yes, I normally went...well, the Army didn't take us to Waikiki. They took us to the north part of the island, and we went on trucks if we wanted to go over there. Or we would get a pass, and we would go off on weekends. I went to Honolulu a

lot. I knew Honolulu pretty well.

Marcello: Would you normally go into Honolulu on the weekends rather than during the week?

Apalatea: Yes, strictly weekends.

Marcello: If you went off the base during the week, where would you normally go?

Apalatea: Oh, they had a little town,,I didn't go too often. I spent most of my time at the gymnasium down there. I forget the name of the little town down there.

Marcello: Wahiawa, wasn't it?

Apalatea: Wahiawa,,I can't even say it now, but, yes, I think that is where we went. There was nothing there except red dirt. It was a little town then.

Marcello: What kind of action was there for the military?

Apalatea: Oh, the guys played pinball machines and looked at the girls and drank a little beer and whatever, you know. They wouldn't stay there too long--just to get off the post.

Marcello: Now when you went into Honolulu, would you normally stay overnight, or would you come back the same evening?

Apalatea: No, I never did stay overnight in Honolulu because it would have been too expensive. The boys would go down to the beach. I spent a lot of time there. But if we went down there in a bunch, we would go down there in a taxi. Everything was taxis. We would go down and get a few drinks, and you could get a good steak dinner for a dollar--a big ol' thing for a

dollar. That was our big thing then.

Marcello: Did you have any favorite restaurants or bars down in the Honolulu where you normally went?

Apalatea: No. The only one that I had was that steakhouse that had that dollar steak, and I went down there about twice a month.

Marcello: On weekends how crowded was downtown Honolulu with servicemen?

Apalatea: On payday it was real crowded, and you would have to hold your tongue because you could get into a fight real quick because all three services were in there. You know, the Navy and the Marines were there, and the Army was there, and you just kind of had to watch yourself, you know.

Marcello: I have heard a lot of people say that they would normally go in to Honolulu during the week because that way they could avoid the crowds on the weekends when the fleet was in.

Apalatea: Some to them did, but I never did. I just stayed out of there during the week, you know. Of course, we went down there to chase the women, too, you know (chuckle), and drinking. You know what I mean...well, you take a bunch of guys, and they will just go out and have some fun.

Marcello: What entertainment was there on the base at Schofield?

Apalatea: Oh, there were all kinds of entertainment. There was boxing and, like I say, the movies. They had live entertainment. "Hilo Hattie" used to come in there. She was a Hawaiian school-teacher. I don't know if you have ever heard of her. They had a lot of good entertainment there...and a library and church

and everything.

Marcello: I have heard other people talk about "Hilo Hattie." Describe her,

Apalatea: Well, she was fat-looking little thing. She was a school-teacher, and she looked like a Hawaiian Minnie Pearl, is what she looked--like Minnie Pearl looks like now. She could really do the hula, and she could really make you laugh. You know what Minnie Pearl looks like? Well, she wore about the same kind of hat,

Marcello: But she was a native Hawaiian?

Apalatea: Oh, yes, she was a native Hawaiian, She came from Hilo, I think, over on the big island.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that eventually the Army was reorganized sometime in 1941, and the 24th and the 25th Divisions were formed. Describe this process, that is, in terms of what you know about it and how it affected you.

Apalatea: Like I said, before the "square" divisions had four infantry regiments to a division, and that is why they called it a "square" division. So then they took and they made three divisions...

Marcello: They made a "triangular" division, did they not?

Apalatea: Three divisions...

Marcello: No, they made...let's get this straight because I think that you are a little mixed up here. When they went from the "square" divisions with the four regiments to the "triangular" divisions,

then they had three regiments, isn't that right?

Apalatea: Yes, they had three regiments. Right.

Marcello: Describe how you wound up in the 25th Division.

Apalatea: Well, they took the...see, the 19th and 21st Divisions were the two regiments...see, there were other regiments...I guess that there were two infantry regiments...

Marcello: Now was it the 19th and 21st Divisions, or was it the 19th and 21st Regiments?

Apalatea: No, it was the 19th and 21st Regiments that were put into the 24th Division, plus whatever it took to make up the other regiments, and the 27th and the 35th were put into the 25th Division, see. So I was in the 25th Division.

Marcello: So that is how you ended up in the 25th.

Apalatea: Yes.

Marcello: Did this mean anything in terms of changing your living quarters or anything of that nature?

Apalatea: No. The only thing that it did was knock out the brigade, kept the battalions and regiments, and they took three or four battalions to a regiment and so forth. Each one of those little squares...you know, I was telling you about the squares...

Marcello: The quadrangles.

Apalatea: Each one of those quads was a battalion.

Marcello: Did your function change within this organization?

Apalatea: No. Most of our training...most of our being out in the field... you know, we had maneuvers all the time, and for most of our



training we went up to what they called Manimahua Ridge, and that was our perimeter. That was what we were supposed to protect...and also part of the cane fields and all of that. We were lucky--we were up in the mountains.

Marcello: Now would you take part in most of this training and maneuvers and alerts and so on?

Apalatea: Oh, yes.

Marcello: How would this affect you, since you were actually administrative personnel?

Apalatea: Well, my administrative part was nil until I got back to the barracks.

Marcello: And what would you be doing, then, out in the field?

Apalatea: Carrying a gun like the rest of the boys, you know.

Marcello: You were more or less a rifleman at that point, an infantryman.

Apalatea: Yes. Naturally, at headquarters they had CP's, you know, Command Post, and I was naturally in the CP, but I was still a rifleman. It was just a little bit different than when you were in the barracks,

Marcello: When you would go out into the field, what would you actually be doing then?

Apalatea: Well, I would do everything but guard, I guess; I mean, I took part in the maneuvers and everything. I wouldn't be guarding because they had plenty of guards,

Marcello: Were you living in tents and that sort of thing when you were out in the field?

Apalatea: No, no. The only tents we had was the Command Post. No, we slept in pup tents. I think we did. Yes, I am sure that we did.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, what changes, if any, could you detect in your daily routine?

Apalatea: Well, when I was in Company G--this was in 1940--we knew that we were going to have trouble with the Japanese because... see, I was also a rifleman as well as a clerk, and we were given live ammunition, and we were to guard the railroad tracks. We had live ammunition, and it was the first time that we had been given live ammunition.

Marcello: And this was done when?

Apalatea: I think in 1940. I am not sure--1940 or early 1941. I am not sure. It was either late 1940 or early 1941,

Marcello: Now why were you assigned to this particular function, that is, guarding railroad tracks and so on?

Apalatea: Well, because we were guarding anything that was important to them, you know, to our defense, I guess.

Marcello: What concern was created by all of the Japanese who was living on the Hawaiian Islands?

Apalatea: Well, no one paid too much attention to them, really, not the civilians, because there was a lot of them in the cane fields, and there were a lot of them down in Honolulu. In fact, I had

some good Japanese friends down in Honolulu.

Marcello: I guess what I am leading up to is this, and I didn't want to put words in your mouth, You mentioned that you were guarding these installations such as railroad tracks and so on. Was there ever any mention of the possibility of sabotage being carried out by any of these Japanese living on the Hawaiian Islands?

Apalatea: Well, I don't know if they were going to do it or who was, but we were to prevent them if they did. I don't know who it was against,

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, do you have these alerts and exercises more frequently?

Apalatea: Yes, really more frequently. Yes, they might wake you up at one o'clock in the morning, or they might wake you up at five o'clock in the morning to move out within an hour or so, you know.

Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around in bull sessions and talked about the possibility of war, how much thought was given, or how much talk occurred, about an attack at Pearl Harbor?

Apalatea: Well, there was no talk at all about Pearl Harbor, but they knew that something was going to happen in Japan. As far as Pearl Harbor goes, no, there was nothing--no thought of that.

Marcello: So in other words, if war did come between the two countries, you felt pretty safe and secure there?

Apalatea: Well, I guess we were the ones to make it secure (chuckle).

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that pre-Pearl Harbor period, what kind of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Apalatea: Well, do you mean as soldiers or civilians?

Marcello: Either-or,

Apalatea: Well, to me they were good people; I mean, we had no fear of them, and we never thought of them as enemies, that is, on the island.

Marcello: Did you personally have very much contact with people of Japanese ancestry on the Hawaiian Island?

Apalatea: Yes. Like I say, I knew people there in Honolulu. They were downtown. I don't know how I got acquainted with them, but they invited me home, and I had dinner at their house. In fact, I stayed the night there one time when I went to Honolulu. I stayed in their home.

Marcello: And these were Japanese?

Apalatea: Yes, these people were born in Japan.

Marcello: How did you meet them? Do you recall?

Apalatea: I couldn't tell you, I think that I met them through a buddy. I think that he knew them, and I think that is how I got acquainted with them.

Marcello: Now the record indicates that during that week prior to December 7, the 24th and 25th Divisions had been on a long, tough week in the field. Do you remember that?

Apalatea: No, I don't recall it because we were out there quite frequently. No, I don't recall that part of it,

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941, and what we need to do at this point is to go into as much detail as you can remember. Do you recall what you did on the night of December 6, 1941? This would be Saturday.

Apalatea: Yes. Well, this particular night, I stayed in the barracks.

Marcello: Why was that? Do you know?

Apalatea: I couldn't tell you. I was either...I don't know, I couldn't tell you. I must have went to the show or a boxing match or something, but I stayed home. Normally, I would have been down in Honolulu, but I wasn't.

Marcello: What sort of activity was occurring in the barracks that night?

Apalatea: Oh, most of the guys went on leave, you know, were on pass. There wasn't too many around.

Marcello: On a Saturday night, when people came back from being either in Honolulu or in Wahiawa, what sort of shape or condition would they be in?

Apalatea: Well, a lot of them weren't...some of them were "stewed" (chuckle), and some weren't, you know. It all depends on what they went to Honolulu for; I mean, they were not all drunk, if that is what you mean. They went down to have a good time, you know.

Marcello: So I gather, then, that that Saturday evening was rather uneventful back in the barracks.

Apalatea: I either went down to the show or the wrestling match. For me that is what I think that I did. I can't recall. But you

just don't stay in the barracks unless you are reading or writing letters or something.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that morning of December 7, 1941, and, again, what I want you to do is to describe in as much detail as you can the events that unfolded that morning. Let's start with the time that you got up. Do you recall when you got up?

Apalatea: Yes, I remember when I got up. Yes, I happened to be facing the window side, and I was on...I think that it would be the south side of the quadrangle, and I was right near the window. Every Sunday morning we had fried eggs. That was a treat--that was really a treat--and I was going to beat the bunch down there and get my fried eggs first.

Marcello: Now normally, one didn't have to get up on a Sunday morning if one didn't have the duty.

Apalatea: No, but if you liked fried eggs (chuckle)...

Marcello: Now describe what happened.

Apalatea: Okay, as I looked around...you couldn't see anything...but I had seen all of these planes come over what they called the Kolekole Pass. Now I did see them come in,

Marcello: Now where were you when you saw these planes?

Apalatea: There right in the barracks. I was up on the top floor.

Marcello: So you had not yet gone to breakfast?

Apalatea: No, I had not yet gone to breakfast. I was cleaning up and getting ready to go downstairs, I seen all these planes while

hugging the mountain, and they were all in a straight line coming in. Now I didn't have any idea of who they were because the Navy and the Air Force were used to doing things like that. I didn't pay any attention to what they were doing, so I went downstairs after these planes had disappeared. I watched them for a little while--it wasn't very long--and went downstairs. I had just ordered my eggs, and I heard the first "booms." See, Wheeler Field was right at the end of our quadrangle,..there was another quadrangle, and then Wheeler Field, and they were after Wheeler Field. They wasn't after us.

Marcello: When you heard this loud noise, what did you think that it was?

Apalatea: I didn't have no idea what it was, and then we heard some more, and by that time it had disturbed the barracks. They just came piling out of there, you know, the people that were there. Pretty near everybody was home except for a few strays.

Marcello: So when you saw those planes from your barracks window, you then proceeded in a routine manner to go down to the kitchen.

Apalatea: Right. Then when the first bomb went off, I went outside. They had a road all the way on the inner side of the quadrangle. Well, I went out on the grass and watched them, and by that time you could see the planes come overhead.

Marcello: Describe what you saw when you went outside.

Apalatea: Well, the planes,..I could see them flying overhead, and you could see the guy up there almost. They were making dives, and he was dropping his bombs, and we knew what was happening

then.

Marcello: About how long did you observe this action there at the chow hall?

Apalatea: It wasn't very long. I watched the first pass, and they were dropping the bigger bombs. Then they come around the second time...they made a turn, and they were flying right over the barracks. I could see the guy's mustache, and they were dropping hand-bombs. They had their windows open then, and they were throwing these little hand-bombs. It looked about that long (gesture), and they were dropping them out the window.

Marcello: About a foot long?

Apalatea: I couldn't tell you how long it was. It was light enough that he had them in the cockpit, and he was throwing them out, see. I remember that (chuckle).

Marcello: And did any of these small bombs land anywhere near you.

Apalatea: No, no, because he was close to the end of the field, and he would throw them in the same direction the plane was going.

Marcello: Approximately how high off the ground were the planes?

Apalatea: Like I say, our barracks were three stories, counting the ground floor, and you could see him sitting in there, and you could see the red circle on the plane. Well, that was about the end of it as far as the action goes.

Marcello: Now up until this time, has any kind of alarm or bugle sounded there at Schofield?



Apalatea: Oh, yes. One of the buglers very alertly blew whatever they blow--I can't even remember, you know--and woke everybody up to get outside, you know, one of those things.

Marcello: And what did you personally do at this point?

Apalatea: Well, I stayed out there because I was already out there. The guys came tumbling out when that happened. So I just stayed out there.

Marcello: And what did you do when you were out there?

Apalatea: We had "Call to Arms," and we got all of our equipment and went out to the field and never did get breakfast.

Marcello: Okay, so the bugler sounds the alarm or whatever call it was, and, again, what do you do at that point? When do you get your field pack and your gun?

Apalatea: Well, you go get your gun and you get your pack and load up the trucks that come in, and away you go.

Marcello: Was there any problems in terms of drawing your weapon or anything of that nature?

Apalatea: No, not after he blew the "Call to Arms." After he unlocked the guns, we and our guns were ready.

Marcello: How long was it before the trucks came to pick you up?

Apalatea: Well, it wasn't too long. The attack itself only lasted...well, where I seen it, it was not much for an airplane to go over and make another round. There were a bunch of planes, and they were flying at different heights. But the one that I seen was real close. You asked me how high it was in distance. Well,

it wasn't too much higher than these trees...or a little higher...probably twice as high as the trees out here. I could see them real easy, and they flew right over. I could see them real, real easy. I could even see his mustache (chuckle).

Marcello: During that first hour, let's say--and I assume that you were still there at Schofield that first hour--how would you describe the reaction of everybody?

Apalatea: Well, it would be just like seeing an atom bomb go off. It was just weird...a funny feeling. It wasn't a defeated feeling. It was just a not-knowing-what-was-going-on feeling.

Marcello: During the first hour, was anybody giving orders?

Apalatea: Well, the usual--get into the trucks, get your equipment, and all that sort of thing.

Marcello: But who was giving the orders?

Apalatea: The sergeants.

Marcello: Were there any officers around?

Apalatea: Yes, they showed up. Yes, they showed up. I can't recall who it was now. I can't even recall who the sergeants were. But they came. You don't move out, anyway, until the officers show up,

Marcello: What did you do during that period before the trucks actually came to take you out in the field?

Apalatea: Well, after the bombing thing was over, we could hear the ambulances going back and forth to the hospital. The hospital was

on the west side of the quadrangle, way up toward...well, it was way out. We just got our equipment and waited for the trucks,

Marcello: What kind of equipment did you have?

Apalatea: A Springfield rifle (chuckle). I don't think that I was issued a pistol then. I think I just had the Springfield and live ammunition.

Marcello: How much ammunition would you have had?

Apalatea: They come in one of those canvas-looking things,

Marcello: A bandoleer?

Apalatea: Yes,

Marcello: Did you have a gas mask and a field pack?

Apalatea: No. We had gas masks, but I don't recall...I think that we took it because it was required. We had steel helmets. We had these saucer-looking helmets--not like they have now.

Marcello: So you did have a regular field pack,

Apalatea: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Describe the trip from Schofield out to your position.

Apalatea: Well, I believe we went down to pretty near Pearl Harbor. We didn't go to our regular positions. I think that we went down near Pearl Harbor, on the west entrance--I can't even recall the name of the place--and that is where we stayed until it was pretty secure.

Marcello: Was this near the beach?

Apalatea: Well, it was inland a little way and quite a way back west from

the Pearl Harbor entrance.

Marcello: What did you do when you went into that position?  
What activity took place there?

Apalatea: Mostly, we secured the place in case of any landings or anything. Also, going down...you traveled downhill from Schofield, you know, like, going to Honolulu or Pearl Harbor, and then we would see all of the ships turned over and ships burning and whatnot,

Marcello: Describe this scene in as much detail as you can remember.

Apalatea: We couldn't see who was hurt or anything. It was all smoke-- just a lot of smoke. You could tell that something happened down there. You could tell that there were bombs.

Marcello: What kind of thoughts were going through your mind when you saw those ships burning in the harbor?

Apalatea: Well, we were just wondering when they was going to land (chuckle). You know, we were expecting an invasion. In fact, we thought...see, what they did after the attack, I think they pulled out what ships could travel and made them get out of Pearl Harbor, and that is what we thought was coming in for a landing because through the fieldglasses they could pick up those ships out there, and you couldn't tell whose ships they were. We thought that they were ready for an invasion.

Marcello: What kind of digging in did you do in preparation for this coming invasion?

Apalatea: You are required...anytime that you have live ammunition, you are

supposed to dig a foxhole, and I think that we probably did. I think that we stayed there for about a week. We didn't stay there,..we stayed there in that position for about a week and then went back to our regular position.

Marcello: Did you ever get any chow the first day?

Apalatea: No, we didn't get any chow the first day.

Marcello: What took place that evening down there in that position?

Apalatea: Well, in the first place, that first night...I think that we may have gone up to Manimahua at first, come to think about it, because we could see all the smoke and everything. That was the first time that we had seen Honolulu blacked out. I think that was our first night, and then we went down by Pearl Harbor because... well, it was just nothing, It was all black. We didn't have a light or anything. It was all just blacked out in Honolulu. Some of us had radios, and we could hear Webley Edwards, I think, telling the people to be calm. He was on the radio station there, and I think that I heard him telling people to be calm.

Marcello: Did you hear any gunfire that evening?

Apalatea: No, no, we didn't hear no gunfire.

Marcello: What did you personally do that evening?

Apalatea: I can't recall. I can't recall what I did. You didn't move much at night, especially in the dark, because you could get shot even in your own ground, You never move at night,

Marcello: What did you do in the days following the attack, such as December 8 and then on?

Apalatea: I think that we stayed up there for about a week or something, and then I think,,I don't know how many days we stayed there or how long we stayed down there near Pearl Harbor until we secured. Then we went into jungle training, and also in our battalion they formed a,,right then I quit clerking. I went to H Company, and I was handling a machine gun. I decided that I had had all I wanted and that I wanted to be out in the field.

And we formed then what we called the suicide squad. You probably will not get this anywhere else, but they had about three or four truckloads,,enough men to make up about three or four truckloads--not the big trucks but the little trucks--and they were to repel any parachutists that might come in the area. We trained and trained and trained for a month on that, and pretty soon they,,I don't know whether it was about the time about the Battle of Midway or along in there that they decided that they weren't coming (chuckle)--because the Navy and the Air Force beat them up pretty well there at Midway.

Marcello: Now did you join that particular unit voluntarily?

Apalatea: Oh, yes, it was voluntary.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join it?

Apalatea: Oh, I don't know--just crazy (chuckle). We trained and trained and trained, but it broke up after awhile when there was no danger.

Marcello: What kind of training did you participate in?

Apalatea: Well, then after that everybody went into...

Marcello: No, I mean, what kind of training did you undergo when you were in this so-called suicide squad.

Apalatea: Oh, what we did, they trained us at night by signals where to go and where to place your machine gun and where to hit--what you were supposed to do when an attack comes. I don't know how long we were at that. It wasn't right after Pearl Harbor; it was a little while after that. I don't know whether the Japs lost their fleet or not. I think that they were coming toward Midway. It was a little later. The fellow that we had training us, I couldn't even tell you his name. He was good. It was all hand signals.

Marcello: When did you finally leave the Hawaiian Islands?

Apalatea: Before I answer that, I wanted to tell you that the whole regiment went into jungle training, and I mean we trained hard! They had real jungles back in the center part of Oahu, and we trained a long time there.

I think we left either in November of 1942...I believe that it was 1942 when we left, and they issued us underwear like we were going to Alaska. They had all our stuff freighted, and they issued us all "longies," you know, "long johns," and everybody thought that we were going to Alaska, and we did, too (chuckle). Our movement was a secret, and we went out first--the 25th Division--and we went out in cattle cars. We went directly to Pearl Harbor and sailed out of Pearl Harbor, and we went south,

Marcello: And where did you go?

Apalatea: We were to go to Australia and New Guinea, I believe.

See, we was ahead of the 24th, and the 24th Division ended up in New Guinea. That was where we were to go. Then they changed our orders to New Caledonia. We was twenty-five days going over.

Marcello: Well, that is probably a pretty good place to end this interview, Mr. Apalatea, I want to thank you very much for having participated. You said a lot of interesting and important things, and I am sure that historians will find your comments most valuable when they will be able to use them.

Apalatea: Well, I hope that I have told you everything that you wanted to know,

Marcello: Well, thank you very much.

Apalatea: Yes.