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Interview with
CHARLEY FENOGLIO
December 7, 1981

Place of Interview: Ft. Worth, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald Marcello

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Approved: Charley Fenoglio
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Charley Fenoglio

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Date: December 7, 1981

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Charley Fenoglio for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 7, 1981, in Fort Worth, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Fenoglio in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the battleship USS Pennsylvania during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Fenoglio, 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. Fenoglio: I was born on October 19, 1918, in Montague, Texas, and I was a farmer. I graduated from high school in Montague and went into the Navy in June of 1939.

Dr. Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the Navy in 1939?

Mr. Fenoglio: I got tired of picking cotton (chuckle).

Dr. Marcello: In other words, there was no patriotism or anything like that involved in your decision.

- Fenoglio: Well, I needed money, too, you know, and I tried to get in in 1938. Then, at that time, they didn't want you in the Navy; I mean, there was just a small quota, and I think that there were about four a month going out of Wichita Falls. So the recruiter in Wichita Falls, well, it seemed to me like, was getting his own buddies, so I went to Ardmore, Oklahoma, and got in. He put me on a list, and six months later I got in.
- Marcello: Why did you select the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?
- Fenoglio: Well, it had faster advancement, and I just,..well, I had a buddy that went into the Navy from Montague, and he liked it, so I figured that I would like it, too.
- Marcello: What part did economics play in your decision to join the Navy? In other words, you mentioned that you joined in 1939, and even at that late date, the country still was not completely out of the Depression or anything like that. So I was wondering if perhaps you joined for some economic reason.
- Fenoglio: Well, I wanted a trade. Just like I said, I wanted to get off of the farm.
- Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?
- Fenoglio: In San Diego.
- Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp?
- Fenoglio: Oh, yes. We were supposed to go three months and then come home on boot leave. That is when Germany went into Czechoslovakia, and they cancelled all boot leave, and I went

up to Long Beach, California, aboard the Pennsylvania.

Marcello: So how long were you actually in boot camp then?

Fenoglio: Three months.

Marcello: You did spend the entire three months in boot camp, but you didn't get your leave?

Fenoglio: That is right. They just sent us aboard ship.

Marcello: Did you have any choice as to where your assignment would be after you got out of boot camp, or were you simply assigned to the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: They asked us. I wanted the USS Texas or the USS Houston. That was my first and second choice, but I got the Pennsylvania.

Marcello: Why did you want the USS Texas or the USS Houston?

Fenoglio: Because I was from Texas (chuckle).

Marcello: In looking back, I guess that it is a good thing that you didn't get aboard the USS Houston.

Fenoglio: That is right. It is the one that got hit around Java, I think.

Marcello: And even the survivors spent the next three-and-a-half to four years in prisoner-of-war-camps.

Fenoglio: That is right. That's right.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going aboard a battleship?

Fenoglio: Well, I was liking it. I wanted the experience. But after I got aboard, I kind of wished that I had gotten a smaller ship.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fenoglio: Well, they were more friendly and not nearly as strict. They

had more inspections aboard a battleship, and I happened to get the admiral's ship, and they were more strict--more inspections.

Marcello: In other words, the Pennsylvania was the flagship for the Pacific Fleet, was it not?

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: Was there some prestige involved in being a battleship sailor, however?

Fenoglio: Well, it was. Whenever we pulled into Honolulu, why, we always had a show, where the other ships wouldn't have. We would get all of the...oh, heck, what do you call them... those hula-hula girls, you know, and they would have a hula band. We would have them aboard, where the other ships wouldn't. And we would have the best movies aboard the flagship.

Marcello: What kind of a reception did you get when you initially went aboard the Pennsylvania? After all, you were strictly a "boot," I am sure, in the eyes of the old hands aboard that ship.

Fenoglio: Well, you got all of the dirty work. You started from the bottom, and after you were on there for a little while, why, you either got compartment cleaning or mess cooking.

Marcello: I assume, then, that you were initially assigned to the deck force,

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. I was in the Third Division, and every Friday we

holystoned the deck, and that is what I hated. We would have a field day on Friday. We had a brick with a hole in the top, and a broom handle, and we would sand the deck down, and then we would run it up and down on the teakwood and clean it on Friday. That was for Saturday morning inspections.

Marcello: That holystoning of the deck has always intrigued me mainly because, I guess, it is a way of life that has disappeared from the Navy. Wouldn't they also put some water on there during the holystoning process?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes--sand and water. They would sand it and water it down first, and then we would get them bricks and run them up and down the teakwood. It would clean it up.

Marcello: What color would that wood come up when you holystoned it?

Fenoglio: Well, it was a kind of a...that would be hard to say. A lot of times we would holystone it whether it needed it or not. In other words, I have swept the whole length of the deck and only end up with broom straws--just to be doing something.

Marcello: You also mentioned that, as a part of your initial activities aboard the Pennsylvania, you were assigned mess cooking. Describe how that worked.

Fenoglio: Back then, why...of course, they did away with this when the war started. We used to have all of our tables up--on the overhead. Each mess cook would have about two tables to feed about twenty sailors. Each mess cook would help the other to take the tables down from overhead and set them up,

and then he would go and get the food and bring it down. Whenever chow call would go, he would have his twenty men-- usually around twenty, ..eighteen to twenty-two men with the two tables--and then you would have to clean them up. Whenever they got done, they put the tables back up overhead, sweep and swab the deck, and that was his duty.

Of course, after the war started, we went to cafeteria-style and did away with all of that because that was too dangerous. Everytime that we would fire the 14-inch guns, we would have to take them tables down and set them on the floor.

Marcello: Did you enjoy mess cooking, or did you find it to be rather distasteful?

Fenoglio: Well, I liked it in a way because on every payday, why, he gets a few tips. Back then, you know, you was getting \$21 a month when you first started, and after three months you went up to \$36. Every little bit of money, why, it would help.

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like aboard the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: Well, at that time we had hammocks. We had a hammock storage place, and whenever taps went, why, we would break out the hammocks and hang them up. That was all done away with after the war,.,,that is, most of the hammocks. We went on to cots.

Marcello: Describe the so-called "swinging" of the hammocks.

Fenoglio: Well, it was nice in rough weather because it held its level,

you know. It didn't do...like a cot, it swung with the ship, where the hammock kept its level. It made no difference how the ship rolled,

Marcello: Did you personally enjoy sleeping in hammocks?

Fenoglio: Well, I did in a way, except taking them down and putting them up (chuckle),

Marcello: Was that a hassle to do that?

Fenoglio: That is one of the main reasons that I got out of the deck force. I put in for the electrical division, and I was actually aboard about a year before I went down to "E" Division, which was electrical. Then one thing about the deck force, they had to wear the blues all of the time, and I wanted anywhere that I could wear dungarees. So whenever I got down below deck in the engineer's force, why, I could wear dungarees.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that after a year aboard the Pennsylvania, you went down to the "E" Division. Had you, over that period of time, developed an interest in electricity and so on?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. That was my main purpose. They assigned you to...well, right there, again, you started from the bottom. The first duty was the dead board of the main distribution system. I would make coffee for the guy that ran the switchboard, and then I had to go up and get chow rations. Then we would have a watch that was from like four to eight o'clock or twelve to four, and we would have that duty, I guess, about every two or three days.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had to get chow rations. Would you

explain that?

Fenoglio: Well, we would have to go up to the mess hall, and we would tell them where we were from, and they would give us rations for maybe two or three guys or ever how many people there were. I would take it down to the station, and we would have a chow ration at midnight. Usually, it was for midnight,

Marcello: So this was more or less like a snack or something?

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were striking to become a electrician's mate, Describe the on-the-job training that you received as you progressed in your goal to become an electrician's mate.

Fenoglio: Well, there are several divisions even in the "E" Division. There was communications, which was "IC," and you had power and lighting and distribution. Well, I was first put in distribution, and we would take ground readings every morning, and if there were certain circuits that were grounded, then the electrician would chase them down the next day. Then we had a "E" Division manual. When we were on watch, we would study those. I studied for...at that time...it was before the war, and a lot of those electricians down there were jealous. They didn't want you to get ahead of them. I would ask some questions, and they wouldn't give you a full answer. So unless you got the right man to ask those questions, well, you wouldn't get ahead.

Marcello: Did you find the right man?

Fenoglio: Once in awhile. There was one guy down there that would never

give you the right answers because he didn't want you to get ahead of him.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were studying these manuals in addition to getting on-the-job training. Is it not true that at that time you had to pass a service-wide examination, and then there had to be a spot open for you before you could be promoted?

Fenoglio: That is right. Of course, I went from fireman third...well, from fireman third I went to fireman second automatically. From fireman second I went to third class electrician. We studied for that. Of course, I went into the Navy at just the right time when they opened up. They started opening up all of those advancements. Before that rating was hard to get. But I just happened to hit at the right time, and everytime that I took an exam, I made it.

Marcello: I am glad that you mentioned that because earlier in the interview you had mentioned that one of the reasons that you joined the Navy, as opposed to one of the other branches, was because advancement was more rapid. I was about to interject a question there, but I think that you have answered my question. There was a period of time during that peacetime Navy when advancement was very, very slow.

Fenoglio: That's right! I was talking to a lot of guys that were in there a long time ago, and I would say, "How long have you been in?" "Oh, four years." And they had not made but one advancement in

in four years. In four years, why, I went from seaman to first class electrician, which was awful fast. Some people, it took them fifteen to twenty years to get to first class.

Marcello: As you continued to advance and progress as an electrician's mate, what was your specialty? I don't know if that is a good word to use or not,

Fenoglio: Well, power electrician was what...like I say, there was "IC," power and lighting and distribution. My preference was power--motors and generators.

Marcello: Where was your battle station aboard the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: Turret two. Whenever they hit Pearl Harbor, I was in charge of all four turrets. I held down turret two, and then there was a turret one, three, and four,

Marcello: And you mentioned that you were in charge of all four of those turrets?

Fenoglio: Under the chief. I was, I think, a second class then.

Marcello: In what capacity would you be operating in those turrets, or at least turret two in particular?

Fenoglio: Well, we had our own battle station in turret two--one of the electrical platforms in turret two. If anything went wrong... in other words, if we lost power, we could switch over to batteries, which would last a very short time, and then it wasn't very fast. It wouldn't whip those guns around or elevate them. In other words, it was slower than the regular power,

Marcello: So you were basically concerned with the turret's power train,

so to speak.

Fenoglio: Right.

Marcello: Everything from moving the turrets and the guns in the turrets to the ammunition hoist and things of that nature, I guess.

Fenoglio: The gunners mate in the deck crew...in other words, turret two was operated by the Second Division of the deck crew, and all that I would do was just see that all the electrical equipment was working, All I did was sit on the electrical deck until something went wrong, and then they would give me a buzz.

Marcello: Now you didn't really have anything to do with, in a sense, with turrets one, three, and four, did you?

Fenoglio: That's right. Turret two was all I...of course, each electrician would help each other.

Marcello: But your particular division was in charge of all of those turrets, so to speak.

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: Do you recall when the Pennsylvania moved to Pearl Harbor on a permanent bases?

Fenoglio: We went out there in first of 1940, and we operated out of there until we got hit. We would go out two weeks and in two weeks, out two weeks or maybe three weeks and then back in. We just kept moving,,we stay out there until we got tired of Pearl Harbor (chuckle).

Marcello: So it was in 1940 that the Pennsylvania moved to Pearl Harbor on a permanent basis.

Fenoglio: That's right. The home base was Long Beach when I first went aboard.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going to the Hawaiian Islands on a permanent bases?

Fenoglio: At first I liked it.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fenoglio: Well, I never was out there, and I had heard a lot about it. But after you are out there a year or so, you kind of get tired of it (chuckle).

Marcello: You know, I have heard a lot of people say that. In other words, the islands are restrictive or confining after awhile. It doesn't take you too long before you have seen everything.

Fenoglio: Well, at that time I think that there was about forty or fifty men to each girl out there, so there is your answer right there (chuckle).

Marcello: As you look back on your days in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy, how would you describe the morale aboard the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: Well, the discipline was good, and the morale, I would say, was pretty good at that time because times were hard. You couldn't get a job on the outside. A lot of people would condemn the Navy and say that they were going to get out. Whenever their enlistment was up, they could get \$200 for shipping over. Well, they signed up because the outside was tough.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: Oh, to me it was good because at home, you know, why, we didn't

get the best either. But I have seen guys complain aboard there. They'd complain about anything. Even if we had had a good meal, they would still complain. But I thought that it was all right.

Marcello: I understand that athletics also played an important part in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy,

Fenoglio: It sure did. We had...now that is one advantage on the battleship. We had our own football team. We had a guy on there that played professional before he came aboard. Then we had some good boxers, and we had a baseball team. That's what we were interested in at that time, you know. We would have games between each battleship. Softball was what I was interested in.

Marcello: I also understand that each of the battleships, in particular, was rather proud of its band.

Fenoglio: That's right. We had a darn good band, The Pennsylvania had a good band. I forget now whether they had a "Battle of Bands" or not. But we always had...I know boxing teams from each battleship or from each fleet would compete.

Marcello: I understand that those boxing smokers were very well-attended by the crews.

Fenoglio: They sure were. I tried to make every one of them that I could. I believe that we had most of those boxing smokers at Richardson Recreation Center. I am almost sure that that was Richardson because...I got to thinking about that the other day. I wasn't sure whether it was Richardson or Bloch Recreation Center. But

that is where I was whenever they hit Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: So we have you at Pearl Harbor now, Just a moment ago you mentioned that the Pennsylvania's usual routine was to be out on exercises for approximately two weeks, and then it came back in port for approximately two weeks. Was there a particular time or day of the week when the Pennsylvania would go out on these exercises? Did there seem to be one day that was more common than one of the others?

Fenoglio: I don't think so. I do know that one time we went out just to go across the equator to be "shellbacks." They took us across the equator just for ceremonies, you know, and, of course, we were looking forward to that, but we got pretty well greased up,

Marcello: In other words, you are referring to the initiation that took place whenever a ship crossed the equator.

Fenoglio: We went across it just for that.

Marcello: Which meant that you went from a "pollywog" to a "shellback."

Fenoglio: That's right. I have almost forgot the term, you know.

Marcello: What would the Pennsylvania do when it was out on these exercises? Describe a typical exercise, in other words.

Fenoglio: Sometimes we would have targets. We'd have a target ship that would be pulling targets, and then we would even have drone planes, radio-controlled planes.

Of course, my first battle station when I went aboard ship as a deck crew was down in...I was a powderman in the

14-inch turret, I'd shove the powder bags out, and they'd shove them up to the guns, and then we just listened to them go off.

Marcello: I guess that it is rather impressive, in a sense, when those 14-inch guns are firing a salvo, isn't it?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. At that time, you know, they were telling me that if I was up above, I could see those shells, projectiles, going through the air. It took me a long time, but I finally got... I guess several months or a year later, I finally...after I was an electrician, I could observe one from up above, and I did see those projectiles go through the air.

Marcello: Would the Pennsylvania normally be working with other ships on these exercises?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. We always had at least two destroyers with us.

Marcello: How about any other battleships?

Fenoglio: Yes, sometimes we would have battleships with us. We would always go out as a group. We'd seldom ever be alone--always two destroyers.

Marcello: I would assume that, given the Navy's budget at that time, those 14-inchers would not have been fired too often.

Fenoglio: Not too often, That is right. Of course, everytime that we fired them, we had to take all the mess tables down from above, I mean, from the overhead, and they would have to take off. Then we would have to recover them later. It was a lot of trouble to fire those 14-inch guns.

Marcello: How much emphasis was given to antiaircraft practice in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Fenoglio: Well, we had the 5-inch guns, and we had 3-inch guns, and we had .50-caliber machine guns--which would be hard to man with the 14-inch guns, you know. So actually, we weren't prepared too well for aircraft,

Marcello: I guess that you didn't get the 20-millimeters and the 40-millimeters until after the war started.

Fenoglio: That's right. Whenever we were damaged, we came back to San Francisco, at Hunter's point, and they redid all those antiaircraft guns.

Marcello: On any of these exercises, would you be working with the aircraft carriers?

Fenoglio: Well, I don't recall ever working with them until the war started.

Marcello: That is kind of interesting, too, I think. That seems to indicate to me, at least, that perhaps the battleship was still being looked upon as the backbone of the fleet rather than the aircraft carrier.

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: No one really knew how important aircraft carriers were going to be in this war coming up.

Fenoglio: That's right. I didn't think that they could ever damage a battleship because of all the armor plate. The captain's battle station had armor twelve inches thick, and the second

floor on the battleship was about six inches thick. The turrets were approximately twelve inches thick.

Marcello: And the armor around the engineering spaces was pretty thick, too, wasn't it?

Fenoglio: That's right. The fire rooms and electrical gear all had pretty good armor. All of that was below the second deck, and that is where the second deck had the six-inch armor.

Marcello: As one got closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, what changes, if any, could you detect in the daily routine of the ship during these exercises? Could you detect any changes?

Fenoglio: No, I couldn't.

Marcello: How about General Quarters drills? Did you seem to have more of those than usual?

Fenoglio: Is that before, you mean?

Marcello: Yes, as we get closer to December 7, 1941.

Fenoglio: Actually, I couldn't tell any difference. I know we were just hanging around out there for a long time, and, of course, everybody wanted to come back to the States. I just didn't see anything to indicate that we were getting close to a Pearl Harbor attack.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs and things of that nature?

Fenoglio: Not too much at that time.

Marcello: Did you read the daily newspaper or anything like that?

Fenoglio: Well, the ship had its own newspaper, and if there was any news, why, they would distribute it every day, you know. Of course, it was small and a lot of work to it. There wasn't...other than radios...well, that was our best communications.

Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around in your bull sessions, did the conversation ever turn to the possibility of a Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?

Fenoglio: Not a bit. Not a bit at that time, I say not a bit--not enough to even notice.

Marcello: At that time, and, again, I am referring to that period before December 7, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what kind of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Fenoglio: Well, we didn't have any love for them, as far as that is concerned. We knew that the State Department or the secretary of state or the country was...of course, at that time they were fighting in China. We had some of our planes out there--the Flying Tigers, you know. In fact, I had a cousin out in the Flying Tigers, and I knew that was going on. We didn't have any love for them, as far as that is concerned,

Marcello: Suppose war did come between the United States and Japan. What were your thoughts concerning the outcome?

Fenoglio: I didn't think that we'd have any trouble, but, of course, I didn't think that they could do that to Pearl Harbor, either.

Marcello: What made you feel so safe being there at Pearl Harbor?

Fenoglio: I just didn't think that they could do that much damage. It just fooled me,

Marcello: Also, I think that we have to remember that Japan is a pretty long way from Hawaii,

Fenoglio: That's right, It just fooled me altogether, If I was a betting man, I would have lost a lot of money.

Marcello: I am sure that you must have had some of the old Asiatic sailors aboard the Pennsylvania. Did they ever talk very much about the Japanese?

Fenoglio: We had a few. In fact, I almost got shanghaied. You know, every so often, as the terms expired, they sent those sailors back home, and they had to replace those. We only had four firemen second class aboard the Pennsylvania, and they wanted two for the Asiatic Fleet. They asked for volunteers. That was about six months or a year before--about six months before--and I didn't want to volunteer, but they had to shanghai two of them or get two volunteers. So I am sure glad they didn't get me, or else I would have been over there.

Marcello: You didn't want any parts of the Asiatic Station?

Fenoglio: That's right!

Marcello: Why was that?

Fenoglio: Well, I have seen so many people from the area, and whenever

you got out there, you were out there until your term expired, and I wanted to come to the States every once in awhile.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had seen a good many people who had been on the Asiatic Station. Describe what those Asiatic sailors were like.

Fenoglio: Well, to us they always seemed to be kind of odd. In other words, if a guy was a little odd or something like that, we'd say, "You must have been in the Asiatic Fleet." Come to think of it, back then, if a guy had a bad record, well, they shanghaied him and got him off. When one of these openings would come up for the Asiatic Fleet--to replace somebody--they'd shanghai him--just put him on that list and send him to the Asiatic Fleet whether they wanted to go or not.

Marcello: I understand that most of those guys had a bunch of tattoos.

Fenoglio: Right. Some of them. That's right. Whenever we seen a guy with a lot of tattoos, they were from...I imagine that it didn't cost very much to have them put on out there.

Marcello: I have also heard it said, however, that most of those Asiatic people were pretty good sailors. A lot of them had been in the Navy a long time and knew what had to be known about handling a ship and so on.

Fenoglio: They were usually twenty-year men. A lot of those,..of course, as I said, you know, the advancement was slow, and they would be out there for fifteen or twenty years and come back as a third class or second class (chuckle).

Marcello: When the Pennsylvania came into Pearl Harbor after having been out on one of these exercises, describe what your personal liberty routine was.

Fenoglio: Well, back then I think that we had port-and-starboard liberty.

Marcello: Which meant what?

Fenoglio: Half of the ship could leave off at one time. Port-and-starboard means that half of the ship could be off at one time. Of course, when war started, we went to four-section liberty. There was one...a fourth of the ship went. But in peacetime we had port-and-starboard, and if anybody wanted to take off at night, of course, they had to be back by eight o'clock in the morning.

Marcello: How about a weekend? How would the port-and-starboard liberty work on a weekend?

Fenoglio: You could take the forty-eight hours. You could take off Friday after work and come back on Monday morning.

Marcello: And then the next weekend, would the other section have the liberty?

Fenoglio: That's right. They would alternate.

Marcello: In other words, the ship would always be half-manned when the Pennsylvania was in port.

Fenoglio: In peacetime, Like I said, in wartime, we went to four-section, and one-fourth went, and three-fourths would be on board.

Marcello: What did you do when you went on liberty?

Fenoglio: Well, at Pearl Harbor we went to the beach or took a tour of

the island, which was nice, and sometimes we would have a certain...we would have our choice of going on recreation, you know, which we could stay out maybe overnight at a camp.

Marcello: Was this the camp up at Nanakuli or someplace like that?

Fenoglio: That's a good question, I remember some word like that, but it has been so long now that I don't remember. It was just camping out in the tents.

Marcello: Did you spend much time down on Hotel Street or Canal Street?

Fenoglio: Well, not too much, Now, of course, we made the rounds, you know, but, then again, I didn't care too much for their drinks out there. We got to where we would just stay on the beach, and if we wanted a beer, we would drink our own beer--American beer, I liked the American beer better than I did theirs.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that, if your particular section had the liberty, you could spend the entire forty-eight hours ashore. This never happened too often, did it?

Fenoglio: Not there. But in the States, why, we did. But a lot of times, when the crew would have liberty, they wouldn't go ashore. A lot of times, even if I had liberty, I wouldn't go ashore.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fenoglio: Well, you just got tired--nothing to do, I say nothing to do--there was just Honolulu, If you got out there...to me there was nothing to do but just the same thing over and over.

Marcello: I have also heard it said that a lot of people couldn't stay ashore because they couldn't afford to stay.

- Fenoglio: That's right. Over there money didn't go as far as it did in the States. On \$36 a month, you were not going far (chuckle).
- Marcello: You had advanced to \$36 a month by this time?
- Fenoglio: That's right. That was one thing for getting into the Navy-- because after four months you went to \$36. In the Army and in the Marines, you stayed at \$21 until you had made the advancement. In the Navy, you at least went to \$36 whether you took an examination or not.
- Marcello: Is it not true, also, that when you went ashore and you were going to stay overnight, didn't you have to have a place to stay? In other words, you almost had to know someone ashore or something like that.
- Fenoglio: Actually, in Honolulu I never did stay all night unless I had reserved...of course, that was during the war. In fact, the Navy took over the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and I went over and spent the weekend. Then we had these camps. Of course, it was supervised by the Navy, but as far as going out there and staying in their hotels and things like that, very few people did.
- Marcello: Well, I think that this more or less brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941, so we will go into this period in a great deal of detail or at least as much as you can remember. That was the time when Christmas was approaching. What preparations were you making for Christmas?
- Fenoglio: None, really, at that time. Of course, we figured that we were

not coming back for Christmas, so there was nothing to prepare for,

Marcello: Okay, now sometime during this period, the Pennsylvania went into dry dock. I want you to describe this period.

Fenoglio: Well, we went into dry dock. We always got our bottom scraped and painted.

Marcello: When did this occur, that is, how far before the actual attack occurred on December 7?

Fenoglio: I don't remember. I wouldn't know exactly how long, but the yard crew was well on their way, scraping the bottom and painting it.

Marcello: Would you have been in there a week or two at least before the attack?

Fenoglio: I figure at least that much. That is something, you know, that I couldn't tell you.

Marcello: How often would the Pennsylvania go into dry dock?

Fenoglio: That is a good question, too. I figure about every two years. I know we were in dry dock at Hunter's Point about the last of 1939. When I first went aboard, we went up to Hunter's Point in San Francisco. Then one time we went into Bremerton, Washington. So actually it occurred about every year or two years.

Marcello: So it was a regular occurrence, then.

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: When the Pennsylvania went into dry dock, how did that affect

you personally? What would you be doing when the Pennsylvania went into dry dock?

Fenoglio: At that time, when we would go into dry dock, we would take our generators off of the line. We would get our power from the beach, So we didn't have to stand any generator watches, and that helped us out a lot, We just went into our regular routine.

Marcello: What kind of maintenance work would you be doing during the dry dock period?

Fenoglio: At that time, as an electrician, we would check...we had our own...like, my station was turret two. We had to check the batteries, and every so often we would have to cycle them. We'd run them down and then run them up, keep them watered, and check for grounds. That was about it, as far as my work was concerned.

Marcello: What would happen to the ammunition and so on when a ship came into dry dock? Would it remain aboard, or would it be taken off?

Fenoglio: It would remain aboard.

Marcello: Do you recall which dry dock you were in?

Fenoglio: Well, at that time there wasn't but one dry dock that would take a battleship, and that was it.

Marcello: It was Dry Dock Number One. Do you recall what other ships were in dry dock with you?

Fenoglio: There were two destroyers up in front of us, but I wouldn't

know their names,

Marcello: The Cassin and the Downes.

Fenoglio: I know one thing--they were pretty well beat up when it was over.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about that Saturday of...let me just back up and talk a little bit more about the Pennsylvania when it was in dry dock. I would assume that there was all sorts of gear and so on strewn all over that ship during this period. Is that right?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. Well, if there was any welding to do or anything that the ship's crew couldn't do, why, we put in assignments, you know, and then the yard would do it,

Marcello: Now actually, when the Pennsylvania went into dry dock, most of that water--I guess all of that water--would be drained out of there, and the Pennsylvania would actually be below the dock or land or whatever, would it not?

Fenoglio: Well, they had...well, I forget now what the ship would settle on, but it seems to me that it was about even with the dock because whenever I got off of the ship, why...it's been so long now, but it seems to me we had that ladder that we walked off from the ship to the dock,

Marcello: Do you recall what you did on that Saturday evening of December 6, 1941?

Fenoglio: Saturday evening?

Marcello: Yes,

Fenoglio: No, I wouldn't know,

Marcello: Did you have liberty?

Fenoglio: If I did, I don't remember it,

Marcello: I know that there was a "Battle of the Bands" going on ashore, and I was wondering if perhaps you had taken part in that,

Fenoglio: No, I don't think that I went anyplace,

Marcello: Normally, when people went on liberty on a Saturday evening and came back aboard, what kind of condition would they be in?

Fenoglio: Well, most of them would be in pretty good condition. Of course, just like I said, people didn't have too much money to drink. But at that time--but I am not sure--I believe the only ones that could stay all night were probably officers. I don't remember. In fact, I know I never did stay all night except if it was put on by the Navy, you know.

Marcello: This is what I was hinting at awhile ago. It seems to me that they had what is called a "Cinderella Liberty," that you had to be back aboard by midnight.

Fenoglio: I believe that it was.

Marcello: And the only way that you could stay overnight was that you had to have an address, In other words, you had to know somebody ashore, and you were going to be staying there or whatever.

Fenoglio: It has been so long now that I don't really recall. I know

one thing--just like I said, I never did stay all night other than if it was put on by the Navy, you know.

Marcello: Okay, so the Pennsylvania is in dry dock, and we drift into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941. I am going to let you pick up the story here and describe the events as they unfolded for you personally.

Fenoglio: Okay. That morning, why, I went...we were at the dry dock, so we either walked to church or we could get a boat. They were sending a boat for anybody that wanted to go to church. Well, I got on the boat with the rest of the church crew, and it was less than a mile. I had rather walk than go by boat.

Marcello: And where were you going to church?

Fenoglio: Richardson Recreation Center. That is the arena where the fights and our drinks and things like that were. Anything that went on, why, they would use that recreation center.

Marcello: About what time did the church crew muster.

Fenoglio: We left, I guess, about seven-thirty. When we got up there, why, church didn't start until eight o'clock. We had about ten more minutes, so I was just outside getting some fresh air. I was standing out there just looking around.

Marcello: What kind of a day was it in terms of temperature and climate and so on?

Fenoglio: Oh, it was pretty. You couldn't ask for a prettier day. Then about five minutes before eight o'clock, a Japanese plane came right above, right over the recreation center there.

Marcello: Did you recognize it, at that time, as a Japanese plane?

Fenoglio: Not right off, but I seen the sun on it--the emblem on it--and I could have hit him with a rock, I believe, if I had had a rock.

Marcello: Now at the time that you saw that plane, had any of the attack occurred yet--to your knowledge?

Fenoglio: Not to my knowledge, not right away. I didn't know until later that there was one guy in my group out there...of course, I didn't notice it, but they had shot him in the stomach. They drug him in there where we had our coke and beer bottles. So he could have shot me because I just sat there looking at him (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so you are outside before service began, and you see this low-flying Japanese airplane coming over. What happens at that point?

Fenoglio: Well, of course, whenever I seen it, why, I began to hear a lot of firing, you know, and then I got a good view. I watched the Oklahoma turn over.

Marcello: Describe that. You are still outside watching at this point.

Fenoglio: Still outside watching it. Of course, there are more planes. And I watched the guys on the Arizona. The Arizona was hit, and smoke was coming out of the stack. There were men out there fighting the fire with a hose, so I guess they still had power. They were out there trying to put the fire out.

Marcello: Let's take these things one step at a time, Awhile ago you

mentioned that you saw the Oklahoma turn over. Describe that.

Fenoglio: Well, there were people out there with the fire hose, and they were going to put out the fire. Of course, I don't think that that lasted long because it didn't take long for the Oklahoma to turn over.

Marcello: Describe the Oklahoma turning over.

Fenoglio: Well, it was just slow but sure. It just kept turning. Of course, for these torpedo planes it was just a good target. The way that the beach was made, you know, from the boat landing, was a straight...these torpedo planes just made a straight shoot for the Oklahoma and the Arizona.

The first guys that I know of that opened fire was the sub base. They had a machine gun tower at the sub base. It didn't take them long to open up. I saw one of the planes...he hit one of the planes, and it went to pieces.

Marcello: Describe what your thoughts were when you saw that huge battleship turn over.

Fenoglio: Oh, man! I thought, "Where are our planes?" I was scared. And I could hear bombs going off out at Hickam Field. I said, "Where is our planes? Why ain't they getting off of the ground?"

Marcello: Now you mentioned that around this same time, you also saw the Arizona blow up. Describe that.

Fenoglio: Well, of course, the Arizona just settled down, you know. It didn't turn over. People were out there, and I could see...I guess that's whenever they dropped something down the stack, or

the torpedo must have hit the fire room, but, anyhow, the smoke was coming out of their stack. It was really afire! Of course, they hit Ford Island.

Marcello: Now you are still watching all of this, and you are still out in front of the Richardson Recreation Arena. About how much time had elapsed?

Fenoglio: Not very much, It was about until we got together. We started back to the ship, We had an officer there with us, so we started back to the ship. We didn't wait for the boat because it was about the same distance, and it was easier to walk, anyhow,

Marcello: Describe your journey back to the ship,

Fenoglio: At that time, whenever we started back, we seen the high-altitude bombers. They were going over. Whenever they started...when we seen them up above and they started bombing, then we got down in the ravine-like or any low place. Then whenever they passed, we got up and went again.

Marcello: Were you, in effect, running back toward your ship?

Fenoglio: Yes, after the high planes--the bombers--went over. I guess that's is what you call them. Of course, they kept their altitude.

Marcello: Well, if you were on your way back to the Pennsylvania when the high-altitude bombers came in, you must have been there at the recreation arena for quite some time because aren't we up to about nine o'clock by now?

Fenoglio: No, no. I got aboard...it didn't take us but about ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes to get back to the ship because, see, we weren't hit. The Pennsylvania wasn't hit until I got aboard. We wasn't hit until that second wave came by.

Marcello: And that was around nine o'clock,

Fenoglio: Nine or ten o'clock. When I went aboard, we wasn't even scratched. There was no damage done. The Pennsylvania was not hit or anything.

Marcello: Where was the Pennsylvania normally docked?

Fenoglio: Being a flagship, we always had the preference where we could walk off and go on liberty because, see, of the admiral. We got the preference.

Marcello: So it was usually over at Ten-ten Dock then?

Fenoglio: Well, I forget the name. I believe that the Ogalala was in our place, where we usually docked. Ogalala was in back of us, and it turned over. So we would have got hit.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get back aboard the Pennsylvania?

Fenoglio: Well, I went to my battle station, which was turret two.

Marcello: What was happening there?

Fenoglio: Well, everybody was at their battle station, and I could hear our gunners whenever the 5-inchers were going off, and we had 3-inch guns. So whenever the high-altitude planes would come over, why, they were firing, and I could hear them going off.

Of course, whenever we took the bomb hit after ten o'clock, I figured that our 14-inch gun went off. I didn't know that we

took a hit until after it was over.

Marcello: Now, actually, I would assume that about all that you could do was to stand-by there in turret two. Obviously, you are not going to fire 14-inch guns at airplanes,

Fenoglio: That's right. But whenever we got hit, I thought that one of them had went off (chuckle).

Marcello: So basically, then, you were just standing-by at your battle station?

Fenoglio: I might as well been eating bread or dinner. There was nothing that I could do.

Marcello: What thoughts were going through your mind? In other words, you were inside, so you really couldn't see what was going on outside; and at the same time, you really didn't have anything to do to pre-occupy your mind. What kind of thoughts were going through your mind?

Fenoglio: Oh, I was just wondering, "Boy, what are we going to do? How did they come in there? Where was our planes?" That was my main worry when we were being hit. I knew that we had a lot of planes out there. "How come aren't they getting off of the ground?"

Marcello: What seemed to be the general tenor of the conversation in that turret? What were other people talking about?

Fenoglio: Well, of course, being an electrician, I was the only one on that deck. I was on the electricial deck. There was nobody to talk to other than by phones, and there wasn't much

to talk about until after it was over. Everybody was on pins and needles.

Marcello: At this point--and, again, I assume that you could only hear this--how much fire to do you think that the Pennsylvania was putting up. Now this is before the bomb actually hit the Pennsylvania.

Fenoglio: Not enough. In fact, we just wasn't prepared to fire at any aircraft.

Marcello: Do you recall the activities of a civilian yard worker who was operating an overhead crane that day?

Fenoglio: No.

Marcello: According to the record, there was a civilian yard worker there in one of the overhead cranes, and when Japanese planes would come by or would come close, he was taking this crane back and forth, I guess, over the top of the Pennsylvania. I was wondering if you had any knowledge of his activities.

Fenoglio: No, I didn't. I do know one thing--we had a great, big crane there on that dock.

Marcello: Now according to the record, that 500-pound bomb hit the Pennsylvania at 9:06 a.m., and it shattered the starboard casemate and whatever else was there. Describe what you recall from the blast.

Fenoglio: Well, just like I said, it sounded like one of our 14-inch guns went off, I didn't dream that we got hit, It hit in the... it got most of our Marines. The Marines were manning those guns

right there, Repair One, I think, was right there. Repair Party Number One was there, and they got quite a few of those people. That is about it, that were killed,

Marcello: How far were you from that blast?

Fenoglio: I would say,..of course, that was right around...that was aft, so that was right around turret three, I guess. I was quite a little ways.

Marcello: So you had all of the superstructure between you and actually where that bomb hit?

Fenoglio: I would say it was fifty yards maybe.

Marcello: Describe the noise when that bomb hit.

Fenoglio: Like I said, I thought that it was a main turret gun that went off. Actually, it didn't jar the ship so very bad. Of course, I didn't know it until everything was over. I started out of turret two, and I seen where they pulled some of the survivors from the hit.

Marcello: Describe what that blast looked like when you saw it.

Fenoglio: Oh, man, what got me was the odor of flesh that was burning, you know! That odor stayed there for days, and it just made you sick.

Marcello: How large a...describe the damage.

Fenoglio: Well, it played heck with our galley, you know, our stoves, where we cooked our meals. That was one of the first jobs that we had to do, was to get the galley going.

Marcello: What kind of a hole does a 500-pound bomb put in the deck

of a ship?

Fenoglio: Now that is where our second deck came in handy, you know. The armor on the second deck stopped it, but it did make a pretty fair hole. Of course, it was the first bomb, you know, that I had ever seen--the damage--but it did pretty good damage.

Marcello: Was that the only hit that the Pennsylvania took?

Fenoglio: That's right.

Marcello: Now how long did you remain there in turret two?

Fenoglio: Oh, I would say until right around noon, until Secure sounded. It was right up around noon, I would say, before they secured us,

Marcello: What happened at that point then?

Fenoglio: Well, that is a good question. I know that we had to get our meals from the dock then, you know, after that. I imagine that we had a muster, you know, to see who was all left,

Marcello: What kind of work were you doing aboard the ship in the aftermath of the attack then?

Fenoglio: Well, our first assignment, as I said, was to get the galley...you know, as an electrician, we had a lot of electrical work to get that...of course, yard workers done a lot, you know. But as a shipboard electrician, one of our main jobs was to get the electricity to the galley and get it going.

Marcello: Did you get involved at all in any of the repairs or evacuation of the dead and wounded or anything like that?

Fenoglio: No, I didn't. I think that the corpsmen or the...actually, I just don't know because I didn't actually get involved in getting rid of the sick or anything like that.

Marcello: You mentioned the distinctive smell of burned flesh awhile ago, so I assume that you were glad that you didn't have to get involved in that activity.

Fenoglio: That's right. I seen parts of a body out there. I should have took more interest, but I didn't, I figured that the ship's hospital crew would take care of that. Of course, a battleship had a pretty good crew of corpsmen and doctors.

Marcello: What kind of a impression did that make upon you when you saw parts of bodies lying around?

Fenoglio: Of course, at that time, you know, as young as I was, I could take it a little better than I could now. It seemed awful, I'll tell you!

Marcello: Now that the attack was over, and you perhaps had a chance to look around, describe the damage that you saw before you as you looked out over the harbor.

Fenoglio: Oh, I couldn't believe it! I just couldn't believe it! The old Ogalala was a minesweeper or a minetender, and it was turned over. That was one of the first thing...you know, we went up on deck to see what all damage was done, which was unbelievable. Of course, then the Nevada took off. It was the

only battleship that was taking off, and it almost blocked the channel,

Marcello: In other words, you could see where it was beached?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. Just to see the damage in the harbor--the Oklahoma turned over and the Arizona burning,..of course, those fires were going for quite a while.

Marcello: How about those two destroyers that were in that dry dock with you? Did you witness their fate?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. Most of their crew was living on the beach, or else there would have been more people killed. What was unbelievable to me, of all the damage, was that only two or three thousand got killed. I don't see how...we were lucky to only lose that many people.

Marcello: Now the Cassin, which was one of those ships in that dry dock forward of you, I guess, also turned over. Did you see it after it had turned over?

Fenoglio: Oh, yes. Of course, somebody pumped water back into the dry dock, you know, whenever all of that was going on. In the meantime, they let the water in to put out the fires, you know, which would help,

Marcello: Otherwise, I also gather, from my notes, that if some water had not been put back in that dry dock, and if the dry dock gate had took a hit, that water would have rushed in there and might have actually pushed the Pennsylvania into those two ships.

Fenoglio: It more than likely would.

Marcello: So I think that that was another reason,,,in fact, I think that that order was given by your captain, that is, to at least partially reflood that dry dock. What did you do the rest of that afternoon?

Fenoglio: Well, that is a good question there, too. I think we just killed time until the night.

Marcello: Were you trying to get that vessel shipshape again? After all, it wasn't ready to go to sea in the condition that it was in right now.

Fenoglio: There was nothing we could do hardly. Actually, there wasn't very much we could do except regroup. The only thing that I could say for me was to regroup and find out all of the damage and start from there.

I know one thing: that night--I would say about ten o'clock that night--we heard that the Japs had made a landing on the island, and we were going down to the Army, and the guy in charge was issuing rifles. There were several guys that got a rifle. I was next in line to get a rifle, and they called out that it was a false alarm, which relieved me. I knew good and well that once we got out there we would shoot each other, you know. We had nobody in charge, and there was no plans. I was sure glad that I didn't have to get that rifle and go out there because I knew good and well we would have probably shot each other--just like we had shot our planes coming in,

Marcello: Describe that incident, that is, when the planes were shot down coming in,

Fenoglio: Of course, everybody was trigger-happy. Whenever they were coming in, I was back to my battle station again in turret two. Of course, each platform had their own phones, and I could hear any conversation that was on them phones. The Enterprise sent her planes in. That's what made me sick. We got the signals wrong, I guess, or no good signals or they got them all switched up, and we shot our own planes down.

Marcello: Did you actually see that happen?

Fenoglio: No, I was in turret two. The only report that I would get would be on the phone.

Marcello: What kind of conversation were you hearing on the telephone at that time?

Fenoglio: Well...

Marcello: I am referring to the time when those planes off the Enterprise were coming in.

Fenoglio: Well, they figured that they were enemy planes first, but then after they shot some down, I guess that they got their signals straight. But all of this was coming from up above, you know. All I could do was just listen on the phone.

Marcello: I am sure that the ship must have been one big rumor mill that night.

Fenoglio: It was! Boy, I mean, we would hear one thing and another! The another thing there that night...see, all of our heads or

toilets...if we had to go to the head, we had to go on the beach, and whenever we left the ship, it was okay; but whenever we came back, we had to tell the officer-of-the-deck, the division officer, in order to get back on (chuckle),

Marcello: So everybody was a little jumpy that night.

Fenoglio: That's right. You had to identify yourself to come back on.

Marcello: How much sleep did you get that night?

Fenoglio: Well, not too much.

Marcello: What did you do in the remaining days then, that is, after the attack, the days immediately following the attack?

Fenoglio: After that, why, as an electrician our main job was getting the galley going and, of course, the rest of the electrical things. The big job was for the yard crew. The yard crew... their job was to get the hole fixed up and put a plate back over it to get us back to Hunter's Point in San Francisco.

Marcello: And when did the Pennsylvania finally get out of Pearl Harbor and go back to San Francisco?

Fenoglio: I can remember one thing...Christmas Day...I think that it was Christmas night. On the way back, for several nights, I slept on the turret deck, my battle station, and on Christmas night I remember being on that battle station going back to California,

Marcello: You were sleeping outside then?

Fenoglio: Well, I say deck. It was the electrical deck in turret two.

Marcello: Oh, I see. Now in the aftermath of the attack, were you able

to send any word home to your parents that you were alive and well?

Fenoglio: I forget now, but I believe that I did. It was not as hard then as it was later on when I was aboard a carrier that got sunk. They wouldn't let me write home and tell my mother and dad that it was sunk, but they would let the newspapers tell it. So the newspaper told my mother and dad it was sunk before I could tell them, which wasn't right.

Marcello: I am sure that in the aftermath of the attack, the water was just covered with oil and fire and that sort of thing. Did you notice that?

Fenoglio: No, I didn't.

Marcello: In the aftermath of the attack, what kind of emotions did you have? What kind of an attitude did you now have toward the Japanese?

Fenoglio: Well, I figured that they had more firepower than I thought they did. In fact, I was wondering how we were going to get regrouped and come back like we did.

Marcello: How did you now feel about Japanese personally?

Fenoglio: Well, I didn't have any love for them, I'll tell you that. They sure surprised me, I didn't think they had that much firepower, and I was wondering how we were going to come back. We were completely disabled there!

Marcello: I have a couple of questions to end this interview, Mr. Fenoglio. This interview is taking place on December 7, 1981, forty years

later. Whenever December 7 rolls around, do you ever have very many thoughts or feelings about that day back in 1941?

Fenoglio: I believe that I remember it every year. Of course, the newspapers will not let you forget it.

Marcello: What do you usually remember most? What thing usually flashes through your mind when you think back to that day?

Fenoglio: My view. I got a good view. I guess that I got just about as good a view as anyone. I was at a place where I could see all of the attack, you know. But, of course, just like I told you, that first attack didn't last long. The second attack, I didn't see any of that.

Marcello: I also know that you are a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. Why?

Fenoglio: Well, of course, I didn't know that they had that until maybe a couple of years ago. Whenever I found out about it, I wanted to join it. I hope to get in touch with some of the buddies that I know.

Marcello: Okay, I think that probably that is a good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk with me. You have said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I am sure historians will find your comments most valuable.

Fenoglio: Well, I hope so. It was quite an experience, I'll tell you (chuckle).