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Interview with

H T HUDGINS, JR

May 5 1984

Place of Interview: Norfolk, Virginia

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: *H. T. Hudgins, Jr.*
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Hezekiah T. Hudgins, Jr.

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date of Interview: May 5, 1984

Place of Interview: Norfolk, Virginia

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Hezekiah Hudgins for the North Texas Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 5, 1984, in Norfolk, Virginia. I'm interviewing Mr. Hudgins in order to get his reminiscences, experiences, and impressions while he was aboard the destroyer USS Bagley during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Hudgins, 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. Hudgins: Well, I was born in 1921 in Mathews County, a small county on the Chesapeake Bay, where most all the gentlemen went to sea. My people went to sea all the time. Naturally, that's why I chose the Navy instead of the other services. I finished high school there, and then I went into the Navy.

Dr. Marcello: When did you go into the Navy?

Mr. Hudgins: I went into the Navy on the fourteenth day of February, 1940.

Marcello: Had you always been ready to go into the Navy, or was there something around the time of high school graduation that may have influenced your decision to enter the Navy?

Hudgins: No, I think that by coming from a seafaring community, I chose to go into the Navy. I was more familiar and, I guess, felt more comfortable by being in the Navy...on the water.

Marcello: How difficult or easy was it to get into the Navy when you entered in 1940?

Hudgins: The physical qualifications were pretty rigid at the time. You had to be in good physical condition. They were trying to up-build the Navy at the time, and the enlistment service at the time you went in was for six years.

Marcello: I assume you had to take certain aptitude tests and so on, also, to get in?

Hudgins: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello:- Where did you take your boot camp?

Hudgins: In Norfolk, Virginia.

Marcello: So you weren't too far from home then.

Hudgins: No, I wasn't too far from home. That's right, sir (chuckle).

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record?

Hudgins: No, I don't think there's anything there.

Marcello: How long did boot camp last at that time?

Hudgins: I believe that, if I remember correctly, it was three months.

Marcello: So it was the normal Navy boot camp.

Hudgins: That's correct.

Marcello: Okay, where did you go from boot camp?

Hudgins: I was transferred from the boot camp to an old four-stacker destroyer, the USS Greer, the 145, which had the neutrality patrol off of Cape Henry.

Marcello: This was the Greer?

Hudgins: That was the Greer, and later on she was one of the first ships that got fired upon in the Atlantic. But I wasn't aboard her at the time.

Marcello: How long did you remain aboard the Greer?

Hudgins: I remained aboard the Greer until the last of August, when they were sending the old four-stack cruisers and a lot of four-stacker destroyers to Russia, and I was transferred to the West Coast to go aboard the USS Bagley.

Marcello: And when did that occur?

Hudgins: That occurred in August.

Marcello: Of 1940?

Hudgins: 1940.

Marcello: Although this really has nothing to do with Pearl Harbor, I'm somewhat intrigued by your stay aboard the Greer. Were you involved in the Atlantic patrol?

Hudgins: Yes, at the time. It was the neutrality patrol.

Marcello: How would they normally take place? What would you do?

Hudgins: Well, at the time I was a young man in the Navy. At the time I was in the deck force. The eventful part about it

was that they used to stand watches in the crow's nest. It was quite an experience when you got up there in rough weather in the Atlantic, and you looked down and you saw water, and you didn't see your ship (chuckle). That was quite something to get used to, and so was the type of living quarters that was on the old four-stackers.

I remember one time when the USS America came out for a trial run, and I happened to be in the crow's nest at the time to watch. I gave her a port...we'd report that a ship was so many degrees off of port bow, starboard bow, or whatever we were reporting. I reported on the starboard bow down to the bridge, and about the time that the officer-of-the-deck picked the ship up, she was on the port bow, so I got a "good correction" on that.

The other experience I remember on the old four-stacker was the voice tubes that they had at the station. They weren't marked properly, and you had to blow in them as a whistle, and that was quite an experience, too, of being aboard an old four-stacker (chuckle).

Marcello: Now you mentioned that in late summer, 1940, you were transferred to the Bagley.

Hudgins: Yes, sir.

Marcello: Describe the physical appearance of the Bagley. What kind of ship was it in comparison to the Greer?

Hudgins: Well, the Bagley was still in Hawaii. I went aboard the

"Lady Lex," the aircraft carrier Lexington, for further transfer. Then when the Bagley came into San Diego, we were transferred down by cruiser. To my opinion the Bagley was a very graceful lady. She was very slick. She had all the modern conveniences, although she was put in commission in 1937 in Norfolk Navy Yard. It was quite a change. I was glad to be aboard her.

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

Hudgins: Well, at that time the bunks, your lockers, everything, was very, very clean. At that time, during peacetime, the living conditions aboard the Bagley were very good.

Marcello: Was that because it was not up to its full complement? In other words, there was more room than there would be later on?

Hudgins: That's correct, sir. I've forgotten the complement. If I'm not mistaken, it was less than a hundred men, which made living conditions very nice aboard the "can."

Marcello: And during wartime what was your complement approximately?

Hudgins: It almost doubled. You see, during the war they doubled up on the bunks, and they doubled up on all the refinements that you had enjoyed aboard the ship and all, and it made living conditions a little bad.

Marcello: So during the war, you actually even doubled up on the bunks?

Hudgins: That's right.

Marcello: What kind of a feeder was the Bagley?

Hudgins: Well, it all depended on the cook that you had and how he could prepare the meals. Some of the meals during the war were pretty rough. I can remember one time--and this is hard to say in the United States Navy--that we completely ran out of chow...out of food. That was the time that was right after Pearl, and we was supposed to run down and hit Bougainville and that area. We were gone so long that we ran completely out of food. So it depended on how long we stayed at sea and how much the ships could supply us.

Marcello: How about during that pre-Pearl Harbor period? Again, my questions during this part of the interview are focusing on the pre-Pearl Harbor period. What kind of a feeder was it at that time?

Hudgins: Very good. Very good feeder. I had no complaints except on Saturday when we had beans every Saturday (chuckle).

Marcello: That was a Navy tradition, wasn't it?

Hudgins: That was a Navy tradition, sir.

Marcello: Beans for breakfast.

Hudgins: Beans for breakfast.

Marcello: Now by the time you went aboard the Bagley, were you still on the deck force?

Hudgins: No, I had transferred to below decks.

Marcello: And what rating were you striking for at that time?

Hudgins: By that time I was fireman third class. I never made fireman

second class until I went aboard the Bagley.

Marcello: How slow or how fast was promotion in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Hudgins: Well, at that time it was, I guess, considered relatively slow.

Marcello: Why did you want to switch out of the deck force and get down into the black gang?

Hudgins: Well, I was interested in machinery, and I had a lot of friends that were down there, and that's why I chose to go below decks.

Marcello: And what kind of functions were you performing at that time when you went aboard the Bagley?

Hudgins: I was in the fire room. I was a fireman.

Marcello: When was it that the Bagley took off and headed for the Hawaiian Islands on a more or less permanent basis with you aboard?

Hudgins: Well, she only came back...she was permanently stationed in Hawaii before I went aboard, and she came back to the States for minor overhaul, and that's when I went aboard the Bagley. We went back to Pearl, and, of course, during that procedure time, before we went back to the States again, we would go one week with the battleships, one week with the cruisers, one week with the destroyers, one week with the aircraft carriers, then another week with the subs, and then the holding of battle maneuvers.

Marcello: And these would usually take place out of Pearl Harbor?

Hudgins: Off of Pearl, yes.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Let's talk a little bit more about those training exercises. When would the Bagley go out? What day of the week?

Hudgins: We generally went out on Monday.

Marcello: And when would it normally come in?

Hudgins: We'd come back in on Fridays.

Marcello: And that was more or less a routine?

Hudgins: More or less a routine, yes, sir.

Marcello: In other words, it wouldn't have taken a genius too long to discern that pattern?

Hudgins: That's correct, sir.

Marcello: What would the Bagley do when it was out on these maneuvers?

Hudgins: Well, we used to hold battle maneuvers, like, they would try at night to sneak in on the other battleships or whatever it was. At that time we used to use a searchlight when you'd go in to spot them before they'd spot you. That was the case before radar and all that. Then toward the end of the week, we used to--like most of the ships--fire at the drones.

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

Hudgins: I'd say there was quite a bit given on that. It was the last of the week, and there was quite a bit given to it.

Marcello: What kind of a armament did you have to use against planes?

Hudgins: Well, we only had four 5-inch and four .50's.

Marcello: You didn't get the 20-millimeters or the 40-millimeters until after the war started?

Hudgins: We didn't get the 20-millimeters until way into the war, and that was in the Pacific, and we had to put them on ourselves.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as conditions between the two countries continued to get worse, could you, even in your position, detect any changes in the training routine of the Bagley?

Hudgins: Yes. Our commanding officer would give us lectures, and he used to always state that there was going to be a war between the two countries, and he drilled us very, very hard. Closer toward the end, the harder he drilled us, and I think that is one factor why we survived.

Marcello: Did you seem to be having more general quarters drills, for instance?

Hudgins: Yes, sir.

Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around in bull sessions and talked about the possibilities of war, did the subject of an attack at Pearl Harbor ever come up?

Hudgins: No. No, it didn't.

Marcello: In other words, war might come between the two countries, but not there,

Hudgins: Well, they were expecting it somewhere out there, but we didn't know.

Marcello: Suppose war did come between the United States and Japan.

Did you and your buddies have any doubt about the outcome?

Hudgins: No, I don't...that's a hard question, sir. If you don't have confidence in yourself or the men you are serving with... and we were of a family then--we pulled together--and I think that's another deciding factor why we survived.

Marcello: You brought this up, and I think we should pursue it further. What was the morale like aboard the Bagley in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Hudgins: The morale was very high.

Marcello: To what do you attribute that?

Hudgins: Well, I contribute that to the caliber of men we had aboard and our commanding officer.

Marcello: Can you elaborate on both of those, that is, the caliber of the men.

Hudgins: Well, all of them had high school educations. They all seem to have had good bringing up, had good morals. The commanding officer gave the men credit. He talked to you like you was a man, not a number. It takes many different things for a group to pull together, but it just seemed at that time that that group had the proper thing going for them for unity.)

Marcello: Plus, everybody was a volunteer, also, aboard the Bagley.

Hudgins: No, we were all regulars then. We were all in the regular Navy.

Marcello: But, I mean, there were no draftees. You were not taking any draftees.

Hudgins: No, not at that time, sir.

Marcello: Everybody was aboard because they wanted to be there,

Hudgins: That's right, sir.

Marcello: I know that in a lot of cases there was a great deal of emphasis put upon sports and athletic competition and so on in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy as a morale booster. Was sports and athletic competition given a rather large role aboard the Bagley?

Hudgins: No, it wasn't, sir, because at the time most of us had only daytime liberty in Pearl. As a matter of fact, at the time of the attack, there was 37,000 American servicemen on the Island of Oahu, so our liberty was limited. Although these facilities were available to us, I think most of us chose to go on liberty and do as they chose to.

Marcello: Did the Bagley ever get involved in any of the inter-fleet competition relative to getting the efficiency rating and things of that nature?

Hudgins: Oh, yes. We all tried below decks for that, but I don't recall of us getting any "E" rating. If we did I don't remember, sir.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine for the Bagley since we brought this up just a moment ago. First of all, how was the liberty organized aboard the ship?

Hudgins: Well, it's more like you had port-and-starboard. Half of the crew had, say, today, and the other half had tomorrow off. Of course, there in Pearl we just had the little small liberty

boat. At that time they only had a very small landing at Pearl for the liberty parties. It was quite an experience getting ashore and getting back to your ship at that time (chuckle).

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

Hudgins: I used to love to go down to Waikiki Beach. I always loved to eat, and I was more of a loner, I guess. I loved to go and get what I would want to eat, and I would love to go down to Waikiki Beach and the Royal Hawaiian. I have a lot of favorite memories of that place. As a matter of fact, when I go back, I stay there. I have a lot of pleasant memories of Pearl.

Marcello: You mentioned that one of the things that you would do when you went on liberty was get something to eat--have dinner. You know, a lot of men say that even though the Navy chow was generally pretty good, it was still nice to have a different kind of meal for a change.

Hudgins: Well, it's like our wives, you know. They're all good cooks, but they enjoy going out to dinner--enjoying someone else's cooking (laughter). That's the best way I can put it, sir.

Marcello: What was the attraction of Hotel Street to the men of the fleet?

Hudgins: Well, that comes, sir, I think, to the caliber of men. We're all different, I guess to a certain degree it was very attractive. To another degree, no.

Marcello: There were all kinds of places down there, I guess, where a sailor could get rid of his money rather quickly.

Hudgins: That's correct, sir. That's correct, sir. It was all kinds of...well, as they said later on, "all working for the American dollar," as the song went. Like I was saying, I think it goes back to the individual as to what his enjoyments were and his bringing up and all.

Marcello: Now when you had liberty, it is true, is it not, that you couldn't stay overnight unless you had permission...

Hudgins: That's right, sir.

Marcello: ...or were married or...

Hudgins: That's right sir.

Marcello: ...above a certain rank?

Hudgins: Yes, sir.

Marcello: Why was that? Why did they restrict liberty in that way?

Hudgins: Well, there was so many. As I quoted earlier in the tape, there was 37,000 men. I didn't realize it at the time. Just here a few years ago, I was talking to a gentleman in the Army, and there was certain parts of the Army that when we were in, they didn't have liberty. The island and the places could not take care of them.

Marcello: I guess they didn't want those sailors sleeping on the park benches or lawns or things like that overnight.

Hudgins: That's correct. Then we go back to past ways. You know, the Army is the Army, and the Navy is the Navy, and the Army Air Force is the Army Air Force, and the Marines...so they would have quite a conflict.

Marcello: Generally speaking, when men came back off liberty, what kind of condition would they usually be in? Let's say on a Friday night or Saturday night.

Hudgins: Is this in peacetime, sir?

Marcello: Yes. This is all dealing with that period prior to the actual time of the attack.

Hudgins: It's like taking a vacation, I guess you would say--to get off the ship, to do things that you want to do or like to do. It puts you in a different frame of mind to go back and perform your job that you were assigned to.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us into that weekend of December 7, and obviously we want to go into that period in a great deal more detail. First of all, when did the Bagley come in that weekend? On Friday, as usual?

Hudgins: Well, could I say something that happened just before? We had been to the States for a minor overhaul. We had left San Diego in April of 1940. We put warheads on our torpedoes then. When we left we had no more lights on at sea. As you were asking the question of drilling, when we went back--even then--our general quarters and our drills were more extensive because, as our commanding officer had stated, there was going to be a war. Evidently, it had gotten much more serious than what the enlisted man knew about. So in looking back...and then that week was our week to go out and be on maneuvers with the battleships.

Then, I think, it was on Thursday, during the day, that one of the old four-stack destroyers who had the in-shore patrol picked up an unidentified object. Another "can" and ourselves were dispatched to go over and to sweep for it. It was on the other side of Barbers Point. We swept and swept, and evidently it must have been one of those two-man subs or something. We never did pick it up.

Then they ordered us back to the battleships--to maneuvers. Well, we were supposed to have fired at the drone on Friday, so on our way back, coming around Barbers Point, we split twenty-some feet of our bilge keel. A bilge keel on a destroyer then was a fin on each side to stabilize her. So they dispatched us to take harbor patrol because at that time it was too late, and the sub net was closed. So we went into Pearl on Friday morning, and we tied up at the Navy Yard next to the officers' landing, right across from the sub base.

It was a strange thing. Generally, when you went into port like that, you had your awnings put up, all your firing pins were locked up and everything was secured. What was so strange was that the .50-caliber ammunition had never been secured. It was still laid by the .50-calibers. There were two cruisers behind us in a slip. One was the Honolulu, and I've forgotten the name of the other. I had liberty when we went in.

Marcello: Incidentally, what was the scuttlebutt going around when you

were detached from the battleship force to hunt for that submarine or that unidentified object? What was the scuttlebutt going around among you and the members of the crew?

Hudgins: It didn't seem to be anything at all. I guess we just took it all in stride. It was just your duty, your routine, or something, and these things would happen occasionally. What was so strange was that the day before December 7, when I was in town, I got a free meal and a free drink.

Marcello: Elaborate upon that as much as you can.

Hudgins: Well, I thought it was kind of strange, but being young at the time and all, you know, a lot of these things you don't think about at the time.

Marcello: Where did you get this free meal and free drink?

Hudgins: It was at one of these Japanese restaurants there in Pearl. I had liberty on Sunday, and I was all ready to go back on Sunday morning to see if I could get another free meal and a free drink.

Marcello: So you had off both Saturday and Sunday that weekend?

Hudgins: That's correct, sir.

Marcello: Now when the Bagley came in, was it fully expecting to be repaired? Was that one of the reasons that it docked where it eventually did dock?

Hudgins: Yes, to be repaired. But we were supposed have gone on the Marine railway to where the Shaw was. As a matter of fact, we were supposed to have come back to the States, I think,

about the 15th of December for a major overhaul.

Marcello: Let's go into this weekend in a little bit more detail. The Bagley comes in, then, on a Friday.

Hudgins: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: It docks on a Friday. You mentioned that you had liberty on Saturday. Go into that liberty routine as much as you can. When did you go ashore?

Hudgins: I went ashore about ten o'clock or somewhere along in there. Of course, the bus took us downtown by the "Y" and all. Then we left from there to wherever we wanted to go. I happened to go into this one restaurant. I ordered what I wanted to, and then I proceeded on down to Waikiki in my own merry way. I didn't think anything at all of it, but in a way, if you stop to think of it, it was kind of strange at the time it should happen because someone else did know.

Marcello: How long did you stay down at Waikiki, then?

Hudgins: I stayed down there until it was time to go back to my ship.

Marcello: So you did extend or stretch out that liberty as long as you could?

Hudgins: That's correct, sir.

Marcello: What time did you get back aboard the Bagley?

Hudgins: If I'm not mistaken, I think it was around four o'clock.

Marcello: What did you do when you got back aboard?

Hudgins: Well, then you more or less relaxed and just shot the breeze with your shipmates and so forth and so on. I did make a

mention of the free meal, to pass it on to my other shipmates so maybe they would get a free meal, too.

Marcello: What time did you turn in that night?

Hudgins: Oh, I guess it was around about eight o'clock, something like that.

Marcello: So you went to bed fairly early then?

Hudgins: Yes, sir.

Marcello: This takes us into that morning, then, of December 7, so once more I want you to pick up the story as much as you can remember. Was there a particular time that one had to get out of the sack on a Sunday morning?

Hudgins: No, sir, not on a Sunday morning, unless you had duty.

Marcello: I suppose that was the holiday routine?

Hudgins: Yes, that was holiday routine. When we came in...the uniform-of-the-day, then, was shorts and skivvy shirts. There was an inspection on Saturday of all ships. All the hatches were opened, and everybody was in a very lax mood. The forecastle and the stern was all covered over with canvass and all. That made...well, everybody...we just wasn't expecting it.

So that morning I got up early, and I guess it was about-- I don't know--five o'clock or five-thirty. I got up early. It was a beautiful day coming up, and I was going to go over and enjoy myself again down at Waikiki Beach. I had to shave and put all of my uniform on except my jumper and hat and neckerchief and went down to chow. I was sitting down,

and I can remember we had ham and eggs.

Then all of a sudden, the fire alarm went off. On this destroyer our mess hall was foreward, and your living quarters were aft. When the fire alarm went off, the part of the mess hall I was eating in was on the port side, and that was the exposed side to the water. I came up on the port side, and as I looked across to the sub base, to this day I shall never forget the smile on that man's face.

Marcello: Describe this incident.

Hudgins: Well, at that instant the liberty boats were coming in from the battleships. They were loaded with men. They were strafing the men. They were screaming and hollering and jumping overboard trying to save themselves. Right away everyone realized it wasn't fire stations, and the men that were aboard ship--the others had had liberty and overnight liberty weren't there--started cutting the shrouds off of the canvass so they could get the guns around. But as each plane came in, that same grin was there on that gunner's face or the pilot's face. They were so close because they came between us and the sub base--very low to the water.

Marcello: Were they strafing your ship or anything?

Hudgins: At that time, no. It was strange. The liberty boats were just astern of us, and they were strafing the men in those boats. That's why I say it was so strange. The men were exposed and just dumbfounded--sitting there looking at them and cutting the shrouds and all to try to get the canvass

down so they could get the guns and all in action.

Marcello: Approximately how long did you stand there and watch these beginning events?

Hudgins: Sir, that's kind of hard to say. We were stunned. It wasn't long. We had been trained so hard. You automatically went to your battle station.

Marcello: And where was your battle station?

Hudgins: My battle station at the time was on gun three, on the after deck house.

Marcello: And what was your function?

Hudgins: I was a shell loader.

Marcello: Incidentally, had General Quarters sounded aboard the Bagley?

Hudgins: General Quarters never sounded.

Marcello: Okay, so you go to your battle station. What occurs now?

Hudgins: Well, the chief gunner's mate came up from the chiefs' quarters. He shot down--these were torpedo planes--he shot down the third torpedo plane that came in. I later learned that that was the fifth plane that came in that morning. He got the third plane of the fifth that came in. I said the things were all locked up. They broke locks, which was against rules. The only time they could fire the .50's... we were limited on account of the sub station over there, and the only time we could fire the 20's was at high-level bombers or dive-bombers.

Marcello: Did you have 20-millimeters at this time?

Hudgins: No, sir. No 20-millimeters.

Marcello: That's what I was thinking. So what were you firing at those planes then?

Hudgins: .50-millimeters.

Marcello: .50-calibers.

Hudgins: .50-calibers, yes.

Marcello: I guess you really couldn't fire those 5-inch guns very well, could you?

Hudgins: The only way we could fire was with the high-level bombers when they came in or the dive-bombers. We were credited with one or two of the...I think one dive-bomber and one of the high-level bombers. We were credited with seven planes that morning.

To describe to you from then on, I was standing out there, and you couldn't fire. You had to stand and watch and hear the screams and all. Then all of a sudden, it seemed like the world came to an end, and as my head went around, it seems as though the Arizona...it just lifted her up out of the water, and then down she went.

Marcello: Describe the noise and so on when the Arizona blew.

Hudgins: The noise was much greater than the regular noise that was going on--the firing of the 20's or the 50's and all. This was different, altogether different. It was so different that it caused you to turn.

Also, during the attack we were ordered to get underway

and to put ourselves in front of the battlegons to try to stop the torpedoes. In the process of trying to get underway, the gentlemen in the fire room put the burner valves in without the sprayer plate. You have a sprayer plate in the end to atomize the oil.

Marcello: Sprayer plate?

Hudgins: It's called a sprayer plate, yes, sir. In that process it made a smoke screen over the two cruisers that were behind us, and the dive-bombers couldn't see them anymore. There was a large lumber pile on the dock, and they were tearing that lumber pile all to pieces.

Another thing that was so strange is that after it was over with, we had splinters all in our life preservers, but we couldn't find any anywhere else.

To explain how you felt at that time is hard to do because you were dumbfounded. You didn't realize...you wasn't afraid. You acted like a piece of machinery. When it was all over with, you folded up.

Marcello: I would expect that one of the hardest parts was in the opening attack when you in your position really couldn't do too much except watch rather hopelessly.

Hudgins: That's correct, sir. That's correct, sir. We had some of the men that came from the liberty boats. We pulled them out of the water. Some of them were wounded, but they didn't want to go and get medical attention. They wanted to get to

the guns to help their friends, their buddies, to come back at the Japanese. It was kind of sad in another sense of speaking because of it being such a surprise attack, and as I said a little while ago...I didn't elaborate on the screams or hollers. It didn't bother me at the time, but now it does. Now it does.

Marcello: Approximately how long did the first attack last? Again, time is a relative thing here, I'm sure.

Hudgins: The first attack, if I'm not mistaken, came in at 7:45, and that first wave lasted for about, oh, close to an hour, I think it was. It was just before nine o'clock or something when the attack was over. You didn't realize or think of time.

Marcello: Now the second wave was made up mainly of the high-altitude bombers. What do you recall from the second wave that comes over? I assume that your gun was able to fire then?

Hudgins: Yes. During the first attack, there were two planes that tried to get us. Either between the coordination of the sub base and our destroyer, the torpedo planes had gotten crippled. They tried to get us, and the closest that one landed to us was about fifty yards off our bow.

Marcello: In other words, it crashed about fifty yards off your bow.

Hudgins: And that was the two planes that the gentleman was asking me about. They couldn't find where those two planes... Japanese planes...what happened to them.

Then the dive-bombers in the second attack...see, they were still after the large ships. They bombed where the carriers were supposed to have been and where the battleships were supposed to have been. And then the dive-bombers were after those cruisers that were behind us. The only thing that we got then was strafing. I guess they figured that we were too small.

Marcello: Were you sprayed by any of the debris off those crashing planes and so on?

Hudgins: Well, we found a lot of pieces of metal aboard ship, and at that time it was all swept overboard. No one kept any of it.

Marcello: How effective were your 5-inch guns in that second wave?

Hudgins: I think we were very effective because, like I was saying, we were very limited as to where we could fire.

Marcello: Yes, you couldn't fire over toward the sub base for sure.

Hudgins: That's right.

Marcello: Were these 5.25's (5-inch .25-caliber) that you had?

Hudgins: That's correct, sir.

Marcello: And I guess later on in the war then you got the 5-inch...

Hudgins: Kept the same guns.

Marcello: You kept the 5.25's all the way through?

Hudgins: All the way through.

Marcello: How shortly was it that the Bagley was able to get underway?

Hudgins: It was about maybe three-quarters of an hour after it was over with when we could leave the harbor, and we had to put a

cable around her to support that fin and proceed out to the mouth of the harbor and take patrol.

Marcello: In the meantime did you go back down to the fire room, or were you still at the gun?

Hudgins: I was still at the gun.

Marcello: What did you see as you cleared the harbor? Describe what you saw.

Hudgins: Sir, that's a hard thing to do--what my eyes saw. There was destruction everywhere. You could see that the harbor was filled with oil, flames, smoke, and there were bodies in the water. You tried to...we had certain duties to perform in getting out so far as preparing the ship as much as we could to survive, so we didn't have too much time to concentrate on what was around us. We were already preparing the ship to try to survive.

Marcello: Under normal conditions how long does it take to get up steam to get out?

Hudgins: If my memory serves me right, sir, about a half an-hour or three-quarters of an hour from "cold iron"--we would say "cold iron," starting off. Once you had your boilers up and you had the proper procedure of warming your turbines up in your engine room...and that had to be done properly. If you didn't you'd warp your blades in your turbines.

Marcello: How long did it take you that day?

Hudgins: If I'm not mistaken, it was less than half an hour because

a lot of your rules and regulations that you went by were disregarded.

Marcello: Okay, you clear the harbor. What happens at this point?

Hudgins: We cleared the harbor, and they thought they had the information that there would be another attack. We were all by ourselves, and we were low on fuel, and we were low on food, and we were crippled from the fin. Thank the Good Lord we didn't get any direct hits during the attack. It was a very lonely feeling, and then that was the time when your legs folded on you. As a matter of fact, when I got out of the Navy and went to college, I wrote a paper on a cigarette after a battle. I got a B+ on it (chuckle).

Marcello: Does this particular story have something to do with what happened after Pearl?

Hudgins: After Pearl. That's correct, sir.

Marcello: Describe it.

Hudgins: Well, you have seen, I guess, commercials as to how relaxing a cigarette was at the time back in those days. This was, I guess, the only thing you had to relax you. You sat and then your mind was roaming over things you had saw, and your mind was collecting all of these things. You were very scared. This cigarette had such satisfaction in relaxing you.

Marcello: Were you a smoker at that time?

Hudgins: Yes, sir, I was.

Marcello: Now that the attack was over and you're out at sea, what did

you and your buddies talk about. What was the scuttlebutt, the speculation going around, the conversation?

Hudgins: The conversation was about home because we were supposed to have gone back on the fifteenth, and then this all had happened. It's strange how the conversation would be one thing, and you'd think it'd be about another. The other strange thing about battles you get through is not of the battles. You speak of home and pleasantries. I guess it's to comfort yourself, to prepare you for whatever's coming next.

Marcello: Did you have any submarine scares or anything while you were thrashing around out there?

Hudgins: Not at that time, thank goodness. We didn't have any submarine contacts at that time.

Marcello: What rumors were going around?

Hudgins: That, sir, I can't answer you because I don't recall.

Marcello: For instance, had you already heard the rumor that the Japanese had landed on some other part of the island or that they were about to land?

Hudgins: Well, we said that there was another attack coming, and we were very afraid because we were all by ourselves. That's where this cigarette part came in, I guess, of trying to relax yourself.

Marcello: How long did you stay out there?

Hudgins: We had to stay out, if I'm not mistaken, three days before

we were allowed to come back into the harbor. Then we came back in to have the ship put back in shape.

Marcello: During those three days that you were out there, were you joined by any other ships?

Hudgins: No other ships, no, sir. We were all by ourselves.

Marcello: How much sleep did you get that night of December 7?

Hudgins: Not very much, sir. You know, you get used to a small ship's ...you worked a lot by sounds, and you could tell when a piece of machinery would come on or anything. The least little noise that night...you were very jumpy. You were ready to go automatically right to your battle station. You didn't have to ring General Quarters.

Marcello: Did you have much of an appetite that day?

Hudgins: No, sir, I did not. I kind of lost my appetite (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, so you came back into Pearl, and I suppose you were getting some temporary repairs again and perhaps some more fuel and food.

Hudgins: That's correct, sir.

Marcello: When did you go out again?

Hudgins: We came back in...we were in Pearl for about a week. Then what ships we had...you went out on patrol around the 180th meridian.

Marcello: In the meantime, while you were in Pearl for that week, were you basically involved strictly in getting your own ship seaworthy and ready to go back out again?

Hudgins: That's right, sir, yes.

Marcello: In other words, you were not helping with any of the repairs or whatever else had to be done with the rest of the ships and things of that nature.

Hudgins: No, sir. We were trying to get our own ship back in shape and to get back out and to defend our country.

Marcello: When did the Bagley more or less get out of Pearl and the Hawaiian Islands on a...I don't know if we can call it a permanent basis because, obviously, Pearl was going to be its home port from there on, but...

Hudgins: We left Pearl right after we went down to the Coral Sea Battle, and after that we went down to Australia, and we joined what was called the ANZAC Fleet, which later on in the Philippines became the Seventh Fleet. It was our squadron of "cans," the Chicago and...let's see...there was the Hobart, the Canberra, and the Australia. That was the ANZAC Fleet. Then the Japs were coming over Owen Stanley Range in New Guinea, and we operated a lot inside the Great Barrier Reef out of Townsville, Australia. That's where a lot of the supplies were, and we ran them up into New Guinea. And we were very limited. We only had two LSTs, and...I've forgotten...a couple of what they called LCIs or whatever it was, because Europe at the time was getting three-fourths of the supplies, and we were getting the rest. We had to make out with what we had. We put on all of our guns, radar, and

everything overseas. We never got back anymore until the last of February of 1944.

Marcello: And so you were down in the South Pacific almost all this time.

Hudgins: All that time, yes, sir. We had thirteen major engagements. The Bagley was credited with being one of the first ships that shot a plane down on December 7. There were two other ships, I believe, claiming that, too. She was credited with seven planes that morning.

Marcello: You mentioned that the Bagley participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea. What were some of the other engagements or battles in which the Bagley participated after Pearl Harbor?

Hudgins: Well, the first one that...we didn't participate in it, but we were going to take the Marines to Midway to relieve the personnel on there, and we were a day out, and we were supposed to refuel before we got in. Then the weather got rough, and not having too much experience at refueling at sea, they broke a lot of the hawsers, and it delayed us a day. It was good because the Japs came in on Midway, and we didn't have enough planes or fleet to go in, so we had to turn around and go back to Pearl.

Marcello: Is this Midway or Wake Island?

Hudgins: That's right. Excuse me, that was Wake Island. I'm sorry. Times now...some of the names allude me. Then we changed our plans and went on between Australia and New Guinea, and

the planes went over and bombed places in New Guinea. Then there was patrols up until the Coral Sea Battle, and then after that we went on down into Australia.

Marcello: Okay, well, that's probably a good place to end this interview, Mr. Hudgins. I want to thank you very much for having participated in our project. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure the students will find your comments most valuable.

Hudgins: Well, I thank you for the work you're doing, sir, because, as you stated before, this is history, and once the gentlemen pass, that history is gone. I hope that I have been of some help, and maybe some student will understand a little better when they hear it.