

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER
750

Interview with
FORD EDWARDS
April 23, 1988

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
Terms of Use: Open
Approved: Ford O Edwards
(Signature)
Date: 4-23-88

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1988

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Oral History Collection

Ford Edwards

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date: April 23, 1988

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Ford Edwards for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 23, 1988, in Austin, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Edwards in order to get his reminiscences and experiences while he was aboard the destroyer USS Patterson during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Edwards, 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--that sort of thing.

Mr. Edwards: Okay. I was born on August 13, 1923, in Georgetown, Texas. I was attending high school in Georgetown, and the Navy program came out to join the service at seventeen years old. So three of us from high school proceeded in joining the service and everything and went through boot camp in San Diego.

Marcello: When did you join the service?

Edwards: August 13 of 1940.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the service?

Edwards: Well, it seemed like a pretty good deal in reading all the posters of the Navy--the way they put it to you--and we thought it would be an experience to take.

Marcello: Had you graduated from high school at the time?

Edwards: No. No, I hadn't.

Marcello: You seemed to indicate that the Navy had a special program. Was this the so-called "minority cruise?"

Edwards: Yes, it was the "minority cruise." You were supposed to get out when you were twenty-one years old.

Marcello: In essence, then, it would have been maybe a four-year hitch instead of the usual six-year enlistment.

Edwards: Yes. Right, four-year hitch.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of service?

Edwards: Well, I had seen pictures and talked about it, and it seemed like it was a better life. You had, I think, more things to do, and it seemed like it was cleaner. You always knew you was going to have a bed to sleep in (chuckle) and everything.

Marcello: You mentioned that you took your boot camp in San Diego. How long did it last at that time?

Edwards: It was four weeks. It lasted a month--North and South Units. We went through training.

Marcello: So they had evidently cut back considerably on the amount of time that one spent in boot camp.

Edwards: Yes, they did.

Marcello: That seems to be some indication of the emergency nature of the situation maybe.

Edwards: I imagine so. I don't really know what caused them to cut it back, but it was cut short.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record, or was it the normal Navy boot camp?

Edwards: No, I guess it was just the normal boot camp.

Marcello: Other than the fact that it was abbreviated.

Edwards: Right.

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

Edwards: I went to Mare Island at a shipyard up there, and the destroyer was in there for repairs. I reported aboard the USS Patterson in Vallejo, California, which is where it was at.

Marcello: Was duty aboard the destroyer voluntary? In other words, did you have some sort of a choice of the type ship you might want to serve on?

Edwards: No, at that time we didn't. I guess, when they needed seamen and everything, the ships would send in for what amount of seamen or what rated men they needed. So when we got out of boot camp, I guess, so many was picked for each ship, and I was transferred there.

Marcello: Describe what kind of ship the Patterson was. Let me be a little bit more specific. Was it an old destroyer or a new destroyer?

Edwards: It was an older destroyer. It was classified as a single stacker. It had four 5-inch mounts plus the .50-caliber machine guns, which later we installed 20-millimeters in place of the .50-caliber machine guns and everything. It was a sleek, well-built ship and everything, and it seemed like life aboard it was going to be terrific. It was going to be an experience, I knew.

Marcello: What is it that makes a destroyer unique from other warships in the Navy?

Edwards: Well, it's not that many personnel on there, and you get to know everybody; and everybody calls you by your first name. It's just like a big family. Everybody knows what to do and everything, and there's just no friction between them. Of course, like I said, the destroyer was small, but it was really a classy ship.

Marcello: What made it a classy ship, to use your words?

Edwards: Well, I guess the crew and the officers. They worked close together, and it wasn't no high-powered rate-pulling on there. At that time, nobody would come up and demand that "you do this" or "you do that" and everything else. It was given to you as a reasonable order and everything.

Marcello: When you went aboard the Patterson, what was your initial job or responsibility?

Edwards: Well, I went aboard as a seaman second class, and I scrubbed paintwork and the deck. Then later on, I got assigned as a bow man in the whaleboat.

Marcello: So essentially, then, you were in the deck force when you went aboard.

Edwards: Right, in the deck force when I went aboard.

Marcello: Describe what living quarters were like aboard the Patterson.

Edwards: Well, they was kind of close. You had chains hanging from the bulkhead (overhead), and it was a three-bunk deal. When you got up in the mornings, you made your bunk up and then raised them up and hooked them up to where they was out of the way to give more room in the compartments and everything.

Marcello: Was the Patterson up to full strength, or was it coming up to full strength during that period?

Edwards: It was up to full strength. We had a full crew.

Marcello: Which meant that it would have been pretty tight in terms of space.

Edwards: Yes, it would.

Marcello: What was food like aboard the Patterson?

Edwards: It was real good, and I couldn't complain about it. You know, to cook a meal like that and everything in small quarters no bigger than the galley was, it was real good

food.

Marcello: Did you gain weight?

Edwards: Yes, I did (chuckle).

Marcello: That seems to be a general rule among a great many people that went in the service at that time, and I'm not exactly sure what the reason for it is. Obviously, the food was good, and I also think that in a lot of cases it was more than they had been getting in civilian life, since the Depression was still kind of hanging on yet.

Edwards: I believe it was something like that. You had more variety of stuff to eat and everything else. When I went in, I was just a country boy. It was a better food and everything.

Marcello: Did you have a turn at mess cooking?

Edwards: Yes, I went through that. Fortunately, I skipped it in boot camp, which I was put in the color guard and everything--raising the colors and going to funerals and stuff like that--and that was my assignment through boot camp instead of mess cooking. But I did catch mess cooking when I went aboard ship.

Marcello: Was the food served family-style at the time you went aboard, or was it cafeteria-style?

Edwards: No, it was kind of cafeteria-style. You went by and took what you wanted, and we had tables set up to where you went and sat.

Marcello: In other words, mess cooking would have then consisted of being back in the scullery or the galley or something like that.

Edwards: Right, yes, just cleaning up the tables and scrubbing the deck after the chow was over with and washing the containers that you ate out of and the silverware and stuff like that.

Marcello: Describe how you got the responsibility of working with one of the whaleboats. You did say a whaleboat.

Edwards: Yes. It was just a small boat that they used for lifesaving at sea. In port we used it a lot to take the officers ashore and pick up supplies and everything. Most of the time, we tied up alongside a tender, and they had a bigger motor launch that would pick up parties and take them ashore when they went on liberty.

Marcello: And you were one of the bow hooks?

Edwards: Yes, sir, I was working as a bow hook on there. Getting back to the food, that's when I met the chief commissary steward in charge of the galley and everything, and he talked me into striking for ship's cook.

Marcello: And did you?

Edwards: I struck for it, yes.

Marcello: And when did that take place?

Edwards: That took place about six months after I was aboard ship.

Marcello: Okay, so would that have been before Pearl Harbor?

Edwards: That was just before Pearl Harbor, yes.

Marcello: Okay.

Edwards: Just before war started.

Marcello: Okay, what made you decide to strike for commissaryman...is that what the rating is called?

Edwards: Then it was ship's cook.

Marcello: Ship's cook.

Edwards: Now it's changed to commissaryman. Yes, they changed it. I don't know. I always kind of fooled around the kitchen with my mother at home because I kind of enjoyed it. I usually fixed what I wanted to, and I guess...I don't know...it just struck me when I went in the service to take that, and I guess the chief had a lot to do with it, too (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, did the Patterson go more or less directly to Pearl Harbor after you picked it up?

Edwards: Yes. We went down to San Diego and took what they called a shakedown cruise and everything. We finished up what we really needed there in San Diego, and then we started out to Pearl and was assigned to operate with a fleet task force out of Pearl.

Marcello: Normally speaking, when the Patterson was over at Pearl, where would it tie up?

Edwards: We tied up...it was either the tender Dixie or the Prairie, both of which were there, and we would tie up alongside for minor repairs or supplying and stuff like

that.

Marcello: And where would they be located relative to, let's say, Battleship Row or something like that?

Edwards: Well, see, Battleship Row was on the east side of the Naval Air Station, Ford Island. You came in to the channel on the west side, and they was just about almost middleways at the end of Ford Island, where they would anchor all the time and stay.

Marcello: I'm assuming there would be more or less a nest of destroyers over there.

Edwards: Yes, usually four at a time would tie up abreast. The squadron that we was in would tie up together, and that was four destroyers.

Marcello: And what particular squadron was that? Do you remember offhand?

Edwards: I think it was Thirty-two, if I'm not mistaken.

Marcello: Now that we have you out of Pearl Harbor, take me on on of the routine training exercises in which the Patterson would engage in that period prior to December 7.

Edwards: Well, we would go out as a fleet task force, and we would have target practice. We would have a plane pull a drone, like, a small airplane, and we would fire antiaircraft guns at it. Then they had a tugboat that would come out and pull a target on a buoy-like that we would practice firing at as if it would be a ship or something like that during war.

Marcello: Where was your battle station?

Edwards: My battle station was on the number three 5-inch gun.

Marcello: Doing what?

Edwards: Number one loader. I would lay the ammunition in the breech, and that was called number one loader.

Marcello: You mentioned that one of the things you would do on these exercises is engage in antiaircraft practice. I think earlier in your remarks you had answered this question, but I'll ask it again, anyhow. What was the difference between the antiaircraft armament before Pearl Harbor and what you had on there after Pearl Harbor? What kind of weapons did you have before Pearl?

Edwards: Well, before Pearl it was the 5-inch guns and the .50-caliber machine guns. Then it was changed over to 20-millimeters, which had a higher range. It was an antiaircraft gun smaller than a 5-inch, and that was what we was equipped with instead of the .50-calibers.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were part of a fleet task force. What would be some of the other ships operating with the task force?

Edwards: Well, we would operate with aircraft carriers, screening them for submarine protection and protecting them from planes. We did the same thing for the cruisers. Every so often with the maneuvers and everything, one of our subs would come out and act as an enemy sub and everything, and we had to get in contact with it and

screen the carriers and cruisers and the battleships that we was operating with.

Marcello: So in essence, then, the destroyer was living up to its role as the workhorse of the Navy?

Edwards: Right (chuckle). Yes.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as conditions between the United States and Japan obviously were getting worse, could you even as a young seaman detect any changes at all in the training routine?

Edwards: Yes, it seems like the routine was getting stiffer and everything. They was really getting down to where when General Quarters sounded and stuff like that, you had to be there in a certain amount of time. They was trying to get more speed of getting there and getting ready for battle practice and everything. It seemed like each time we went out and practiced and everything, it was more set on a time limit of getting there and getting ready for action and getting the gun in shape and everything.

Marcello: Did you seem to be having perhaps more general quarters drills and so on?

Edwards: Yes, we had been out to sea that week before Pearl Harbor was bombed and operating with a task force. Usually, we didn't have exercises at night; most were held in the daytime. But this started continuous all during the day and at different times. Maybe they'd be

two or three hours apart at night, maybe four hours apart. But it picked up more as we went along.

Marcello: Were there blackout conditions during these times?

Edwards: Yes. Yes, the portholes was covered, and the lights was cut off.

Marcello: That also was different from what it had been, let's say, months earlier.

Edwards: Yes, it was because out at sea we was operating before with our lights on.

Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around and talked in bull sessions, did the subject of war with Japan ever come up?

Edwards: Yes, it did. We was wondering, really, if it would happen and when it would happen. I guess the big question that was coming up was what would we do, actually. A lot of us were young on there. We had some older ones on there, but none of us had experience in the war before and everything. It was a lot of talk about really what would happen if it did come to that point.

Marcello: Did you ever talk about where it would happen?

Edwards: Well, we really didn't expect it would be at Pearl. We thought maybe they might try to bypass us and bomb the United States, actually, but we really didn't expect it at Pearl.

Marcello; Normally, when did the Patterson go out on one of these

exercises? Was there a particular day of the week when it would go out?

Edwards: No. Maybe you'd be in two weeks, and then they'd schedule you out for maybe a week, week-and-a-half. You'd go out, and you had so many exercises that you had to run through and everything; and when it was complete, why, we would cruise around awhile. We had orders at a certain time to come back into port.

Marcello: When you came back into port, would you normally be in for a weekend?

Edwards: Yes, we would.

Marcello: And generally speaking, on a weekend--now I maybe asking you an unfair question--would most of the fleet be in Pearl?

Edwards: Yes. It just so happened, I guess, that that was the weekend that most of them was going to be in there. But as far as I can remember, it wasn't but one task force group out at sea. Most all the battleships was in, and so were a couple of the cruisers, and I think it was about three divisions of destroyers in there.

Marcello: When the Patterson would come in off one of these exercises, what was the policy concerning liberty? How did liberty work?

Edwards: Well, it worked port-and-starboard. The port crew's number would be, say, one, and starboard's would be two. You worked and cleaned up the ship and painted it and

got it back top shape while you was out at sea. The biggest part of the time, the liberty party would be called away at one o'clock, and the rest of duty unit would stay aboard and finish cleaning up ship and standing their guards at night and everything. They took turns. About every other day was liberty for you.

Marcello: So on a weekend, then, you might have either a Saturday or a Sunday?

Edwards: Right.

Marcello: When you went on liberty, what would you normally do?

Edwards: Well, I went to Waikiki Beach the biggest part of the time because there was a program that was sent back to the United States. It was a Hawaiian program, and the man was named Ralph Edwards.

Marcello: And what was the name of the program? Do you recall?

Edwards: I don't remember what it was, but it was all Hawaiian music from out there.

Marcello: I remember there was a program that some people used to talk about that, I believe, originated at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. It was called "Under the Banyan Tree" or something like that.

Edwards: That is possible because I think that was the hotel where it was at. It was off in, like, a patio on the side of it--right on the beach. We used to go out there on Sundays and sit and listen to it.

Marcello: Now as a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old at that time, I

guess you probably would not have been able to go in the bars, or most of them, would you?

Edwards: No, no bars. We wasn't allowed in them. Mostly, we just went ashore and went out Waikiki Beach swimming and going to movies that they had and that we wanted to see and everything.

Marcello: Were the local joints pretty stringent about serving minors as such?

Edwards: Yes, they were. They were strict over there. That's one thing that the military was strict on, was underage drinking.

Marcello: I'm not asking you for any personal experiences, but I just thought about this. You were underage in terms of being able to drink. How about if you wanted to go to one of the houses of prostitution? Did age make any difference in that case?

Edwards: Well, I understood they didn't. There was no age on that.

Marcello: I just wondered because I think most of those houses of prostitution also sold liquor, did they not?

Edwards: Some of them were equipped for that yes.

Marcello: Okay, I think this more or less brings us into that weekend of December 7. Obviously, the Patterson was in during that weekend. When had it come in?

Edwards: We came in that Friday morning.

Marcello: So that would have been December 5.

Edwards: December 5, right.

Marcello: What did you do during the days of December 5 and December 6? What was your routine?

Edwards: Well, I was striking for cook, and the chief explained to me that the best way to learn it was start out in the spud locker. I had two mess cooks under me, and I was given a list of what the cooks wanted prepared for the meal that day. I took the mess cooks up to what they called the searchlight deck. It was a small deck in the center of the ship on the second deck level, and the spud locker was fixed up underneath the big searchlight. I was given, as I said, a list of what they wanted to go in the food and everything. I was put over the two mess cooks to see that they put it out the way it was supposed to go to the galley.

I had duty Saturday, and I had done made plans. A couple of us we was going into Waikiki Beach on Sunday morning and listen to the broadcast again because every Sunday morning, if we could, we'd go in there. The breakfast was going on at the time then. I had done got my two mess cooks up there, and we had started because I told them I wanted to get it over with. They wanted to go ashore, too. We was up there preparing it when the first bombs started falling.

Marcello: Let me back up just a minute. What did you do that Saturday evening aboard ship?

Edwards: I just laid around and laid back on the fantail--we had it covered--and read books. Then at nights we had a movie on there, so you had a movie to watch when you had duty and had to stay aboard ship.

Marcello: You don't per chance remember what the movie was, do you?

Edwards: No, I don't (chuckle).

Marcello: Did anything eventful happen that night, or was it more or less a typical Saturday.

Edwards: No, it was just, you know, a quiet Saturday night and everything. Everybody was just sitting aboard ship and watching the movie and cutting up and everything.

Marcello: For those who had liberty, would they have to be back aboard that night at a particular time, or could they stay over just so they were ready for duty the next day?

Edwards: No, right now the liberty at Pearl was...they had to be back aboard ship by 7:00 in the morning, and muster would be called--quarters--at 8:00.

Marcello: In other words, then, the ship would not have been fully manned that night.

Edwards: No, if it had been Saturday night, it wouldn't have been fully manned. No, sir.

Marcello: Okay, that leads us into that Sunday morning, and, as you mentioned, you're preparing for the breakfast meal.

Edwards: Well, the breakfast is already on. We was getting the food ready for dinner and supper.

Marcello: I see. Okay, pick up the story at that point.

Edwards: Well, we was up there getting it ready, and when we first heard the bombs going off...it was a small ladder coming down to the main deck, and until this day--if I could find the two mess cooks--we all three was on the main deck at the same time, and we all three swore we came down the ladder (chuckle). How that happened, I don't know, but it did.

Marcello: Well, describe what you initially saw before (chuckle) you came down the ladder.

Edwards: Well, we seen the dive-bombers coming in. First, we thought it was our own planes from the air station out practicing. Then we started hearing the bombs go off, and then they was down low enough to where we could see the red sun on their wings and everything. Then we knew it wasn't our planes. So they sounded General Quarters, and everybody was scrambling to get to their battle station and getting things ready. On the fantail, just below where we was at, where the number four 5-inch mount was, it was covered with a tarpaulin which kept a shade down there when we was watching movies and laying out there on the evenings; and instead of cutting off with a knife the ropes that held it, they just elevated the 5-inch gun and blowed it off. And just quick as we got ready...there was no set time it, so as quick as we was ready to fire, we started firing.

Marcello: And you did start firing at those planes.

Edwards: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: You mentioned that when you first saw these planes, they were low enough that you could distinguish the rising sun on the wings or wherever. How low would you estimate they were coming in?

Edwards: Well, I would say...it's rough, but a lot of them was torpedo bombers, which were right over the water, and they was coming in to drop their torpedoes. But the dive-bombers were up pretty high, diving and coming down. But the torpedo planes were the ones that were real down low. I wouldn't say they was over a hundred feet off the water--down there as close as they could get.

Marcello: Could you distinguish the pilots in the planes?

Edwards: We could see a person in there, but we really couldn't tell what they were. But you could see in the cockpit on most of them.

Marcello: Okay, so General Quarters sounds almost instantly...

Edwards: Right.

Marcello: ...and you go to your battle station. Is the battle station pretty much fully manned--the turret?

Edwards: Yes, sir, because everybody was back aboard ship and everything by the time it started. I think about the only ones that was missing was three officers, which one of them was the skipper and the "exec" and, I think, the

engineering officer. But the other officers had took over command and was equipped for it.

Marcello: Okay, so what goes on in the turret?

Edwards: Well, we commence firing and kept firing as fast as we could. In the meantime the repair crew chopped the lines loose so we could get away from each other and pull out to sea. As we broke loose, we backed over toward Pearl City--that's in the area where we was at-- and as we started forward, the sonar picked up a submarine sound. As we started forward, they rolled off a depth charge at the fantail, and they said that a part of a ship came out of the water, so evidently we got a sub.

Marcello: You are referring to one of those two-man midget submarines?

Edwards: One of those little two-man midgets, yes.

Marcello: In the meantime how long are you firing before the Patterson gets underway? You'll probably have to estimate that.

Edwards: Well, it was probably within a half-hour because just as quick as they got them up there and got hold of axes, they was chopping to get us loose. We kept firing until we was out of the harbor mostly and there wasn't no more planes around that we could see.

Marcello: I'm assuming that since your battle station was inside...

Edwards: No, this was an open turret.

Marcello: Oh, this was an open turret.

Edwards: The number one and number two is enclosed, and number three and number four is open.

Marcello: Okay, what are you able to see?

Edwards: We could see the planes as they dove, and our pointer would train the gun that way because there was open sight and we could really see them. We didn't have to depend on the radar to give us the direction and everything.

Marcello: When you're in the situation like that, do you have time to talk or anything, or is everybody simply doing their job and letting it go at that?

Edwards: No, everybody just does their job unless something happens. The gun captain would scream out, give an order to change something or it's a hang up or something like that or a misfire.

Marcello: The only talking, then, has to do with either orders or something having to do with a situation or problem concerning the gun.

Edwards: Right. Orders was coming from the bridge over the headphones to the gun captain. He was given orders that was transferred from the bridge to him.

Marcello: How fast were you throwing those shells in there?

Edwards: Well, (chuckle) it was pretty fast. In fact, we fired enough that the paint started melting off the barrel.

Marcello: What happened to all the brass? Is it beginning to build up?

Edwards: Oh, yes. It was throwed all over the fantail and everything because when your doing that you don't stop to get rid of it. If you stumble on it, you kick it and get it out of the way.

Marcello: Approximately how many rounds do you figured you fired? Let's start at fifty. Were there at least fifty?

Edwards: Oh, it was more than fifty, yes.

Marcello: A hundred?

Edwards: I imagine right at a hundred, yes. Pretty close to it. I don't think I'd be far off saying that.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that the Patterson, like all the other ships that are capable, need to get out of there. Under normal circumstances, how long would it take a destroyer to get up what was considered the proper amount of steam and so on to get out of there? How much time would elapse, normally?

Edwards: If we shut down completely, normally it would take about forty-five minutes to an hour. But they had not cut the steam off completely.

Marcello: They probably had at least one boiler going.

Edwards: At least one boiler at all times. They never shut them all off. By the time we got out of the harbor, we was operating at full steam.

Marcello: And how long did that take about?

Edwards: I'd say it was forty-five minutes to an hour that we was completely out of the harbor.

Marcello: Okay, so mentioned that the submarine is spotted, or the sonar picks up something. You roll off a depth charge. You think you possibly hit one of those submarines. What happens at that point?

Edwards: Well, we proceeded out, and some of the battleships had gotten underway, but they were hit. Evidently, they knew they was going to sink and everything, and they had run aground on the side of the channel to keep from blocking it.

Marcello: This is the Nevada?

Edwards: Right.

Marcello: Okay, in the meantime, while the Patterson is going out, is the attack over, or are you still firing away?

Edwards: No, it was still going on. During the meantime, when we was pulling out, the Arizona was hit, and we could feel the heat from where we was at from it.

Marcello: Describe the Arizona being hit--what you remember from it.

Edwards: It was just one big explosion. All at once there was just a big orange ball and then a big cloud of black smoke. I don't know...it just felt like...it was like about a thousand pounds of dynamite went off or something--just a great big "BOOM" and everything. And as I said, there was a big orange ball, and then black

smoke started falling everywhere.

Marcello: I guess at that stage you really don't have time to think about the magnitude of what was happening over there other than the ship was obviously in trouble.

Edwards: Right.

Marcello: So you're still firing when you're going out. Are you coming under any direct attack?

Edwards: No, most of them were still over in the bay area where the dry docks were and where the battleships and the cruisers were. See, the cruisers would tie up over by the sub base, and Battleship Row was over by the Naval Air Station at Ford Island there.

Marcello: Okay, so you now clear the harbor.

Edwards: Yes, we cleared the harbor. We knew it was a task force out at sea, and they got contact with them and everything, and the ships that got out proceeded to the task force. Evidently, they hadn't heard anything because as we was proceeding to them at full speed, they wanted to know where we was going in such a hurry. We told them, and they had never heard nothing about it, they claimed.

Marcello: Was this the Enterprise group?

Edwards: This was the Enterprise group. I think Admiral Halsey was aboard it.

Marcello: Okay, so you then join up with them, and what do you do?

Edwards: We joined up with them and continued our search. We

stayed out searching the sea from there toward Japan as far as we could and as fuel would allow us. Then, if I remember right, we came back in that Thursday to refuel and resupply and everything.

Marcello: Actually, you really didn't stay with that task force, then, because the Enterprise obviously got close enough to Pearl that they flew some airplanes in.

Edwards: Yes, they did. They took their planes off the carrier and flew them in and got them equipped with ammunition and everything else and all set up for action and everything. We kept on operating out at sea.

Marcello: So you were not with the Enterprise at that point?

Edwards: We stayed with the Enterprise for about two days, I think it was.

Marcello: Yes.

Edwards: And then we parted, and they went searching one section, and we went on another one.

Marcello: While you were out there, did you have any submarine scares?

Edwards: We had picked up two or three, but whether it was ours or theirs we really didn't know for sure, I don't guess. We didn't have no attack on us from submarines.

Marcello: Are you, in essence, more or less at your station all this time?

Edwards: Yes. We was brought coffee and sandwiches. I was relieved from duty because then I was in the galley. We

would prepare coffee and sandwiches and everything and carry it around to the gun crews. We was there, I think, two days, day and night, and the only time we was relieved to go off was to go to the bathroom and back. We slept right there and everything else.

Marcello: What did you talk about that day after the attack was over and then on into the night.

Edwards: Oh, I guess, you know, what had happened; wondering how bad it was at Pearl because we really didn't see all the damage and everything; how many had been killed; what would happen if we did run into a Japanese fleet with its carrier planes; whether we'd be able to get through it or not. You know, just a lot of stuff would run through your mind.

Marcello: What rumors did you hear?

Edwards: Well, we heard that they had three aircraft carriers and two battleships in that area, but we wasn't positive. Of course, we couldn't find no trace of them, so evidently they came to the conclusion that when they launched those planes, that was it; they wouldn't have no place to go; they'd either crash at Pearl or do their job. You know, just suicide is what it was because we figured, after we couldn't find no trace of them, then after they had launched planes, well, they had took off and went back toward Japan.

Marcello: When was it that you had a chance to come into Pearl,

then? What was the earliest that you could come back in?

Edwards: The earliest we came back in...we left that Sunday morning, and the earliest we came back in was Thursday at noon.

Marcello: Describe what you saw. Did you get a chance to get out on deck and view the harbor? You know, this is the first time you had really been able to look at it with a certain amount of detachment. What did you see?

Edwards: Yes, we all stood on deck and observed everything as we went in. We seen all the ships that had been hit and the ones in dry dock that was blowed up and everything. The Arizona had just about completely rolled over by then. It was just oil and debris and stuff strewn all over the harbor and everything.

Marcello: It is my understanding that, given the amount of activity in that harbor, Pearl was relatively clean. The water was relatively clean prior to the attack.

Edwards: Yes, it was. It was kept real clean. It was no garbage, no rubbish, or anything like that throwed in the harbor or in the bay area where the ships were.

Marcello: Did you get a chance to look at the Oklahoma?

Edwards: Yes. We came by that and seen the Oklahoma sitting there. Really, I guess the main focus was on the Arizona. In fact, some of us had buddies on there that we had met while we was on liberty and everything.

Marcello: Was the Arizona still smoking or anything?

Edwards: Yes, it was. Well, it was kind of a bubbling situation, you know, from under the water and everything. It was still smoke boiling from it.

Marcello: Bubbling in the sense that oil was coming out?

Edwards: Right.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you saw a huge ship such as the Oklahoma turned over?

Edwards: Well, we figured if they could do that, what could they do to the rest of us, as small as the destroyer is, you know. We figured, boy, we was on a ship that maybe they could hit it like that and do to us what they did to the Arizona and Oklahoma. Unlike one of the battleships, there wouldn't be nothing left to us. But you had different things go through your mind about what could happen to that ship as small as it was, and there was nowhere near the armor on that destroyer as was on the Oklahoma or the Arizona.

Marcello: What did you do in the weeks following your return?

Edwards: Well, we resupplied and got all our supplies aboard ship and things that we needed fixed up and everything else, and we proceeded out with the task force and started combing the sea and patrolling for submarines and stuff like that. We went from there toward Midway and out in that area because we had a little air station at Midway. We patrolled in between--from there into Pearl.

Marcello: In projecting ahead just a little bit, how long did you stay with the Patterson?

Edwards: I stayed with the Patterson...I forget exactly how many months it was. I had a cousin on board with me from Georgetown. We went to school together. Then they wouldn't allow relatives to be aboard the same ship. Well, at my rate--I had made third class cook--I was requested to be transferred off of there, and I was sent back to San Diego. I arrived there aboard a transport that was taking injured personnel back to the San Diego hospital. I reported into the receiving station at noon one day, and the next morning we fell out for muster and was called out to fall in at a certain area. When the muster was over with, we was told to get our sea bags and everything, that we was assigned to a ship.

Marcello: When was this? What year was this?

Edwards: That was in 1942.

Marcello: So you did not remain on the Patterson for too long after Pearl?

Edwards: No, I wasn't. I was sent aboard a troop transport. The Navy had took over the President Lines, and I was put aboard the President Jackson. At that time, when we reported that morning, they were loading all the guns and trucks and the Marines. That night we was loaded up, and we pulled out in the harbor at San Diego and anchored out. The next morning at daylight, we pulled

out. We was trying to find out rumors as to where we was going and stuff like that until we got out at sea. Then we found out that we was going to Guadalcanal.

Marcello: And how long did you remain on the President Jackson?

Edwards: I stayed on the President Jackson until the New Guinea campaign started, and then I was transferred aboard a LCI, Landing Craft Infantry--a lot smaller ship, smaller than a destroyer. It was used just mostly to land troops.

Marcello: And did you remain on that for the remainder of the war.

Edwards: I remained on that for, I think, five months or six months, and then I was transferred back to stateside and went to Norfolk, Virginia, and picked up a brand-new LCI. I started back overseas and was put off at the Naval Air Station in Panama. I served six months there and was transferred down to a naval base on the equator and served six months there. Then I was sent back to the Naval Air Station in Panama, and I was serving my time there until the war was over with.

Marcello: Did you remain a cook throughout this period?

Edwards: I remained a cook. I had made first class and everything--second and then up to first.

Marcello: I have one last question before we close this interview, Mr. Edwards. Where did you get your tattoo?

Edwards: I got those at Pearl, over in Hawaii (chuckle).

Marcello: Was this during that period prior to the attack, or was

it sometime after it?

Edwards: No, it was before the attack. You know, kids and everything else. We thought it was a fad. These old sailors had them all over their bodies (chuckle) and everything, and we thought it made you really a sailor to have a tattoo (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, well, I want to thank you very much for having talked to me. You've said a lot of interesting and important things, and I'm glad we were able to get together for this interview.

Edwards: I was glad to talk to you, sir.