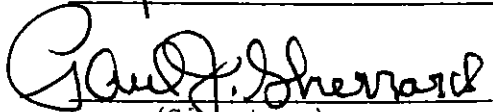


UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER
756

Interview with
PAUL J. SHERRARD
September 17, 1988

Place of Interview: Cape Girardeau, Missouri
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
Terms of Use: Open
Approved: 
(Signature)
Date: 9/17/88

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Oral History Collection

Paul J. Sherrard, Sr.

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello Date: September 17, 1988

Place of Interview: Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello, interviewing Paul J. Sherrard, Sr., for the University of North Texas Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on September 17, 1988, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. I am interviewing Mr. Sherrard in order to get his reminiscences and experiences while he was at the dispensary at the Ford Island Naval Air Station during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Sherrard, to begin this interview, give me some biographical information. In other words, tell me when you were born and where you were born.

Mr. Sherrard: I was born on December 31, 1903, at Morehouse, Missouri.

Dr. Marcello: And give me a little bit about your educational background.

Mr. Sherrard: I completed high school at Morehouse High School. I entered the military service before I graduated from

high school. I stole my brother's registration card and went in the Army, but they found out about it in about seven months, and they gave me a discharge and sent me home. Immediately, I went into the National Guard. I stayed in the National Guard until January 1, 1924, when I enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

Marcello: When was it that you initially went into the Army under those false pretenses?

Sherrard: In 1921, in June. Sometime in January they found out about it--the following year--and I was booted out of the service at that time, and I enlisted in the Missouri National Guard (chuckle). I was sixteen years old, and you could go in the Guard at sixteen at that time. I stayed in the Guard for the two years, and during that period of time that I was in the Guard, I was put on strike guard duty at Poplar Bluff, Missouri, when the railroad men went on a strike and the National Guard took over. I was there for four months and turned loose in September in order to go back to school to finish my high school education.

Marcello: Now let me back up and get something straight here. You said that you were born in 1903, is that correct?

Sherrard: Yes.

Marcello: And when was it, then, that you initially went into the Army under false pretenses?

Sherrard: I was about fifteen--I guess maybe sixteen--years old.

Well, it was 1921. Now the 1903 birth date there, December, has been a kick-up back and forth. The state has me down as being born on December 31, 1905. For some reason or another, during that period of time. .my grandfather delivered me. He was a doctor, and he delivered me. He was killed sometime after that, and no record was made until they gathered his records together. My mother died when I was at an early age, and I was raised by aunts and uncles. I really didn't know the exact date until...it could have been 1905, and it could have been 1903. You know, when they make those little curlicues.

Marcello: Yes.

Sherrard: Now that's the thing that's come up since then. I have a sister that's older than I am, and she says there is only a year difference in our age, and she was born in 1902. So I went by what she had to say on it. That's exactly how I could give it to you. Between the two of them, I'm either eighty-three years old, or I'm eighty-five, one of the other. I don't know (chuckle).

Marcello: Well, the Army initially must have interpreted your birth records as 1905, because that's what would have got you your discharge.

Sherrard: No, see, in the Army I was under my brother's card.

Marcello: I see, I see.

Sherrard: See, I used my brother's registration card.

Marcello: That's right.

Sherrard: My brother was six years older than I was. He didn't go in the service, but he had to register for World War I. I took his registration card to the Army recruiter, and they took me right in. They were having a drive, and I was a pretty hefty little boy at the time; and they picked me right up, and away I went. In the course of events, while I was in there, my father--I had failed to tell him--did not know where I was, so they got hold of someone someway or another, they notified them, everything came out, and I was let loose from the service.

Marcello: Why was it that you decided to join the Navy?

Sherrard: Well, I had seen people there in Morehouse and around in their old age and how they had fallen--people who I respected--and had got down to where they absolutely had nothing. Now I made it my intention at that time that I was going into the Navy, and I was going to stay there until I retired. They had a sixteen-year retirement bill at that time, and they had a twenty-year retirement bill. I was going to stay sixteen years and retire, was what I was going to do. Well, as it was, when I had my sixteen years in, the war came along, and I stayed on beyond that, see.

Marcello: And how long did you stay in the Navy altogether?

Sherrard: Altogether in the Navy and the Naval Reserve, active and

inactive, I spent thirty years. I was put on the completely retired list on January 1, 1954. So from 1924 to 1954 would be the thirty years, and that was when I was placed on the full retired list with the rank of lieutenant commander.

I was talking to some people off the record, and they seemed to indicate that you obviously had some interesting experiences prior to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, which is, of course, what we're most interested in. Nevertheless, there are some of these other things I'd like to have your comments on, since you evidently were involved either directly or indirectly. One of the things I've heard some people talk about was the Panay incident. What connection or association did you have with the bombing of the Panay? Well, I was on duty with the Marines in Shanghai, China, during the year of 1937-38. We received word about 4:30 that afternoon that the Panay had been bombed and sunk about thirty-five miles from Shanghai, where our hospital was located. I was running a dispensary for the Marines about two-and-a-half miles from the hospital. Well, immediately they gathered up supplies and loads of Marines, including myself with them since I was in the medical service. They took us up to this area. I'd probably say it was about 5:00 when we got there. We began picking up survivors, taking care of

them, bringing them ashore and whatnot, and bringing them back to the Naval Hospital in Shanghai. And that was my connection with that.

I was there when the Japanese made their invasion through there and when we took all the Chinese off of that area they were in, across these little bridges and whatnot. Dr. Manion and myself and a Dr. Chester were sent to this point where they had come off the bridge. The Marines had set up a tent out there for us to take care of the wounded as they came across the bridge. We didn't go over on the other side where the fighting was. But while we were there, they started delivering babies. These women would come over, and the babies would have to be delivered right away. They were running and whatnot. Dr. Manion and another corpsman by the name of Black--Alexander Black, I believe--began to deliver these babies. I sorted people out to go to them, and then we were giving shots. The only one that we would give them was a yellow fever shot. We had the serum there. During that period of time, all that long, we worked there.

Marcello: Now you were dealing with Chinese civilians?

Sherrard: Chinese civilians, yes. The Japanese were fighting the Chinese army in this territory there right out of Shanghai, and civilians were all coming across to get into Shanghai. Shanghai was an independent city at that

time, and they were all trying to get in there. It must have been at least. .at our check point there, I would say there was at least maybe 5,000 that came across during that period of time that we were there. When that period of time was over with, of course, I returned to my station in Shanghai--the dispensary there.

Marcello: Let me back up and fill in a few things. There is something that I should have asked you earlier. When you went into the Navy, I'm assuming from what you just said that you eventually became a corpsman.

Sherrard: I eventually did. When I first started out, I was a quartermaster. Then I went to flight school. I was already an aviator. I was flying as a civilian at this airport in San Diego. I was in the band at the training station, and they held me over at the training station as a drum major for the band there. So I had all kinds of time to go across to the airfield over there, and, of course, I learned to fly while I was over there. I got my civilian pilot's license from there.

Well, in 1928, which is several years later, they were pulling in enlisted pilots. Well, I applied for it, and they sent me to the flight school. While I was at flight school, just before the time to graduate, I crashed and ruined my left eye. I was out of it for...and that's when I entered the Hospital Corps. I dropped down in rank in order to go to the Hospital

Corps because I was so interested in what was going on with the corpsmen. Within eight years, I was a chief petty officer in the Hospital Corps.

Marcello: You brought up something else that I would like to have your comments on. In the Navy of that period, how slow or fast was advancement of rank?

Sherrard: Well, to me it was fast because I went to school. Everyplace I'd go, I'd try to get in a college and get a few college credits. I was going to be a pharmacist, so they sent me to school for pharmacy. That was what I was assigned to most of the time.

For some reason or another I was at the right place at the right time in order to be advanced. I was getting commendations for things that came up there. One time I jumped in the water in San Diego, over the side, and pulled a lady that was drowning out of the water. Well, you know what they do on that. Well, another time I was present when there was an accident, real serious accident, where the ferry was located. Someway or another, I got involved in that deal. Another time, a train was wrecked in Salt Lake City. They had two trains, one was following the other, and the train that was following ran into the first one, and I got involved in that. Another thing was, the senator from Missouri, Starks, was a personal friend of my father's (chuckle), which helped an awful lot. So I

went up in rank.

In Pearl Harbor, on the seventh, they had me listed as a pharmacist's mate first class. I had been a chief pharmacist's mate for four months--I had made chief four months before that--and they hadn't ever caught up with me, and I made warrant pharmacist two months before that, which was a warrant officer. I was over there as a pharmacist first class, and my rank was warrant pharmacist. I passed all the examinations that were required, and having the service that I had, I was put right in. On a plaque at Pearl Harbor, it has me listed as a chief pharmacist's mate. I have a citation from Nimitz that has me a pharmacist's mate first class; I have a citation from the Secretary of the Navy that has me down as a chief pharmacist's mate. These were for what I did in Pearl Harbor--my actions out there.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit more about the Panay incident. Describe what you saw relative to the actual wreckage and so on of the Panay.

Sherrard: Well, when we got there, it was in the evening, about 6:00, and the breeze pulled right in down on the pier. The Panay had been tied up alongside this pier there. When the Japs came in there, they just dive-bombed down on it and dropped bombs. The Panay was trying to get away. Well, the only thing that was showing on the Panay was just a mast. Part of it was sticking above

the water, and later on that disappeared. I don't know what damage was done to it. I have no idea whatsoever.

Marcello: But it was sunk?

Sherrard: It was sunk. Yes, sir, it was tore up. I don't remember how many, but the captain of the Panay and three officers and about ten enlisted men were placed in one of the Marines' trucks and shoved right on back--before we got an ambulance or two there--back into Shanghai to the hospital. I don't remember how many that was killed there--I have no idea--but I do have it in my records at home. I have the records there at home. I helped with the dead bodies there. We sorted them and counted them. Our part of it was picking up after it happened. About 10:30 the next morning, we got everything cleared and had all of them back in Shanghai.

Marcello: In general, what kind of injuries were you dealing with?

Sherrard: Well, I would say that they were mostly shrapnel and probably a few machine gun bullets. But the ones that I took care of mostly was where we would take and put a bandage on them and put on sulfa and stop the bleeding and whatnot. We'd evacuate them out of there immediately, as quick as we could. That was our main thing. We didn't know but what the Japs were going to come back. We didn't know whether they were going to take our battalion. The 4th Marines and 6th Marines were there. We didn't know if they were coming over to

take that or if war had started. We didn't know anything at all, except they sent us down there to get those people and bring them back into Shanghai.

Marcello: While you were here in Shanghai, you obviously must be getting some sort of an idea of the personality of our future enemy. Of course, I'm referring to Japan. What were your early impressions of the Japanese from the Shanghai period when you were there?

Sherrard: Well, I had been in Shanghai before during my first enlistment, and at that time they tried to push us around on the streets. See, they were in our area there at that time. Of course, you know how an American is; and, boy, especially, as a kid like we were, a bunch of us, we didn't get pushed around. We held our own regardless. My opinion of them after that always was that I had no use for them whatsoever. I still don't have any use for them. I still can't understand some of the things that's going on, but that's not for me to say. I was a military man, and I did what they told me to do, and I kept my mouth shut.

Marcello: So I guess what you're saying, in essence, then, is that they gave you the impression of being very arrogant.

Sherrard: Very, very, very arrogant. I tell you, you'd be surprised at the way that they would strut around and everything else and bluster up to you and all that if you'd come in contact with them. Four or five of us had

come in contact with them, and we had orders not to start any problems whatsoever--the first time I was there and the same thing on the second time I was there.

Of course, I'd been in the service quite awhile at the time. I'd been in the service about thirteen years. And I was smart enough to not push myself into where I was going to get hurt. I stayed clear of this brawling and all that stuff that went on there. For one reason, I wanted to hold my rank, which they would take away from me immediately. I mean, if you were with the Marine detachment, they didn't care whether you were a sergeant or first class pharmacist's mate or what it was. If you messed up, that was it. I mean, the Marine Corps is a "can do" outfit. They have my respect all the way through because I served with them so much while I was in the service. Now other people may have other ideas, but my idea of them is that that's what they were like, either aboard a battleship when they had the guards or ashore. All the way around, they were all business, and that was it.

Marcello: Did you perchance have an opportunity to witness the kinds of treatment that the Japanese extended to the Chinese civilians as a result of the fighting and so on?

Sherrard: Only that when they had that deal coming over on the bridge to Shanghai in that area there. I saw some Chinese that were pretty well beat up. I saw some in

there that we took care of that had bayonet stabs and things like that and who are just coolies. They just had loose clothes on and a little ol' hat around their head, and they ran like a mechanical person. I've seen those people when they carried those bamboo deals. They would just lay their loads on this bamboo stick on each side, put one on one shoulder and one on the other, and two of them would run across the bridge. They'd chant as they ran, and there was a rhythm to it as they came. Everything they did had a rhythm to it. I helped take care of several of those at that time. I know that the Japs were very, very tough on them while they were over in that territory.

Marcello: So you developed a fairly early dislike for the Japanese.

Sherrard: I certainly did, very much so.

Marcello: There is something else about your China experiences that I'd like to get your response to. Were you a part of what was called the Asiatic Fleet when you were over there?

Sherrard: No, we were with the 4th and 6th Marines. You see, the 4th Marines were there. The 6th Marines, Fleet Marine Force, was located at San Diego, and we were being trained off the ships out there to go over the side and make landings and whatnot at that time. Well, when we were sent to the Marine base in San Diego, I was

assigned to the San Diego dispensary and to the medical detachment of the 6th Marines under Admiral Boone. Admiral Boone was the only man at that time in the medical service or any other service that had two medals of honor, and he was in charge of our group in Shanghai.

Marcello: So you went to China, then, as part of the medical detachment of the 6th Marines.

Sherrard: Yes, with the 6th Marines. We were all on the Chaumont, the USS Chaumont, and we were landed in Shanghai. Then we went right to the Marine detachment. The 4th Marines were there. We arrived there, and we were integrated with the 4th and 6th Marines. I stayed with the 4th and 6th Marines until .I believe. I went to them in February of 1935, I guess it was, and I stayed with them until July. They brought us back on the Chaumont in July of 1938. At that time the Japs were tearing everything up over there. Our detachment and anybody else knew that if they wanted to come get us, they could come in because they had 50,000 troops there when we had only probably 5,000. But that was about the way it was.

Marcello: What can you tell me about the Asiatic sailors?

Sherrard: The what?

Marcello: The Asiatic sailors. I'm referring now to the sailors in the Asiatic Fleet. Did you ever come into contact with any of those guys?

Sherrard: Oh, yes. I was with those dudes my first trip over

there.

Marcello: What kind of people were they?

Sherrard: They were happy-go-lucky, hard-working sailors--hard-drinking, hard-working--and they just loved those riverboats. They'd do anything that they could to get on those small riverboats that went up and down the river hundreds of miles and whatnot. They loved that type of duty.

The submarines over there were small submarines. We had probably ten small submarines there at that time. I couldn't tell you what they had in the Asiatic Fleet. There were two or three cruisers there of which I did not come in contact, but I did come in contact with the men over on the beach. At that time, again, I was assigned to the Marines, and there we were.

It seems as if I was always with the Marines overseas. My foreign service in Nicaragua was also with the Marines. In China I was assigned to Marines during both my hitches there. The second time was right after I had reenlisted in the service at that period of time, and I was transferred over to the Fleet Marine Force. That's what it was.

Marcello: I gather that most of those Asiatic sailors had a lot of tattoos, also.

Sherrard: Yes, and I stupidly got a lot on me. I'm tattooed from my arms all the way up, and that seemed to be the deal.

They had these little girls in the tattoo shops there, and we hung out at the beer joints and the tattoo shops and things like that, ricksha shelters. That seemed to be the thing to do--to get tattooed. I still have the tattoo that was made in China. I never got one in the United States, though. I got mine in China when I was here the first time. They've all been on me since 1928.

Marcello: I gather a lot of those Asiatic sailors also had Chinese mistresses and so on, did they not?

Sherrard: Well, they called them concubines. You could buy one. At that time you could buy a girl for a hundred dollars money from their parents. She was your property. You gave her a fish head and rice to eat and whatnot, and she took care of whatever you wanted; or you gave her other things if you wanted to. It was a very good place for sailors to be ashore there. You see, they were on the boats. But the Marines all had them a concubine or two. Of course, at the hospital. We had a hospital at that time. We had one at Peking. And that was just the way it was. That was our way of life. That was during the period, I believe, of Chiang Kai-shek. I believe that was the period of him and his wife when they were ruling China. I've seen their money. Their penny is about that big around (gesture).

Marcello: In other words, about the size of our quarter.

Sherrard: It was a little larger than that. Well, I brought back

a whole boxful of them when I came back. I've seen those fellows take those pennies and heat them and throw them out for the coolies to pick up. They'd grab the pennies, and they would burn their hand, but, boy, they would get them. Of course, if they could get two pennies, they could get a bit of rice.

Another thing I saw there was the...they had a "honey barge. I don't know if you've ever heard of one of them or not.

Marcello: I sure have.

Sherrard: Okay. The "honey barge" came by every morning, and you had to have your "slop"--that's what we called it--set out front, and they would dump that in the "honey barge. If anyone that had died during the night and was laying on the streets...which is where a lot of them would take them if they passed away. They would throw them out on the street. The "honey barge" would pick them up and lay their bodies across the front of the "honey barge" and carry them out to where they disposed of all the "honey" they picked up during the day.

They had open toilets there that you went into for females or males. It didn't make any difference where it was at.

There's another thing here that's rather funny; I mean, we got a kick out of it. At a funeral they always had paid mourners, and the women wore pants that were

split at the back. Now if they had to defecate on the road, they would just step out of line as they were mourning and screaming and taking on. Then they would run back and get in line. I wouldn't make any difference. They had bands that played, and they had songs ahead of them there. They carried a coffin on about three or four people's heads down through town. You could see one of those approximately...well, I guess you could see one of them at least twice a week when they had money to pay for it, see. Now the coolies and those that didn't have the money to bury or whatnot, they were thrown out in the road or out in the street or in the river. You could go and see them floating in the river anytime. You could see a "floater" in the river anytime. It didn't make any difference if it was day or night.

Marcello: What were your impressions when you saw this kind of life? What were your attitudes toward the Chinese?

Sherrard: Well, there were two types of Chinese that you dealt with there. I really felt that they were trying to do better in Shanghai for themselves, or they wouldn't have been in Shanghai. Then we had the upper class there, where they had the balls and that part of it, and I was very fortunate to be able to attend a lot of those. I don't know whether it was because I was in the medical service or they didn't know what the score was. Anyhow,

we were not allowed to wear civilian clothes in Shanghai, but some of us managed to get this type of clothes that they would have there, and we would attend those different places. We busted in on several of them. Three or four of us would just bust in on them and think nothing of it, and we were taken right in with them because there were other foreigners there. I mean, it was the White Russians, the Belgians, and the English. English was the language that was spoken there. Sometimes you couldn't understand it.

Marcello: And just for the record again, when were those two tours? Do you remember the years?

Sherrard: The tours?

Marcello: Yes, the tours of duty.

Sherrard: Well, my first tour was in 1928. We had the fleet that went out there, what they called a White Fleet, which was about twenty-five ships or something. They made a circle there, and they went through China, and I was dropped off there at that time. I was put off of the USS Relief, which was a hospital ship, for duty with the Marines for a period of six months. Then I was brought back to the States on a troop carrier. So that was my first tour of duty there, and it consisted of approximately six months. My second tour of duty started in July, I believe it was, or August--I'm not sure--in 1937. It was supposed to have been a six-month

deal, but we continued there until July of 1938 before we were brought back. And when we were brought back, I was sent to another station.

Marcello: So in both tours, you were attached to the Marine Corps?

Sherrard: Yes, both tours I was attached to the Marine Corps.

Marcello: Earlier in our interview, you talked about a period during your career in the Navy when you were attached to the Marines in Nicaragua.

Sherrard: Well, now that was a problem there. In 1925 the Marines had landed in Nicaragua to assist them at Managua. At that time I was a quartermaster, and a quartermaster was a signalman. I was sent over from the USS Melville to assist in that period of time for about three months or four months with the Marines as a signal quartermaster in the Signal Corps that they had there. Their Signal Corps was short of men, and they covered an awful lot of territory. They asked for volunteers, and I volunteered to go over for that period of time. Well, the Melville laid off out there with supplies, went back to the States and picked up more supplies and came back, and at that time I was returned to the Melville.

Marcello: So during that period, you were again more or less attached to the Marines.

Sherrard: That's right.

Marcello: What exactly were you doing with the Marines?

Sherrard: At that time I was piling up carts with wire for the

telephones, and I was handling flags and signaling back and forth. In those days we had the semaphore flags. We were laying wire all up around that area there at the Marine base. When they would go out on these patrols, they didn't have telephone services back in there. At that time we didn't have the radio or that type of communications. Everything had to be over wire. And that was what we were doing, was laying wire to our posts that were back in the hills. Now we had posts. .oh, I don't know. The Marines had posts all over that place. I mean, they had thirty or forty Marines there at one of these places. That was what my job was with them--assisting any way that I could with the Marine Corps in setting up their communication system.

Marcello: Now was this during that period when the Marines were trying to track down the guerrilla leader Sandino?

Sherrard: Yes, that was it. They would chase Sandino all over the country.

Marcello: What do you know about Sandino from what you heard and so on down there?

Sherrard: Well, from what I heard and what everybody else said, they wanted to capture him and shoot him. That's about all I could ever know (chuckle). If they ever got him in their sights, that was it.

Marcello: If you can remember, what was the reaction of the native

Nicaraguans to the Marines being there?

Sherrard: Oh, they loved it. The Marines in town there and whatnot, you were something while you were there. The Marines, they thought, were "it" because they protected them. They protected them at night. The public would go to bed and go to sleep and have safety, which they couldn't have with the rebels hitting them and running like Sandino did.

Marcello: So they were more sympathetic to the American presence there than they were to Sandino?

Sherrard: Oh, yes, all that I found there was at that time. Everything was for the American's being there.

Marcello: Okay, this finally gets us up to that period when you get to Pearl Harbor. Let me ask you this question. When was it that you got married?

Sherrard: July 11, 1932.

Marcello: What was the Navy's response or attitude toward marriage and so on during that period?

Sherrard: Well, if you were a second class petty officer and above, they probably would give you an allowance, housing allowance, or they would transport your wife to wherever you were going. They would assist you. Now at that time there was not very many Navy quarters on the bases. You had to find you an apartment wherever you lived. But the living conditions. .it was right after the Depression, and you could get a house for, say,

twenty-five dollars including the water; or a furnished apartment, a little two-room, three-room apartment, which was sufficient. Then in Portsmouth, Virginia, we lived in some fine places there. Of course, I was attached to the Naval Air Station at Norfolk, across the bay there.

But all and all, I can say that the Navy held together much more than they do now. If we went into a place, like, my wife and I went in there, the other sailors there would invite you to their home until you got set. You stuck together; you were a clique. In other words, wherever you worked and whatnot, the Navy was with you. Now I've had families to move in with me for so much as two or three months before they found a home. I did the same thing, even after I had my two boys. It was the same deal there. When we moved to Pearl Harbor, we had the same deal there. My quarters were not ready on the base, and when my wife got out there with the two boys, a family took us in, a Navy family, and we lived together even though we slept on the floor or whatever it was. We stuck together. The Navy stuck together.

I don't know what they do now, but I know back in those days, if you had problems, the Navy Relief was ready to help you. The Chaplain's Corps was ready to help you. You had all the assistance that a Navy person

could have had and more than at home. When my wife went into places like San Diego, the Freemans met us, and we went out to their house, and we stayed there until we got our apartment. You know, things like that. We're still in contact with some of them--the wives mostly, because most of the husbands have passed on.

I'm assuming, however, that your wife did not accompany you on any of the overseas tours, such as the one to China.

No, she was not allowed over there because mine was not a permanent place.

You were temporarily attached to the Marines.

No, it's not temporarily. You were attached to the Marines as part of their unit. You became part of their unit until you were left there. Now when I was with the Marines in San Diego and I was based with the Fleet Marine Force, she was part of the unit out there. She attended their meetings and everything that went with it. And we wore a Marine uniform. The Marines were at our house more than sailors, unless they were in the medical service. We lived right with them and everything else when I was with that part of the service.

As a matter of fact, there was quite a thing that came up about that. We had a store down about two blocks from where we lived. I always went in there in

the evening and bought food with my Marine uniform on. Well, we had an inspection, and for an inspection we had to be in Navy uniforms. Well, when I came home that afternoon, I stopped off there, and this clerk in there looked at me and said, "What goes here?" He said, "You're not in the Marines, are you?" I said, "No, I'm in the Navy. He said, "There's a Marine that comes in here every night and buys groceries and whatnot and looks just like you and lives right down here. I said, "That's my twin brother. (chuckle)

Marcello: Well, how was it that you would have had both the Marine and the Navy uniforms?

Sherrard: Well, you see, when the Navy came out there for the inspections, you had to keep your Navy uniforms. You wore your Marine uniforms while you were on the base with the Marines. But if the Navy came in for an inspection, a uniform inspection and for haircuts and all everything that you had, you had to show that you had the proper Navy uniforms available. You were always in dress whites or dress blues for this Navy inspection. That showed up about once every four months or six months there--from the Navy department.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about the process by which you got to Pearl Harbor, Mr. Sherrard. How did this come about? I'm again referring to that period when you were at Pearl Harbor prior to December 7

Sherrard: Well, I had finished my tour of duty at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station. I was first class pharmacist's mate at the time. And you have to go back to sea for two years, what they call "sea duty. Hawaii was not a state at that time, and it was considered "sea duty. I had been in aviation, so they transferred me from Great Lakes, Waukegen, to Pearl Harbor, to Ford Island, to assist with the examinations for the aviation branch of the Navy. It was a permanent transfer, and I was supposed to be there two years on a permanent transfer. Well, I had been there three months, and the supply department made all the arrangements to fly my wife to San Francisco and put her aboard one of the luxury liners there and bring her and the boys out to Pearl Harbor. Well, when she got out there, they lacked two or three weeks having my quarters finished. I was supposed to have quarters on the base there. Well, we stayed with a family for that period of time, and we were the second family that moved in the new quarters that was built. Webb...I don't know if you met him or not.

Marcello: I sure did.

Sherrard: Well, Webb was moved in about three weeks after we moved in, and then Mr. Miller was another one, Lieutenant Miller, and he was the one that later on you'll hear about him and I in the car deal. He moved in there, and

he was chief boatswain's mate, and they were promoting him--this was before the war started--to a lieutenant in charge of the post office at Pearl Harbor Naval District.

It's the 14th Naval District, isn't it?

I believe it is, 14th.

He was the postmaster in charge of it. At that time they handled all the Navy mail and all the mail out that was going through there. Well, he lived in the next house down from us. We lived in this little area there --the three of us. While I was there, they assigned me to the Aviation Medicine School. I was instructor in the school there and was an instructor when the war started. That was my duty with the aviators. I worked with all the...well, I gave Admiral Halsey his physical examination. I wrote it up and got him ready for it and the doctor, C.D. Riggs, who later on was a rear admiral in the Navy, gave him his physicals. Later on, Riggs retired as a rear admiral. A friend was talking to me the other day, and he had been to Pearl Harbor, and he'd met Dr. Riggs on the ramp coming down. They talked quite a bit there about what took place that day, December 7. Dr. Riggs was the one that took charge of the dispensary when the war started. Our captain was out-of-hand at the time, and, oh, maybe two or three hours later, well, he got down to the dispensary.

Marcello: So when was it, then, that you got to Pearl Harbor?
When were you assigned there? What year?

Sherrard: In 1940.

Marcello: So you were there in 1940.

Sherrard: Yes. My wife came out there in March of 1940.

Marcello: And you mentioned that once you got out there,
eventually you were living in this four-plex, I guess it
was.

Sherrard: Yes.

Marcello: They were pretty nice quarters, if I can believe what
Mr. Webb told me yesterday.

Sherrard: They were nice quarters, yes. They were downstairs and
upstairs. We had our bedrooms upstairs, and we had our
other rooms downstairs. My quarters were right
next. .well, his was on the corner here (gesture), right
around from it, and mine was here (gesture). After the
war started and they found out I was a warrant officer,
they were going to move me out of those over into the
warrant officer's quarters which was just across the
road. And my wife wouldn't fly back. They were
offering to fly them back since one of my sons had been
pretty well shell-shocked. He went down there when they
were picking up survivors with my wife, which she
shouldn't have taken him down there. But it didn't
bother my youngest son. He was born in 1938, and, of
course, those things didn't bother him so much.

But the night before the war started, my wife and my two children and another family by the name of Sealley had planned on going around to the other side of the island and go swimming. He and his wife had a little girl. We'd lived together at Great Lakes. We'd known each other there, and my wife and his wife went over on the same boat and roomed together going to Hawaii. He was attached to the semi-dispensary on the main side. Ford Island is surrounded with water, and then there was the main side. Well, we had planned on making the trip around the island. The week before, I'd been on duty. They called all of us in, and we were all ready there waiting for the carriers to come in. Well, instead of the carriers that were due in there, the battleships were there, and they were supposed to leave. Well, they didn't leave. We thought that they were going to leave the next day, on Monday morning, you know. On Sunday morning all our carriers were out at sea, and all of our battleships were lined up. The dispensary was set within 150-200 feet of the California.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Where was the dispensary located in terms of where your living quarters were? I guess what I'm trying to get at is, how would you get from your living quarters to the dispensary? What was your usual route or method?

Sherrard: Usually, I cut through the quarters and walked over

there. But this morning everything was taking place over there, and Mr. Miller said, "Let's take my car. My car is all ready to go. I said, "No, we'll take mine. He said, "No, we'll take mine. I've got it ready.

Marcello: Let's back up a little bit here because there are a couple of details I want to get. What did you do that evening of December 6? Do you recall what you and your family did?

Sherrard: Yes. We drove into Honolulu and picked up supplies, you know, what we wanted for a picnic. My wife needed a bathing suit, and we finally found what we wanted for the bathing suit. So when we came back, we did as you usually do at home at night. No television. We had a little radio. We listened to that little radio.

So the next morning, we got up early for breakfast, so we'd get ready to go. We heard these planes. My wife said, "Paul, I hear planes flying. I said, "Well, Alma, they don't fly on Sunday. She said, "Well, they're flying today. She walked out of the door, and she looked up. About a hundred feet above us there at our home, she saw those little red balls on there, and she came running back. She said, "They're not our planes! They've got a little red ball on them!" I told her, "Hell, this is war!"

Marcello: Did she say this in an excited manner or in a matter-of-fact manner?

Sherrard: Matter-of-fact, because she didn't realize what it was. About that time they started dropping the bombs. Well, the shrapnel began falling in our yard.

Marcello: Is this shrapnel from our own antiaircraft fire, or is this shrapnel from bombs?

Sherrard: From bombs that they dropped. We have several pieces of it at home, if I can locate it. Since she's been sick, I don't know what happened to it. And we had parts of the planes and different things that she got as souvenirs. But she looked up, and I ran back because, of course, I knew about the ball and whatnot because I'd been in the service. That's the first time she'd ever seen anything like that.

Marcello: So you're just a couple of blocks, then, from the dispensary and Ford Island and so on.

Sherrard: Well, across from the mainland. You see, I'm on the mainland. Our quarters were right on the mainland, and we could stand there and look right at the Arizona and the island across there.

Marcello: I see.

Sherrard: The quarters we thought we were going to get were right on Ford Island. There were four houses down there. The captain had one, a senior Hospital Corps officer had one, a commander had one, and a doctor had one. Well, they were going to let us have the one the doctor had, but then our quarters got opened up over there. They

wanted me there because the work that I did was pretty essential to the dispensary.

Marcello: So you evidently have to take a motor launch when you want to get over to Ford Island.

Sherrard: Yes. So what we did, we got in the car, and we started up to go to the motor launch landing. His building where he worked, district post office, was just two blocks down, and he had a parking place there reserved for him.

Marcello: In the meantime, what instructions have you given your wife and so on and so forth?

Sherrard: Well, I told her to go in the closet and lock the door and not to answer the door unless they were military.

Marcello: And she has the two children with her?

Sherrard: Two children. The oldest boy wanted to know why they were going to do that to him because he'd always been a good boy (chuckle).

Marcello: How old were they at the time?

Sherrard: Well, one was born on September 4, 1934, and the other one was born on February 3, 1938. He was born while I was in Shanghai, China.

Marcello: Okay, so she locks herself in this closet with the two boys.

Sherrard: She went in there, and she's very inquisitive, wanting to know what was going on, so she gets out to see what's going on. When the second wave comes by, that's when

they sprayed the house with machine gun bullets. She gets back inside because the Marines and the soldiers were telling her to get back and get out of the road out there. So she got back in the house. I left putting my shoes on and getting in Mr. Miller's car.

Okay, so describe your journey from your quarters to wherever you were going to go.

I got outside, and, as I said, we'd go in Miller's car. We got started and we had to go up from the quarters about maybe four or five blocks. Now that was during the first run. This plane came in and shot the motor out of Mr. Miller's car. In other words, the bullets that he put in there were right in the motor part of it, not in the cab part of it. Well, Miller went to the ditch on one side, and I went to the ditch on the other side, and the car went zooming! The car was completely demolished from that deal there.

Well, when we came back out of there, out of the ditches, which were on the side of the road, we jumped on a truck there. Miller had just made lieutenant and had his uniform on, and he said, "Let's get to the pier so Paul can get over to Ford Island and I can get back to my station!" His station was there at the 14th Naval District. This truck had three or four in it, and we started out, and we went right in.

I got on a watch as quick as I was there. There

were three or four injured, and I started taking care of them. We got to the launch on the other side, and here comes a battleship right down through there, Nevada. The planes were coming in on their next run. They had them sent about thirty minutes apart. I don't know just what it was. But another group was coming in. When they came in the first time, they came in opposite of any flying we'd ever done there. Our quarters faced north and south, and they came in from the west. We always flew off to the east out, see.

Therefore, I didn't realize that my wife had heard the motors running because she knew I was out every day or so flying with different groups, and she was always waiting when they came in. She heard the plane, and she told me that there were planes flying. She said there were a lot of them. And there sure was, because about forty or fifty of them flew right over the top of our house, and while they were flying over, Mr. Miller and I were trying to get back to our stations.

Marcello: Okay, so you're now in this motor launch heading toward Ford Island, the Nevada is steaming out, and it's the target of probably every Japanese plane in the area.

Sherrard: Yes. Well, when we landed I ran over to the dispensary, which was about maybe 300 or 400 yards from the landing place, and I got in the door just in time to look up and see a bomb coming down. That bomb hit the front part of

the dispensary. They were trying to hit the California, but they missed. Something happened and that bomb didn't bust, didn't explode. It went down in the bottom of the dispensary and made a hole about thirty feet deep and about twenty, twenty-five feet wide through all that concrete, and that bomb stayed in there for about two months after the war started.

Marcello: I'm assuming that you were not molested in any way when you were in that motor launch going over to Ford Island.

Sherrard: Oh, no. The only thing was, we thought that they were going to sink the Nevada right out in the stream. Some of us on there said that that ship should never have tried to make it. And it didn't. The fellow, whoever was in command of it, ran it aground out there in order to keep it from blocking the channel. If he would have blocked that channel there, well, it would have been wide-open, and everything could come in.

Marcello: What was the condition of the water when you were going out to Ford Island?

Sherrard: Smooth.

Marcello: Had the oil and all that sort of thing not yet spread over the water?

Sherrard: Oh, no. That was probably down at Battleship Row, at which the dispensary was here (gesture) and Battleship Row was here (gesture). There was the California...there were five battleships tied up there.

The Arizona got the worst part of it. The California was sunk; it went straight down. Later they brought it up. And the Oklahoma, I believe, turned over.

I went to the dispensary, and they told me they needed me around on the other side of the island. They had one of those little go-carts that you sit in, the cart on the side with little motor over here (gesture), and this Marine took me around there past the officers' quarters. The Utah was turned upside down out there. That's why they sent me. They thought that I could help coordinate getting some of those people back over. That was Dr. Riggs that sent me there. I saw there was nothing to be done, so I came on back to the dispensary.

Marcello: Back at the dispensary, whether we're talking about the first time you were there or when you returned, how would you describe the scene? Was it one of professionalism and order, or was it chaos and confusion?

Sherrard: There was no chaos whatsoever. It was just perfectly coordinated, and every corpsman knew what he was doing. When they would bring those Marines in and whatnot and those people who were burnt, we laid them under the shelter. See, the dispensary had a bulletproof shelter through it. We laid them on the floor there.

I went to the dispensary, and I told the pharmacist there to make up four gallons of. I forget what it was

now. Anyway, it was to put on burns. We opened our storeroom up, and I put a fellow in there, and I said, "Anything they need, you pass it out to them. Don't care who it is. If they're from outside or anywhere else, it doesn't matter. We don't need it here in the storeroom. We need it out there where it can be used.

Marcello: In other words, all of the paperwork and formalities are pushed aside?

Sherrard: There was no paperwork whatsoever for two or three days. Some of us worked all night long. The worst part of it, that scared me more than anything else, of course, besides my family being there, was the fact that that night some of our carriers, for some reason, sent some of their planes in. Well, all those guys were trigger-happy. I don't know if we had planes shot down or not. I think we lost a lot of planes coming in. It never came out, although some people knew about it. But I was one that didn't know what had taken place. My wife told me. .see, she was right next to where they were shooting them down coming in there, and she could stand in our window there and look out before they boarded it up. She could look out and see everything that was going on --the Arizona and all those fuel tanks. My God, we had fuel tanks within a hundred feet of our house, and if they would have busted into those fuel tanks, they would have torn everything up in there. They didn't touch the

fuel tanks or anything in that part at all. But the submarines, some of those little two-man submarines and whatnot, had come up that channel.

Marcello: How long did you keep working in the dispensary there before you got a chance to see your wife and children again?

Sherrard: Well, it was about five days, and she came over, and she said, "They are going to evacuate me and the boys out of here to Honolulu. Well, the first day she refused to go when they wanted to evacuate her. She said, "No, my husband will be here, and we'll be all right. Well, a hospital corpsman from the hospital up on the hill had slipped off and crawled through the mud down to our house there. His wife was in town. So Alma, when she was to evacuate, was going to go by and pick up Mrs. Ball, and then they were going over to the Esslinger's and stay there. The Ball's had been married just a little time. The Esslinger's had a daughter. So they took our car...my wife had a lot of groceries. She loaded the car up with the groceries that we had there, and a Marine drove her from the house and was picked up by an Army escort, and they escorted her through Honolulu out to the Esslinger's. When they got out there, they didn't have a thing to eat in the house. There were five families there with nothing to eat there at the Esslinger's. Well, she carried all this food in

that she had. She had enough to last ten or twelve days for that group.

But they had no bread. So the next day my wife. .nobody pushed her around very much. She was going to go to the store and get some bread. But they got her and brought her back to the place (chuckle). The soldier that brought her back said, "Do you want some bread that bad?" She said, "Our kids want bread. So he went and bought them about ten loaves of bread from somewhere, and that's where they got the bread to last them for the two weeks before she moved back out to our home in Pearl Harbor.

To top it all off, our cat got locked up in that house, and you've never seen such a torn up and nasty house as ours with that durned old cat in there (chuckle). On the table, for breakfast, she'd had pancakes, and he'd eaten all those pancakes. Our toilet bowl was empty (laughter) where he had drank the water (laughter). What an experience, I tell you.

Marcello: I had some good questions to ask you, but I've lost my whole train of thought now.

Sherrard: (Chuckle) Well, I shouldn't tell these little stories that happened.

Marcello: Well, I think that gives human interest to the whole thing that happened there. What was I going to say? I thought I had some brilliant questions to ask. That

night, after the attack was over, was there more or less. .how did you cope with blackouts and so on there at the dispensary?

Sherrard: Well, we had been practicing for blackouts for a long time. We had crepe, black crepe, that we put across our windows before we painted them, too. Then we painted them. But the building was a concrete building without a lot of windows, and what windows were built in there were these blocks that were opaque, you know. You could have a certain amount of light to it, but if you put a candle or something near it, they could see it outside. Of course, you've seen them in the banks and different places where they have those windows. Well, that was only just a few of the rooms that had that, and they were on the bottom floor.

But on the second floor of the dispensary, we had beds all through there. That first night I had a Jap body up there. I had them bring him in, and we locked him in one of the rooms. He was shot down in a plane, and we wanted him there in order for the intelligence people to get all the facts they could off of him. So we locked that down, and nobody knew anything about it except a Marine captain, myself, and a doctor that was with us there, Dr. Smith. He knew where I had this body hidden away up there. So the next day I notified the commandant that I had him there because they had been

looking for him. Of course, they came and got him, and what they did from then on out, I don't know. Anyway, he had a long band wrapped around him, and we unwrapped that dude, and that thing would reach twice across this room.

Marcello: You're referring to the band around the stomach, that had all the stitches and so on on it?

Sherrard: Oh, yes. I have a strip of it about that long (gesture) at home somewhere. I don't know just where it's at now, since our house has been torn up so much, unless my wife has gotten rid of it. But it was left in the room after they got through cutting it loose and seeing about him and all that, you know, there in the room. That was the first Jap that I had had any real contact with during the war. Of course, they were all flying over.

Marcello: How did your medical supplies hold out?

Sherrard: Fine. We had plenty medical supplies. We had no problem with them whatsoever on Ford Island because most of our patients were evacuated the next day or the following day, so we would have that clear to take care of all the people that came from the ships and whatnot. We put them up in the quarters there, made quarters for them at the base. Of course, everytime we would bring a group in, one of our corpsmen would have to go over and check and see if they needed any help or anything like that. A lot of them were pretty well stupefied from the

impact of it. Of course, I'm glad that we were bringing them in and setting them up. Our morgue was set up in one of the hangars that hadn't been completely torn down and because we had all these injured Marines and sailors laying this way (gesture) around the walls under that canopy. We thought that if they came back again, with our rooms full, we didn't put them out in the open because we'd already had this bomb dropped out in the middle of it. So we just lined them there, and we would take care of them. We had two boys that carried water around, and we'd set them up and talk to them, and they would give them a drink of water or whatever they wanted. We did the best we could for them until we got some food in there.

Marcello: Which patients received priority?

Sherrard: Those that we figured were really serious burned and those that we figured would be fatal. Now minor injuries, one like I got, didn't amount to anything.

Marcello: You mentioned that you received a minor injury, but I don't believe you've mentioned this in the interview yet. How did this take place?

Sherrard: Well, a piece of hot metal slapped me in the leg. You can feel it. See that?

Marcello: Yes, I can see kind of like some scar tissue in there.

Sherrard: Yes, it hit me in there (gesture).

Marcello: This is on your lower right leg.

Sherrard: Yes. And it burned just a little bit, was all. All I did. I had a pair of khaki trousers on, and it ruined my khaki trouser. Blood was running down, and what I did, I just put sulfa in it and wrapped it up and never said a word about it to anybody. I pulled that piece of metal out, and I have it at home.

Marcello: And when did that occur?

Sherrard: That occurred on the second run that the Japs made.

Marcello: Now was this when you and Lieutenant Miller were trying to.

Sherrard: No, no, after I got into Ford Island.

Marcello: I see.

Sherrard: I was out in the street, and they were bombing some of the ships. They were coming in with dive-bombers, and we were shooting. Now I don't know whether it was our shells or their shells or what it came from, but shrapnel was falling all around. I didn't have a hard hat on, like I should have had, or anything like that. We had helmets there, but I didn't carry one out there. Of course, that came down, and it must have bounced on the sidewalk or somewhere and hit there. I didn't know it. I guess it was an hour-and-a-half that I discovered that my pants were bloody down there. I thought it was from picking somebody up or taking care of them. So I went back up and took my trousers off and got everything I needed out of them and took my belt off, and I threw

them back in the corner of the room. I went to take my socks off, and I discovered I didn't have on a pair of socks (chuckle). And that was it. I never reported it, never said nothing about it to anybody or anything. Some of them knew it that were there, but to me it was just nothing.

Marcello: So that morning, when you put on your clothes, you forgot to put on socks.

Sherrard: Well, I had one sock on and one sock off. I was running with my shoes in my hand to catch Mr. Miller to be sure that I got over there, because he had already told me he was going to get his car running and we were going to get over.

Marcello: How long a stretch did you work taking care of the wounded, that is, without any break or without any relief or any sleep?

Sherrard: About twenty-six, twenty-eight hours. I stayed up from the time I got over there that morning until. .I slept standing up, they said, alongside the bulkhead when I did turn loose and I thought everything had been cleared enough for me to sit down or anything else. But I was on my feet continually or doing something from, say, 8:00 in the morning, when they made their run, whatever time it was. I forget now. But, anyhow, I was on my feet all that time, all that night and all the next day until the next afternoon, without anything to eat and

just something to drink. We were very fortunate in our dispensary there. We had several cases of Coca-Cola, and I managed to stash a few of those, and a certain one of us would go up and get a cold Coke when we needed it. That's about all we had during that period of time.

We had an ensign there by the name of Griffith, Eugene Griffith. Eugene and I had the same type of job, and we worked together on this thing. He lived in the house that I was going to live in on Ford Island. He got the house because he was senior to me at that time. Of course, his wife and daughter were there during the contact and whatnot. He fell out later on in life. I don't know what happened to him. He just made lieutenant, and then when he retired, why...he had family troubles. As I understand it, he ended it all himself. I met him one time after that. We were going to fly back out to Pearl, and he chickened out on me.

Marcello: I have a couple of other questions. Earlier in the interview, you had mentioned that one of your sons had suffered some shock as a result of the attack. Describe what had happened and how that incident came about.

Sherrard: Well, you see, across the road was the Army Air Corps base, Hickam Field, and that was where he went to school. The road where we lived was just across and the gates where you went in there. Someway or another, they were carrying these wounded and these dead or whatnot up

to one of the other places to put them for their. .now this is the second day. Well, the first day my wife and my sons and the lady that lived next door--there was four of them--went down to the bay to see what was going on down there, and they saw all those bodies floating. Well, they were in little boats and everything else trying to get them out from the Arizona. He saw all those people dead the first night, and that was along at dusk. Well, she should have never taken him down there to begin with, but she wanted to see what was going on.

They had run that submarine up on the ground there, and she was wanting to see if they ever got the guy out of it. Well, a friend of ours was going to go in to get him out, and he said, "I'm too big to get through the hole. Well, my wife said, "I'm not. At that time she only weighed 120 pounds. She said, "I can go get him. (chuckle) And they ran her off back to the quarters.

Marcello: Okay, I think there's another incident here involving the shrapnel and so on, too, that figures into your story. Is that correct?

Sherrard: Well, the shrapnel was all out in our yard and on our porch, and she went out and picked it up. When she went in, she saw where the bullet had come through the door and hit our dining table. She picked up thirty, thirty-five pieces of shrapnel from there. I always said that one of them had a sign on it that said, "Made in

Missouri" and was sent to me special express or something (chuckle)

Marcello: Let me go back and ask this question. Prior to the attack, could you detect any changes in the routine over there at Ford Island that maybe indicated that something might be coming? Maybe not at Pearl Harbor, but simply war with Japan.

Sherrard: We anticipated, some of us, that something was going to happen because the week before they had called my house and told me to come on back to duty. Every soldier, every sailor, and Marine that was on the island that they could get hold of were back to their duty stations. During that whole period of time, we had blackouts. The battleships were blacked out. Now I don't know if you've heard this or not, but when that Sunday morning came, December 7, they had everything opened up full. But on Saturday night, we were all at our stations, regardless of who you were or what you were, and they were issuing helmets, and we'd been issued gas bags. We had to carry that damned old gas tank with us everywhere we went.

Marcello: And when did this occur?

Sherrard: The week before.

Marcello: Okay.

Sherrard: At our station at Ford Island, our guns were manned and everything else at that period of time, on that weekend.

Marcello: You'd been around for a while. You'd obviously been in the Navy for a bunch of years at that point. If you could put yourself back in that period of time, did you think that the Japanese would have the audacity to attack Pearl Harbor?

Sherrard: Yes, I sure did, because I had read the history of the time. I was pretty much of a historian, and I read everything I could about what had happened in the previous years in regard to things and whatnot. I had seen raids made by the Japs when I was in China, and also I'd seen raids made when I was down in Nicaragua by Sandino's men, so to me everything began to stack up. And then they began to call back in 1938, I believe it was, reserve people, which we never had known before. I'd never known what a dadgummed reserve looked like or anything else. They also called retired people back to active duty at their old rank and rate and whatnot. See what I mean? Some of them they gave a higher rating to. I had never seen anything like that all the time that I had been in the service. So everything began to add up because we were always at odds with the Japanese. It was always this about the Japanese or that about the Japanese. I anticipated that somewhere, sometime, that there was going to be hell to break loose.

Marcello: But do you think it would be at Pearl Harbor?

Sherrard: Well, I really don't know. I didn't know that much

about Pearl Harbor except by flying around it, see. I was in a plane quite a bit when we'd go around there. I couldn't anticipate a fleet coming in there and taking Pearl Harbor. I knew that if it was taken, it would be from internal. In other words, the 70,000 Japs that we had over there were aliens. I knew if it would ever come it would be an internal deal. It couldn't have been from the air. They could tear everything up from the air, but the people that we had there--our Marines and our soldiers and our sailors--were really "gung-ho. I'd been with them so much and seen so much that they had done and different things and while they trained and whatnot that I just couldn't anticipate the damage. But we always thought, and we've mentioned this many a time there where we worked: "Why did they bring in those aircraft carriers and line them up there?"

Marcello: The battleships, you mean?

Sherrard: No, aircraft carriers.

Marcello: Oh, aircraft carriers.

Sherrard: Yes, they put them in there the same week. The weekend that they hit the aircraft carriers were supposed to be there; but they stayed out, and the battleships stayed in. If it hadn't been for that, we would have lost that war because they would have gotten every one of our good aircraft carriers. There was five of them, and all of them would tie up right there, right down Battleship

Row. It was on Ford Island side. We could walk from our dispensary out to their gangplank and go up on board them.

Marcello: I'm assuming that what happened at Pearl Harbor only served to increase your dislike for the Japanese.

Sherrard: Well, it didn't help any (chuckle), if you come right down to it, because I never had a good feeling for them after being in China like I was and seeing them there. Of course, I had been to Tokyo, and I wasn't too much impressed with them there. To me, as far as I was concerned, they were just a skinhead. I mean, if I caught one in front of my car and I had to turn this way to miss him, I would have turned the other way and got him. And that's my feelings today about them. I don't care what they say or anything else. I saw so many of my friends die, and they shot at my wife and my kids over there. I'd just like to tell you, I just can't have any feelings, and I'll never buy anything from Japan. Anytime I find a car that comes from over there and they're trying to sell it to me, I call them. .that's just the way I feel about them. I always have and I can't get it out of my system. But they really had an enormous fleet, and they had it down to what they were going to do. Even on Guam, when we'd be in Guam, they'd come over there and land once in a while in the port.

Marcello: Courtesy calls or whatever?

Sherrard: Yes, whatever. It was the thing over there. They thought they were "it."

Marcello: They just thought we were inferior to them.

Sherrard: Absolutely. Except some of the big admirals. They knew that if they ever got into it with us--and they couldn't talk them out of it--that it would be a hard go of it, regardless. That was all.

Marcello: Did your wife and children eventually have to evacuate to the mainland?

Sherrard: Oh, yes. On April 1, they boarded to old Lurline, which had been converted to a troop transport. She didn't have that stateroom and all that service. She had a little room about the size of your toilet in there. They had two beds in there, and they took turns--one lady and then her and the children--sleeping. They sat on the floor, no chairs. They had to sit on the floor. They had to carry a life jacket with them all the time. And she was seasick all the way back, but it didn't bother the kids. She was ten days coming back from Pearl, which, if she would have flown back, she'd been back the next day. But she refused to fly back.

Marcello: And when was the next time, then, you were able to see your wife and children?

Sherrard: Well, after the Battle of Midway. See, that started in June.

That would be in June of 1942?

June, 1942. I went aboard the USS Northampton and had all my supplies and everything on there. I left the Northampton and went to the Yorktown with the squadron. While I was there when they started the Battle of Midway. The Yorktown was sunk on the 9th of June, and we were picked up by the Hamman. I was picked up from the Hamman by a submarine and taken out and put on board a PBY and taken back to Pearl. I got back to Pearl, and I worked at Pearl helping in the search for survivors of the Battle of Midway. I was out every day.

Then when I came back from there, they had my orders cut, and I went aboard the old Chaumont and came back to the States. And from there I went to an air station at Norman, Oklahoma. I was in Norman for a little bit, and then I went to an air station outside of Memphis, the Memphis Air Station. Then from there, they ordered me back to Norfolk, Virginia, the air station at Norfolk, Virginia.

I spent a year-and-a-half there, and I was sent aboard the carrier CVE-90, USS Thetis Bay. We went out to the Solomon Islands. We were out there in a battle, but the Thetis Bay was not involved in it. What they were using her for was to go back and forth to the States and pick up fighter pilots and their planes, and when they would get off of the islands out there, these

Navy pilots would fly the planes over to the airstrips to replace their planes.

Marcello: I think these were called "jeep" carriers, weren't they?

Sherrard: "Jeep" carriers, yes, sir. I served aboard that dude about seven or eight months. I don't remember just how long.

I got transferred to the Naval Hospital at Oakland, California, due to sickness. I was there just a little while, and they sent me to Memphis, Tennessee, again, the air station there. Then they sent me out to a hospital at Charleston, South Carolina, and were going to put me out of the service. I just raised so much hell about it, that the war was still on and I wasn't about to get out of the service.

The war was winding up then. That was about the time they dropped the bomb and everything else. So they ordered me to Jacksonville, Florida, to the air station at Jacksonville, Florida, and I retired. Well, I didn't retire. I transferred from there into what they called a reserve unit, active deal. I'd had twenty-four-and-a-half years service at that time, and I was allowed to return on call for active duty and take a physical every year and whatnot. I was there until 1954 with that unit when they fully retired me from the Navy.

Marcello: I have just one or two more questions to ask. You mentioned earlier something about the Battle of Midway,

and I wasn't quite clear on this. Were you on the carrier Yorktown when it was sunk?

Sherrard: Yes.

Marcello: That's another story, and it's kind of beyond the scope of this interview, but that must have been interesting, also.

Sherrard: Well, I hadn't been aboard it long enough for it to be real interesting (chuckle). We were just out there in the battle, and the submarines were all around us and hitting us. I left her and went to the Hamman, which picked up the survivors. You've probably heard of that Ensign Gay that had all that problem there.

Marcello: Yes.

Sherrard: Well, I went out to help take care of him at the time that he was found. He was found by another PBY than ours. But at the time, why, I was there when we brought him aboard and took him back to Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: But you were actually on the Yorktown when the Japanese bombed it.

Sherrard: Yes, I was aboard her when they attacked it and all that. That lasted two days.

Marcello: That's when they were trying to save it.

Sherrard: Yes. It was listing, and we were trying to save it, and they were coming back after it. That's what it was, see.

Marcello: And then I think it was during that period that a Japanese submarine put a couple torpedoes into it.

Sherrard: When it did that, we took. .some of us had cords, line, you know. Nylon had just come out. I had a flashlight that I had water-proofed and tied to my jacket. What do you call it?

Marcello: Your life jacket.

Sherrard: Life jacket. I tied my jackknife to it and a little medical kit. Well, when we went off of there, we were evacuating the sick and the wounded out of the sickbay. Some of them were put in boats to let them get away from there, you know, the wounded. We took this line that we had there, and some of them...they had balls with line tied to them, and they took them about 600 or 700 feet out from the ship. They would take the people out there, the survivors, and they would hang on to that until the time they got picked up. Well, some of them had been out there pretty long, and it was getting pretty rough. There was about four or five of us that had done that, and we swam around, and we tied a knot around their back and over their arms and tied a loop so they wouldn't have to hold onto that deal. They would put their chin over it with their life jacket, and they would float okay That's what we did. And that's where they picked them up. The destroyers and submarines and everything had gathered right in there at that time to help the ship. What I did aboard the ship was nothing. I was just there in a compassionate capacity. When I

left it, it was the same way.

Marcello: But you did pick up the Yorktown back in Pearl Harbor?

Sherrard: Yes. She'd come in, and she had her bow blown off.

Marcello: She was undergoing all kinds of repairs, or was supposed to.

Sherrard: Yes, at the front of it there, see. When my squadron-- they attached me to a squadron--went aboard, well, I went aboard with it. We knew they were going to hit Midway.

Marcello: You're attached to an air squadron now, is that correct?

Sherrard: Yes. So when I get aboard there, I'm supposed to go to another ship. But our squadron flew off of that during the battle. Part of them came back, and part of them didn't come back to the Yorktown because it wasn't there. But my duties aboard there, I mean, were so insignificant, and what I did didn't deserve a mention hardly of anything, except I was on her and that was it.

Marcello: Refresh my memory Was the Yorktown hit with bombs or torpedoes?

Sherrard: Torpedo bombers. The Japs came in and dropped them, but a submarine was what sent her to the bottom.

Marcello: Yes. Evidently she was hit by the carrier planes, and she developed that list, and they abandoned ship. Then they decided they could tow her back to port or something, I believe.

Sherrard: We thought we were going to make her seaworthy. A bunch

volunteered to go help bring her back. If the submarines hadn't have showed up, we'd have brought her back to Pearl. At that angle, she was down.

Marcello: What did it feel like when those Japanese aerial torpedoes slammed into the Yorktown? Could you feel that when you were on board?

Sherrard: No. I was in a position where I couldn't feel hardly anything. I was on the second deck down. We knew they were a good hit, see, but we didn't feel that the damage that they did and everything was that much because they were hitting under the water with those torpedoes.

Marcello: When the Yorktown was originally evacuated, abandoned, was it done in an orderly fashion?

Sherrard: Everything was orderly. I don't believe there was any. .some of them were screaming, without a doubt, from pain and whatnot, burning, and we lost those. But what I'm thinking is that those guys had so much confidence in themselves and did so much. The crew that stayed aboard to save her, the watertight crew and the engineers and all those people, volunteered for that. All they got rid of at that time was the excess baggage. In other words, those that were injured, those that would not be of any benefit to the ship in any way whatsoever if it went down, they got those off of it immediately. So the captain of the ship and the commanding officer and all of them really did a good job

all the way through.

It was the same thing when they hit the Hamman. Now I left the Hamman, I guess, an hour after they hit it. We knew it was sunk. One submarine hit it, and we knew we were going to lose it.

Marcello: Well, didn't they hit the Hamman about the same time that they put the final torpedoes in the Yorktown?

Sherrard: Yes. See, the Hamman was picking up survivors. Some of us had gone from there to the Hamman. We were doing what we could and bringing people aboard, and that was it. Of course, if that submarine would have surfaced, we could have had a chance to probably knocked the conning tower off or something like that with our guns that they had ready there. They had little 5-inchers on--two of them on there right up in front. The captain still had control of it until it went down.

Marcello: So you were actually were on the Hamman, and then you went back into the water again?

Sherrard: Yes, I went back in the water and was swimming over and helping with the buoys, helping with that. At that time, we had no idea that the Hamman was going to go down. We had PBY's coming in, and we had submarines out there. Our submarines were out there.

Marcello: So did you go into the water, then, in some sort of a small boat, or were you simply in with your life jacket and so on on?

Sherrard: I was just like I was. I swam out there. I just went over and started swimming and got hold of one of them to pull myself out to the line there.

Marcello: I have one last question to ask, Mr. Sherrard. Whatever happened to that damned cat?

Sherrard: We buried the son-of-a-bitch! (laughter)

Marcello: (Laughter) I think that's a pretty good place to end this interview. I want to thank you. (laughter)

Sherrard: We didn't eat him, I'll tell you that (laughter)

Marcello: (Laughter) I want to thank you for taking time to participate in our project. You really said a lot of interesting things, and I'm sure that students and researchers are going to find your comments most valuable (laughter).