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JAMES BOLAR
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Place of Interview: Austin, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

James Bolar

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date: April 22, 1988

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing James Bolar for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 22, 1988, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Bolar in order to get his reminiscences and experiences while he was aboard the heavy minelayer USS Oglala during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Oglala, incidentally, was the flagship of the Minelaying Force at that time.

Mr. Bolar, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature.

Mr. Bolar: All right. I was born on July 12, 1917, in southern Illinois, and I joined the Navy. .in fact, we had a flood that flooded out the town. I was eager to get

into the Navy in 1937. The flood was in January of 1937, and I enlisted in the Navy in March of 1937 and went through Great Lakes Training Center at Great Lakes, Illinois.

Marcello: Tell me a little bit about your educational background up to that point.

Bolar: I graduated from high school. I wasn't a "knock out" student, but I passed and got through. At that time, a high school education was essential. They were only taking one out of ten applicants to come to the Navy because that was the Depression, and you had to be of good character and educated to get in at that time.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Navy in 1937?

Bolar: My father was in the merchant marine, and my uncles and cousins were all seafaring. In fact, I worked on a river boat--steamboat--prior going into the Navy. I worked for Federal Barge Lines on the Ohio and Mississippi River.

Marcello: Had you planned to join the Navy for a long time?

Bolar: Oh, yes, yes, since I was a small kid!

Marcello: Tell me a little bit about the qualifications that one had to have at that time to get into the Navy. You mentioned that you had to have a pretty clean record. What else relative to background in terms of education and testing and things of that nature?

Bolar: Well, you had to pass a real good qualification test

mentally-wise, and physically you had to be A-1. You couldn't even have a certain amount of teeth out; you had to have a full set of teeth. The very least little thing would disqualify you because they had such a backlog of applicants waiting to get in. I used to ride a coal truck from a town sixty miles away to take my physical and mental tests in a place called Marion, Illinois. On the way back, to keep clean--I wasn't able to load it--for the ride on this coal truck, I had to help unload the coal. So you can see how bad I wanted in the service.

Marcello: You mentioned that there was a long waiting list to get into the Navy, and I think you also mentioned that this was probably due to the Depression. The Navy didn't pay a lot, but it was still a certain amount of security there.

Bolar: Oh, yes. In fact, I didn't even know if they let you go ashore, or I didn't even know what they paid. I just wanted in. The pay was \$20.80 a month, and everybody wanted to know...they took twenty cents a month out of your pay for hospitalization, which a lot of people don't realize. Later, some Navy people asked why did they take that twenty cents and what did they do with it. Well, that helped pay for the Balboa Hospital in San Diego, California, I was told.

Marcello: You mentioned that you took your boot camp at Great

Lakes.

Bolar: In the snow!

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

Bolar: Boot camp, I believe, was three months. Then after you was considered to be graduating, you went into what they called the OGU (Outgoing Unit) to get groups together to ship to the respective ships. At that time they didn't have all of the schools like they do now, and the opportunities. Now you are guaranteed all this. At that time you weren't guaranteed anything, except that you could retire with all the benefits.

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 other than snow?

Bolar: Well, it was a mess, truthfully. I had went to what they called a Citizens Military Training Camp two summers in a row at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, so I had a little jump on it as far as the military drills and so forth. So I was made a right guidon of the 1st Platoon, which is the lead guidon, and which I thought was pretty good. I was what they called a "square knot admiral" or petty officer, is what it amounted to, so that was a break for me there. At the time--I hate to say this--we had a chief that was taking us through training who was a torpedoman getting ready to retire on twenty years, and he was a tyrant. He actually would

knock guys down in the snow and stomp them. Like, one guy he hit in the nose, and the blood froze right on him. It ended up that some of the kids wrote home, and they had a congressional investigation, and they more or less drummed him out of the service.

Marcello: Where did you go from Great Lakes?

Bolar: Oh, I caught the Great Northern. I hadn't been out of Illinois except to Saint Louis, Missouri. We got on the Great Northern Empire Builder going along the Canadian border into Montana, across northern Idaho and into Washington state to the Bremerton Navy Yard.

I asked for the USS Pennsylvania because I was told that that was the flagship and that it would be closer into port for liberty and so forth, so naturally that appealed to me. They also said it was more prestige. Our particular crowd had our choice of the Pennsylvania, the Nevada, the Arizona, the Saratoga, and a repair ship, Medusa. As of today, I don't really know if some of our people in that particular company. I think there were 120 of us. Some of them went to the Arizona. Even though I've been to Pearl Harbor, I've never went back aboard the memorial there and saw the list, so I don't know actually if some of our particular people that I knew were casualties there.

Marcello: So you then went aboard the Pennsylvania?

Bolar: Yes, the USS Pennsylvania.

Marcello: Where did you pick it up? There in Bremerton?

Bolar: Bremerton Navy Yard.

Marcello: What kind of reception did a "boot" get when he went aboard a battleship during that day and time?

Bolar: Well, you got the usual treatment. You sure didn't get a lot of. .what does Rodney Dangerfield say? "You got no respect at all. (chuckle) So, yes, it wasn't long after that. .well, you know, fighting was very common at the time. I had had a little background of street fighting and so forth, so I got on the boxing team, which gave me a little prestige and made it a lot better for me. When I say "better, just less people picked on me.

Marcello: I'll come back and pick up on that later on, but let me ask you this first. When you went aboard the Pennsylvania where were you assigned? In other words, to what division?

Bolar: Well, I went to what was called the X Division. The reason they finally decided on this X Division was that on these battleships there were people aboard those things that had spent years--I'm talking about ten, twelve, fifteen--who would do a whole cruise on this battleship. There were people in the deck force that didn't know anything about the engineers force, the after steering or the different parts of the ship. They thought that was not such a good idea, like, in the

event of casualties or something, to have a person familiar with only one part of the ship. So what they did in the X Division is give you a chit to go to different places and have it initialed to acquaint you with the different parts of the ship. So after that I went up to the Sixth Division, which is the boat deck division. They had the teakwood decks where you'd holystone. If you're not familiar with the holystone, they take a fire brick, bust it in half and put a hole in it; and you get a stick, and you swing it back and forth like you're swabbing. It makes the deck shiny.

Marcello: So the Sixth Division, then, was probably one of the deck divisions. Is that correct?

Bolar: Yes, there were six deck divisions. The Fifth and Sixth were on the port side. There was two boat divisions, they called them, and that's where they kept all the motor launches and things up on deck, including the cranes to hoist the boats in and out and to rig the airplane in.

Marcello: In most instances, is it not true that they put those right out of boot camp into the deck division initially?

Bolar: As a rule. In those days, yes, they definitely did because they had to see their intelligence. Not that you were a dummy if you ended up in the deck division, but at the time they wanted to test your qualifications for going on farther to get into more technical aspects

of the ship itself.

Marcello: You mentioned holystoning, and, of course, that's a portion of the Navy that is no longer in existence. I usually have my interviewees describe holystoning, and you've done a little bit. But let's go into it in a little bit more detail. Give me the whole process of holystoning and how it works.

Bolar: Well, you'd take a swab handle which is about four feet long, and the holystone is a fire brick that they'd "bum" off the boiler end of the division. They'd peck a hole about halfway through and just take this holystone and point this stick down and just shake it back and forth like you were buffing. We'd take our water that we scrubbed the paintwork with, that had heavy soap suds and things in it, and throw that on to help it cut in. I think they used to say you had twenty strokes to the plank as you went. It was very tedious and tiresome. Oh, then any guy that was shirking duty, when they hollered, "Turn to, which meant to run up to hit the deck to do their work, if he was the last one up, he got a stick to holystone with that was about two feet long, which made you get on your knees. It was the same way with a swab that was about two feet long. So after the first time, you never had any trouble getting up to man your cleaning station.

Marcello: After you would go through that process of holystoning,

then would they wash the deck down with freshwater?

Bolar: Oh, never freshwater. It was always saltwater. In port, yes. If we was in a port, we could use freshwater. Otherwise, it was saltwater. Every day, Christmas and every day, that deck was washed down.

Marcello: It was holystoned every day.

Bolar: Well, not actually. A couple or three times a week. Like, the inspections were on Saturday, but we had what we called our "field day" on Friday. That's when you did all your paintwork and holystoned the deck. We had a very bad place because the garbage gondola where all the garbage and slop from the meals is thrown...naturally, some grease would get out, and the seagulls, like, on a Sunday would stroll over in that area. Not bragging, but I was one of their better workers, so they put me around by the garbage gondola to get the grease out. I was a good (chuckle) worker, so they put me there, which is a compliment, really.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Pennsylvania at that time?

Bolar: Well, it was terrible, actually. I won't say terrible, but serving it was terrible. At the time. I don't know why they always stuck to this particular thing because they didn't have such a thing as a cafeteria. You ate twenty people to a mess. You had two oak tables with oak benches, and they would fold them up and hang them

to the overhead on some hangers. They'd bring those down for chow. The food was brought in a stack of tureens. Each tureen was about ten inches in diameter and about ten inches high. They stacked them up in kind of a carrier to carry them. These mess cooks. I guess they had over a hundred. Well, you figure that we had 1,400 to 1,600 people on the ship, so with twenty people to a mess, you can figure for every hundred there was five mess cooks. It was really a fight to get these. They had a scullery where they took all the plates to run them through the scullery and scald them and everything because they were real conscious of sanitation. These ships...you can't believe how clean they were. Our ships today won't compare to how clean they were then. I think it was Eleanor Roosevelt who said, "The sailors have the cleanest bodies and the dirtiest minds. (chuckle) Anyhow, cleaning was a chore, really, most of the time.

Of course, we had our battle practice and everything. I was on a 5-inch/.38 antiaircraft gun as one of the crew members.

Marcello: We'll get to that in a little while. Let's talk a little bit more about the food.

Bolar: Oh, yes.

Marcello: You mentioned that the food was terrible. You just didn't like the quality of the food aboard the ship?

Bolar: No, I retract that. What I meant, to get your food was terrible. You saw very few fat sailors in those days. Just coming out of the Depression, I think I lived on potatoes and wild rabbits. There was never enough food. The petty officers sat at the head of the mess, and the lower you were in rank, or like a "boot, as you mentioned awhile ago, you'd sit at the end; and whatever they didn't scarf up, the leavings, you got that at the end of the table. So it was a constant fight.

In fact, after I was in the engineering force, there was two first class about to fight over a cream puff that was left over. I ended up with the cream puff, and I said, "You guys are going to look pretty silly if you go to a mast and the captain says, 'What's up?' and there's two burly sailors fighting over a cream puff. So they gave it to me (chuckle).

Like, on Saturdays they would have beans for breakfast. The reason they did was because they didn't want to not dirty as many pots and things and have it ready for inspection. In those days there was no excuse for any lax in cleanliness anywhere in the ship. That was a crushing blow, to be called for some little infraction of the cleaning.

Marcello: Did you ever have a tour of mess cooking duty?

Bolar: Yes (chuckle). I was just on mess cooking for a few days. Then I made fireman first class, which is an E-3

or equivalent to a third class petty officer, and they took me off of it, which I was very happy.

Marcello: Is it not true, however, that on some ships, if one did an unusually good job of mess cooking, the crew would actually put a tip in one of the soup plates on payday?

Bolar: Regardless of whether he did a good job or not, he got his tips twice a month, which payday was every two weeks. If you didn't tip...well, there was no such thing as not tipping because the guy in charge of the mess would decide that. Out of those tips, the mess cook had to put in a quarter a payday for dishes, because if he fell with a rack of those dishes, that would blow his whole month's wages, \$20.80. So that was insurance in a slush fund to pay for dishes if he happened to fall. You had to run up and down those steep ladders with that. There were many guys who hated green beans because there was a lot of water in them, and they came out scalding hot, and many guys have fallen and been burned with green beans. It was a constant fight among the mess cooks. They had more beefs or fights among them because, like you say, they had to really get in and hustle, not only to keep the petty officer in charge happy (the mess captain, as they call it) but also in order to get his tips.

Marcello: You mentioned boxing awhile ago. How important were sports and competition between the ships during that

pre-Pearl Harbor period in the Navy?

Bolar: Each ship had their football, and they had baseball. The carriers seemed to dominate with basketball because they had the facilities for basketball, which you wouldn't have on one of the other ships. They were all proud of their boxing. We had interdivision boxing, and we had interfleet boxing and right on up. It was a big thing. If you was on the boxing team, you were looked up to pretty good. I fought as a welterweight because I'd originally boxed two years at this Citizens Military Training Army Camp at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. The coach finally said, "I don't know. You'll never be anything but a 'ham-and-egger, but street-wise I don't think you'll have any trouble. (chuckle)

Marcello: Now did being on the boxing team give you any special privileges?

Bolar: Yes, after you busted your bottom all day, then on your own time you were to be off, and then is when you worked out. The only time you'd get any break was that you got off a little early to go to another ship.

Marcello: I do know that up at Schofield Barracks, a lot of the athletes were able to advance more rapidly in rank because they were athletes.

Bolar: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: Did that happen on board the ships?

Bolar: I don't think so, no. To start with, most of the boxing

people were on deck, and there was no way you could advance because the petty officers alongside of you, although they didn't box, they sure wouldn't...in other words, they'd frown upon you. You had to do your time in rank, and promotion came very slow until the war.

Marcello: Did you go out to Pearl Harbor aboard the Pennsylvania when it went out there on a more or less permanent basis?

Bolar: Yes.

Marcello: When did that occur? Do you recall?

Bolar: I don't know. We made two or three trips out there, and I was transferred off the Pennsylvania to this minelayer.

Marcello: Was that after the Pennsylvania was out at Pearl Harbor, or was it before that?

Bolar: I was transferred to the Oglala while both ships were out there. In fact, the Oglala was permanently stationed there, but we had made a trip back to the States prior to that.

Marcello: How long were you in the Sixth Division before you transferred off of there?

Bolar: About eighteen months. I had trouble getting loose because the boatswain's mate, Pierce, was a nice guy, and he said I was the type of guy he wanted to keep. He says, "If you are no good, you're holding me back. If you're exceptionally good, I'm holding you back. He

said, "You're what I call 'just right' because we want to keep you in this work. So three different times I tried to go down below, but each time it was stymied. One time I guess I was in a fight over in Long Beach on the streets, and I got in jail. The ensign came over and got me out, so I felt a little obligated to stick around. Next time, being in the boxing team, I decided to stay. Then the last time I had a chance was when I had made seaman first class, and that was a raise from \$36 up to \$54. Besides, you got a big locker which was about eighteen inches wide and about eighteen inches deep and about three feet high--about twice as big as your other locker--so that was a prestige thing as well as having room for more gear.

Marcello: So when you moved out of the Sixth Division, where did you go then?

Bolar: I went to the number one engine room, main engine room, on the USS Pennsylvania down there. That's where the chief engineer was located, and the nucleus of the headquarters of the four engine rooms was in the number one engine room. They ran the ship from there.

Marcello: And what were you striking for?

Bolar: Machinist's mate. I came down as a seaman first class, which made me a fireman second. We had shipboard competition, and out of twenty-one people I was first on the fireman first list, because I had a good chance to

study. I forgot to tell you that on the deck force I was on what you called a side boys.

Marcello: Side boys.

Bolar: Side boys. It came from the old original days, in the old sailing days. When some dignitary, officer, came from another ship, they had to put a davit over, a topping lift, and put him in a kind of sedan chair and hoist him aboard. In those days the higher in rank the brass, the higher the number of side boys required. It could be as high as eight people. Like, when the President comes aboard, it's eight side boys. A commanding officer gets so many, and, like, a lowly ensign is two officers. So what you do is, you stand by out on the quarterdeck. When they see a motor launch coming, say, a captain's gig or admiral's barge and everything, as they come over they signal how many side boys they need. There's eight of you sitting there all ready--two of you jump to the side (two, four, six or eight)--and you welcome him board. In fact, one of the dignitaries I did side boy for was Martha Raye, and she kissed me on the cheek (chuckle), and I had that lipstick on. As a result, you had plenty of time to study because all you had to do was sit there and keep clean. You had to be clean-shaven. That's one reason they would take you to the side boy, if you were a little exceptionally clean and neat.

Marcello: Awhile ago you were talking about the locker space and so on a board the Pennsylvania. Let me ask you this. What were your sleeping quarters like when you were in the Sixth Division?

Bolar: I'm glad you asked me that. We had what we called casemates. In the Fifth and Sixth Divisions, the boat deck divisions, we had what we called casemates, and a casemate is where your 5-inch broadside guns are. You had the ammunition stacked around in gun racks. One of my duties up there, too, alongside of working on deck, was compartment cleaner. I had to keep that casemate clean, and when I say clean, I mean clean. There was a gunner's mate named Lychek, who had the best, cleanest broadside in the whole battle fleet. He had the best, cleanest broadside in the whole fleet, and as a result he went over to the junior flagship, the USS California, and got to have dinner or lunch with the captain, commanding officer. So he helped me keep my casemate clean--keep people from dirtying it up--and I kept people off of his gun. And the brightwork had to be just so.

Another thing I might add is that we had what we called "love trips" when the visitors would come out on Sundays and holidays. Up on the boat deck, we would take off our brass dogs that we dogged the hatches down with. We had to do that because people would steal

them. They looked like they were gold plated. They were taking them as souvenirs, so we had to quit putting them out there. Sometimes you'd get the duty to dress up real good and take the visitors around. Naturally, most of the places were restricted, but you'd just show them the highlights of the ship. For people from the Midwest or away from there, it was quite a thing to go out there and see those huge guns.

Marcello: And this was called a "love trip?"

Bolar: "Love trips, yes. They'd haul them in on the motor launch when we were in San Francisco and Long Beach and anytime we came to a port.

Marcello: We were talking about the sleeping quarters...

Bolar: Oh, yes.

Marcello: .a moment ago.

Bolar: We had billet hooks. Actually, it was an iron or steel bar about a foot long that came out with a hook in it that you hung your hammock on. The first eighteen months I slept in the hammock, but being in the boat deck, a lot of times, when we were in Hawaii and down in the tropics, I'd sleep under the superstructure. I had my favorite place there. Each night I would sleep there. When they'd pipe or call reveille, you had to get up, and you had to clear out the hammocks, fold them, and stow them in the hammock netting out of the way. So that was quite a chore, too. If you didn't

roust out, the master-at-arms, which is like the sheriff, would come around with a cue stick--sawed-off cue stick--and blast you from the underneath. You didn't wait for the second lick. You got up and did your thing (chuckle). But some of the seaman, like, the senior seaman, the "wheels, they got to sleep in a cot, but you had to earn that privilege. Then when you had what they called the anchor watch, you'd go down by the quarterdeck so you'd be available to man the anchor or any duties that would arise during an emergency-type thing.

Marcello: How did you like sleeping in a hammock?

Bolar: It was good because I have a little tendency to be seasick. When it would get a little rough, I'd leap up in my hammock at night--of course, you couldn't during the day--and what you had to do was take a cot stick to stretch it out where it wouldn't squeeze your shoulders because naturally it has a tendency to wrap around you. Yes, it was good. It was warm, too.

Marcello: You mentioned that it helped if you had a tendency to be seasick. Why was that?

Bolar: Well, you just didn't feel the ship coming up and down. The pitching by the bow or the side motion didn't get you as much, and you didn't feel so much up there when you were swaying. It was just like a--how would you call it--a stabilizer.

Marcello: How rapid or slow was promotion in that Navy before Pearl Harbor, before the attack?

Bolar: Well, it started letting up because I'm reasonably sure that President Roosevelt could foresee all of this. It started picking up, but there was still competition. It wasn't any on-the-spot or field promotions or anything like that. You had to take fleet examinations. I was an "eager beaver, and you'd see one of your buddies that you went through training with, and you always wanted to be equivalent or a grade higher than him. Money-wise, you went from \$60 a month, and you went to \$72 as a second class and \$84 as a first class. I think a chief made \$96. In those days you got nothing extra, except you got \$5.00 for mess cooking; and if you was in a gun crew that got an "E" for good gunnery, you got what they called "efficiency money" for that. In those days a guy was happy; you had enough money. There was seamen living on \$54 a month that were married and had kids.

Marcello: You've mentioned several things that I want to follow up on. In addition to passing the examinations, there also then had to be openings.

Bolar: Oh, definitely, definitely! In fleet competition they would have so many openings for first class. Now I'm talking about the whole particular fleet. There would be so many spots open, and it was highly competitive.

Your people couldn't just go in and override some other guy because each ship will naturally want to get as many people rated as they could. You had to have your general qualifications--your ability to work and learn. They checked you out close.

Marcello: But I guess this is why people transferred from one ship to another. Isn't it true that if you did have an opening on one ship and you wanted to be promoted, sometimes you'd have to go to another ship where that opening occurred?

Bolar: No, they didn't have too much of that. Besides, after they had you aboard the ship and had you trained and everything, there was no way they wanted to get rid of you. The main way of getting off of a ship if you wasn't happy with it would be when your .everything was four years at the time, and they had a two-year extension. So in order to get off that ship, maybe a lot of times there'd be new construction coming out, so you'd put in for new construction. Then everyone wanted to go to European duty, which was very hard to get. You was lucky to get it.

Marcello: Why did they want to get European duty?

Bolar: Well, they figured the grass was always greener on the other side of the fence (chuckle), and Europe seemed a lot better than out through the Orient and out in that area.

Marcello: You also talked a moment ago about the "E" for efficiency. Tell me a little bit about how people in the engine room, for instance, could earn the "E" for efficiency.

Bolar: To start with you usually had. Our particular man was a warrant officer, a W-4, which you have to have a lot of years in. What he would do was save fuel and go around the ship being sure that no freshwater was being wasted. Down in the evaporators that made freshwater from saltwater, they would be sure that they were taken apart, scaled, and get the utmost efficiency to use less steam to convert that. We'd try to be sure that your engineering space was getting the most out of your fuel. Like, for instance, a lot of ships would beat the deal on that because they had a qualification that you had to be underway, so a lot of times we'd go out on a battle problem, and instead of anchoring we'd steam at night on what they call "back pressure. In other words, it was the steam that had been built up. There was enough speed underway to keep them steering. So that would be one way of beating the dealer. Another way was that when the oil tanker would come alongside, you would slip the guy on the oil tanker a ham or some goodies, and he'd give you a little extra fuel. So that's one way they would beat the dealer on that (chuckle). Naturally, in your firing it was the amount of hitting your target.

Marcello: Well, did somebody come around and check all these things and so on?

Bolar: Oh, yes, each ship checked the other. For example, the Arizona was our ship we operated with mostly. You knew that when they came over checking you out, they wasn't going to give you any (chuckle) leeway whatsoever. In fact, we were towing targets for the Arizona, and we looked up and this destroyer almost ran over the tow line. That's the first time I saw a destroyer off like that backing down, and that's something to see. In fact, when he backed down, a solid sheet of water went over the fantail. Too, I don't know if people know this, but you can see those fourteen-inch projectiles going through the air as they fire. Have you ever heard about those?

Marcello: Yes.

Bolar: Your turret consists of three barrels, and the two outboard guns fire just split second before the middle one does so they wouldn't have a chance to maybe tumble and hit each other and go astray.

Marcello: Okay, so if you got the "E" for efficiency, what did that mean?

Bolar: Five dollars more a month.

Marcello: And didn't you fly an "E" pennant, or didn't you paint an "E" on the stack or something?

Bolar: Oh, yes, an "E" on the turret. If you'd see a ship with

four "E's" on their turret, man, the prestige of it was great. And you wore an "E" on your sleeve. In engineering you had a red "E" on your stack, and later, I guess, they got other "E's" when aviation got real prominent. And each gun had an "E" on it. Oh, I went to machine gun school on San Clemente Island.

Marcello: The battleships, at least, also had a band.

Bolar: Oh, yes, and an orchestra, especially the flagship, which we were, the Pennsylvania.

Marcello: Did you ever attend any of the so-called "Battle of the Bands" over at the Bloch Arena that were held during this period?

Bolar: Yes, I did go to a couple of those--Bloch Arena.

Marcello: I guess most of the sailors were kind of proud of their bands, were they not?

Bolar: Well, yes. You had a ship's dance, and the band would play, and they had to be real good.

Marcello: Okay, how long were you out at Pearl Harbor before you transferred over to the Oglala?

Bolar: I don't know. We were in and out of there a bit. In fact, that's one of the saddest songs I ever heard, was after I transferred off my first ship, the USS Pennsylvania, onto the Oglala. It was tied up at Ten-Ten Dock. The saddest song I ever heard was them coming around Ten-Ten Dock, headed out and going back to the States playing "California Here I Come. I was sad

(chuckle) because all your shipmates were leaving. Then again, I was just young and inexperienced at the time. But in going to the Oglala, you meet a new crowd and pick up where you left off.

Marcello: Well, how long before the actual attack on December 7 did you go aboard the Oglala?

Bolar: Oh, several months, because I'd went back to the States. I'd say several months. I don't know why I didn't keep track of all of that time as much. It all runs together. You know, times passed so fast. In fact, I made first class on the Oglala.

Marcello: How and why did your transfer come about?

Bolar: I don't know (chuckle). I've always prided myself in being a good sailor and doing my job and everything, but for some unknown reason this one particular warrant officer was unhappy with me. So I understand that he was instrumental. .in other words, the Oglala had to have a second class machinist's mate, and they would send you out.

Marcello: Okay, describe what the Oglala was like relative to or compared with the Pennsylvania in terms of quarters and things like that.

Bolar: Well, it's just like getting out of a Cadillac or a Lincoln Continental and getting into a Model-T or a Model-A (chuckle). It had a kind of a lackadaisical atmosphere. You could wear dungarees, for example, and

there wasn't the spit-and-polish. It was in what they called the "Pineapple Fleet, and being the flagship they got by with a lot of things that the other ships didn't. We made a lot of inter-island trips, and we'd tie up downtown at the pier near where the Matson steamship came in and different things. So it was a lot different. The food was a little better because I believe there was less people fed, and they had more room and better facilities.

Marcello: What exactly was the function of the Oglala? We talked a little bit about this off the record, but now we have a tape going, so tell me a little bit about what its function was.

Bolar: It was the flagship of the Mine Force, and it was to lay mines. I understand it could lay about 400 mines if it carried that many. It was an old ferry boat that had been converted into a minelayer. In fact, we had pumps on there, feed pumps, that was off the USS Florida. I believe the Oglala was built in 1906. It had two fire rooms, and the one was up over the other. They took the bottom one out, did away with it because they didn't need it, and it got top heavy, and they had to put anchor chain down there to keep it from rocking so much out at sea.

Yes, it was good duty. When I tell people about looking out the window, they say, "The window! You mean

port!" I say, "No, that thing had windows. It even had a side porch on each side. It would do about eighteen or nineteen knots. I was second class, and they made me throttleman, which was kind of a prestigious spot, and it was very hard. They had two throttleman, one for the port and starboard engine. This was a reciprocating engine, which is much harder than the turbine-driven that I was used to and everything. It was just like starting all over. We'd go to sea for four or five days, and I had to come in and spend a week beating on the bearings and the shaft to get it back in shape again to go out again.

Marcello: What was the morale like aboard the Oglala during that period that you were on it?

Bolar: Oh, it was good! It was a happy crowd there. It got a little worse as the Pacific got a little bit more troublesome. The destroyers came out, then the Hawaiian Detachment came out, then the fleet. Then the liberty wasn't any good. Before then, guys had their cars and were pretty well established. In fact, when we went back to the States, I got permission to bring my car back on the ship. They put it on the fantail. I was sitting in my car playing the car radio coming across (laughter).

Marcello: And this was before December 7?

Bolar: Oh, yes, yes, back to the States. I made first class on

the Oglala. In fact, being on the boxing team, the executive officer gave me my. .he was an ex-boxer, too, and during an inspection he shook hands with me, congratulated me, and says, "I hope you stay with us until you make chief, which all the guys razzed me about.

Marcello: Actually, you were on the boxing team on the Oglala, too.

Bolar: Yes. We used to have smokers going down to Midway.

Marcello: You mentioned something else that I want to follow up on because I think it's a part of the old Navy--the so-called boxing smokers.

Bolar: Oh, yes. That's kind of a story itself. When they'd have a smoker, they'd give hot dogs and cigars and cigarettes--they'd just give them away--and Coko-Cola and goodies, you know. They would have the wrestling first because people didn't understand or know anything about wrestling. They'd have a mat down, and there I was, getting ready to box and nervous and everything, and I'd have to wait until that was over. Being penned up all that time, every boxer will tell you they are nervous, or they're lying to you, or they're goofy. One time I boxed, and they didn't take the wrestling mats up, and you couldn't move. You had to pick your feet up, and it was terrible. So I always disliked amateur wrestling until my boys got interested in it, and I'm

quite a wrestling fan now for amateur wrestling now that I understand it. I take back all those ill things I used to say and think about it.

Marcello: When the Oglala was there in Pearl, or even the Pennsylvania for that matter, what was your liberty routine like? In other words, first of all, what kind of liberty would you have aboard the Pennsylvania and talk a little bit about the kind of liberty routine you would have aboard the Oglala.

Bolar: Well, naturally, they have to keep a certain amount aboard, so they had port-and-starboard liberty. You had a liberty card, port or starboard. The port was a red liberty card, and the other was green. On the Pennsylvania, naturally, with that many people it was more restricted there a little bit. You could get a stand by, but it was frowned on to swap from watch to the other. The Oglala, like I say, was tied up alongside the dock all the time, and unless you actually had the watch, we had what was called an "open gangway, and you could go ashore in the limits of the Navy Yard. You wasn't supposed to go in town. They Navy Yard had movies, smokers, and at the "Tin Roof" we all met and drank beer.

Marcello: That's the name of the place--the "Tin Roof?"

Bolar: The "Tin Roof. Oh, yes, everybody knows the old "Tin Roof. We'd tie up about a hundred feet from there, so

if a guy would tie the ship up, he'd hang the line over the ballard, the tie up post, and go have him a beer (chuckle). The old "Tin Roof" was a sacred place there prior to the war.

Marcello: When you went ashore, that is, went into town, what did you usually do on liberty?

Bolar: Oh, well, like I say, I wasn't too much on drinking. I'd usually go to a movie and have a malt or something like that and maybe have a dinner or supper. Maybe later I'd have a few beers and head on back.

Marcello: Of what significance does Hotel Street have?

Bolar: Well, that was the focal point of all the "society" of the whole fleet--every sailor up and down Hotel Street. Naturally, that's where all the cathouses were. I'm not just saying this, but I never went to one because I didn't like the idea, so I steered clear of them. I was always afraid of disease or something. At that time it would go on your record, so it wasn't a good thing, so I steered clear of that. Luckily, like I say, I brought my car out, so I was in a position to have transportation. I could get out of the Hotel Street area. You mentioned the old Black Cat Cafe right across from the YMCA. That's where they used to all meet when they'd come in from Pearl Harbor or go back out to Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: That's where the taxis stopped.

Bolar: Yes, your taxis stopped at the YMCA--two bits to ride in and back. I tried to get off at Hotel Street. Even on the Pennsylvania and in the States before we went out to Pearl, I'd go up and down the street, and if I saw too many sailors, I'd just keep going because it wasn't my idea to get in there and wrestle and fight.

Marcello: I also noticed that you don't have any tattoos.

Bolar: No, no. My dad had to sign for me, and there's two things he insisted on when he agreed to sign: don't get on submarines or get tattoos.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into those weeks just prior to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, and let me ask you this, first of all. As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the two countries continued to get worse, could you detect any changes in the training routine aboard the Oglala?

Bolar: No, actually I don't think so because, like I say, I'm reasonably sure that all ships including the Oglala stayed in a state of readiness regardless of conditions. Naturally, we didn't have the definite idea that war was coming, but we stayed ready. Oh, I might add that on the Pennsylvania we used to sit out on the guns every night, and they would broadcast over the radio and say how many Germans and Russians killed each other. We'd always applaud when both sides were getting dealt in because we felt that they were both going to be our

adversary.

Marcello: Normally, what kind of duty was the Oglala undergoing during that period right there prior to the actual attack? What did it do?

Bolar: Oh, we'd just go out and practice dropping mines and keeping them ready in the drills. We'd go out to West Loch, which was where they stowed the mines and ammunition and things out there.

Marcello: This perhaps is a stupid question, but I'll ask them from time to time. Were there actually any active mines laid out around any of those facilities prior to December 7?

Bolar: I would say no. I'm practically positive that there were no live mines. I know some of the smaller four-stack destroyers had been converted into minelayers, and they would drop some just like us--dummy deals for practice.

Marcello: Okay, when you and your buddies sat around in bull sessions there aboard the Oglala, did the talk ever turn to the possibility of war with Japan?

Bolar: Oh, yes. We was going to wipe them out in the six weeks. It might take six months, but down in the engine room, we was, in fact, looking forward to it (chuckle).

Marcello: Let me ask you this, though. Did you ever talk about the possibility of the Japanese hitting Pearl Harbor?

Bolar: Well, it had come up, yes. It was possible, but with

the fighting in Europe and everything, it was always said, "There's too much of a line of supply for them. In other words, you don't get that far away. They felt that no way would they attack Pearl, but, then again, we had in the back of our minds that they did the same thing to Russia. They blitzed them (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941, and, of course, we want to go into that weekend in a great deal of detail. Do you recall what your routine was on that Saturday, December 6, 1941?

Bolar: Yes. I was a first class, and my buddy, Anderson, was a second class. Anderson was bigger than me--taller. In the meantime, I had been out of the engine room. I was put in the admiral's barge as the engineer of the barge and coxswain, so I was with Admiral Furlong. We had a boathouse where the boat would stay. Sometimes when the ship would go out on maneuvers, we'd stay in, so we got good liberty, and we'd pick up movies and be ready when they came back in.

In fact, one of my buddies from my hometown was a movie operator, and so I had a good thing. I'd run around with him. You can cut this out if you want, but you were talking about Hotel Street. This guy from my hometown, that I went to school with, he was out there, and he was in tight with the MPs, so they took us all through all the cathouses and fixed us up with drinks

and everything. They would go along with the MPs to keep from getting shut down or closed up. If they had a case of, say, VD or something, they'd close them up. He and I was good buddies, so as a result I had an "in" originally.

Marcello: Tell me a little bit about this Admiral Furlong. Who was he?

Bolar: Admiral Furlong had been the skipper of the West Virginia. I understand that he actually got married on the quarterdeck of the West Virginia. But his wife was in the States, and he was on the Oglala. He relieved Admiral Marquard, who had been the admiral before. He was a Pennsylvania Dutchman from Monongahela, and he was a classmate of Admiral Nimitz. And the commanding officer of Lualualae, which is the ammunition depot out at the other end away from Pearl Harbor, Captain Dowd, was also their classmate. That's odd, after all them many, many years, that they'd end up that close together. On into the interview I'll tell about how at night I used to take Admiral Furlong up to talk to Admiral Nimitz.

Marcello: Now Furlong was in charge of the whole minelaying force.

Bolar: Minelaying, yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you've been transferred to the admiral's barge.

Bolar: Barge.

Marcello: Talk a little bit about that Saturday, December 6 then.

Bolar: Well, as I said, we had the boathouse, and we stayed there. But we went ashore and all over, and we debated about coming back to the ship or going to the boathouse. I said, "No, let's go back to the ship" because on Sunday mornings you got your eggs by call. You could have them sunny-side up, where ordinarily they scramble them and throw them at you. You got a little special handling on Sunday.

So we go back aboard late at night, and, oh, there is a solid stream of white up and down Hotel Street. Every sailor was ashore. The weather was nice and everything. We slept in the forward compartment, so we went back and went to hit the sack. I always slept in the top bunk. I don't know why, but I always liked it.

Marcello: What kind of shape were you in--you and your buddies?

Bolar: Oh, we had had a few beers, but, no, we weren't "in the bag. No way! Anyhow (chuckle), the next thing I know...I knew my Pennsylvania, my old ship, was in dry dock, so when this torpedo came in under us and hit the Helena next to us, the lights went out, and the bunk flew up and dropped, and I fell right flat on ol' Andy, who was sleeping under me. In the darkness I got into his pants, and he was trying to get into mine. There was a kid named Armsby at the log room--we looked out--and that's when the Jap flew over, and he said, "The Japs! The dirty bastards are bombing us!" Well, just

then the ship started listing a little bit, and I went over on the Helena.

Marcello: Let me just stop you for a second here and back up. Maybe we need to get the position of the Oglala. Where was it tied up at that time?

Bolar: At Ten-Ten Dock alongside the Helena.

Marcello: And you were outboard?

Bolar: Outboard, yes. Like I said, it was an old river boat that was converted, and it didn't draw enough draft, enough water, so the torpedo went in under us, luckily. It had the steel hull, but the rest was wood. It would have blew the whole thing clear up. In fact, on the Helena one of the guys I went through training with was in the barber chair, and it killed him on the Helena.

Marcello: That was your first clue that something was going on outside?

Bolar: Oh, yes!

Marcello: Was there a loud noise that accompanied you being knocked out of the rack?

Bolar: Oh, just WHAM! Being that the Pennsylvania was in dry dock, I thought that they were pulling the Pennsylvania out of dry dock, and it had rammed us.

Marcello: Okay, so you're on the deck on top of Anderson or whatever.

Bolar: In the dark, down in the forward compartment. All the lights are out, and it's dark. We're scrambling to get

to topside.

Marcello: There's no General Quarters sounded or anything like that?

Bolar: Oh, no, no, no.

Marcello: Okay, so you get on somebody's britches, anyhow.

Bolar: Yes.

Marcello: And what happens at that point?

Bolar: And his jumper. I go up above. The admiral was aboard at the time--a lot of them were ashore--and he is running around giving orders. He said the first thing we'd have to do is to try to move the ship from alongside the Helena so it wouldn't box it in. I ran out over onto the Helena, and they had a tropical tarp, the tarpaulin over it for shade. They had a machine gun there...and I ran in the scullery, and there was some young ensign in there who had a bunch of sailors in there singing "Onward Christian Soldiers. They were all scared. Of course, I wasn't brave, but I wasn't that scared. I said, "This ain't no place for me. I took a butcher knife and went out and whacked that tarp loose. I had been to machine gun school, and I jacked it back and got it ready for the guy to fire.

Marcello: So you went down in the scullery to get some sort of a sharp instrument to.

Bolar: On the Helena. It was at deck level--a spud locker, I guess it was. I wanted to cut this tarp loose so we

could see, and that's when the Japs were coming all up and down.

Marcello: Okay, in the meantime what are you seeing outside?

Bolar: Oh, well, I look over, and the Japs are flying and the strafing, coming along there. I guess the really most scared I was. .twice I was helping carrying things over to the Helena. Then I got a battle lantern. They told me to go down and look and see what damage was down below. The ship was listing then, and the next thing I know is that guy is dogging that thing down with me down in there.

Marcello: Now which ship is this?

Bolar: That's the Oglala, when I came back to help carry records and things ashore. I beat on that deck, and the guy said, "What the hell are you doing?" I said, "The boatswain told me to go down there and check the damage. He says, "Boy!" (chuckle). Then I dogged it down and went over.

Marcello: Well, let's back up here a second. Okay, so evidently the Oglala was damaged somewhere in here.

Bolar: Oh, yes, it was split wide-open.

Marcello: Okay, and this was a result of the torpedo that hit the Helena.

Bolar: Oh, yes. It hit the Helena alongside, and it just busted our seams, being an old rusty hulk. So then I ran out..

Marcello: So the abandon ship order was given?

Bolar: Yes, but we came back and forth after it wasn't going over. We didn't know the damage. It took a little time for it to keel over. In fact, we got tugs and pulled it back where you see it laying there away from the Helena. One time I ran out and was crawling under a boxcar, and they came strafing by. Then I got out from under that after they got through strafing, and I looked up, and it was loaded with ammunition (chuckle). If they had strafed that boxcar, it would have been tough.

Marcello: Okay, so the Oglala is listing, and it's obviously going to sink.

Bolar: Yes, it's going to roll over.

Marcello: What sort of things are you taking off there?

Bolar: Well, records and everything, such as the paymaster's records. It was mostly all records.

Marcello: Now is the attack still going on at the time?

Bolar: Oh, yes, yes! You looked out, and, Jesus, that thing lasted until about 11:00 or something.

Marcello: But I'm assuming that the Japanese are ignoring your ship.

Bolar: Well, they done nailed it. Why they got us in the first place is that Ten-Ten Dock was where the USS Pennsylvania always stayed, and she would have been there then if she hadn't been in dry dock. But us being the flagship with the admiral, we got to hang alongside.

Marcello: But you actually didn't come under any specific or direct attack.

Bolar: No, not other than strafing. In fact, they had me listed as being shot because one guy named Poler came across the gangway spewing blood where he got hit with the strafing, and they had him as being killed. Later, I saw him, and all he had was . . . it just looked like a cigarette burn. It went in his mouth, chipped his teeth, and (chuckle) went out the side of his jaw.

Marcello: Okay, now is the evacuation of the ship taking place in a rather orderly fashion?

Bolar: No. They was yelling, "Do this! Do that! Get in lines! Draw it back!" Some of the guys came from town and was going to lash it to the dock, but there was no way because it just heeled over. In the meantime, we got the barge and went out, and we was picking people up. The admiral sent out his barge crew, me and the coxswain and a couple of the deckhands, and we went to the Nevada. The Admiral Furlong sent us over to ascertain the battleship after we saw it going down the channel and thought it was going to get away. I remember I went aboard there, and they was picking up the dead and wounded and putting them on the fantail, trying to identify them. The commanding officer. . . I'll always remember Captain Scanland. He later came back, and I think he was captain of the shipyard, commanding

officer of the shipyard. I remember he was in civilian clothes, and he had one of those Panamanian white hats like they wore in the tropics. Some ensign came up and says, "Abandon ship, sir?" He said, "Abandon ship, hell! As long as the guns are above water, we'll fire them!" He had the turrets pointed right straight down the harbor.

Marcello: You actually heard him say that?

Bolar: Oh, yes, yes! I was right by him at the time because I was going to tell him that Admiral Furlong had sent me to see what damage was done.

Marcello: Did you actually see the Nevada when it was trying to get out of the harbor?

Bolar: Oh, yes!

Marcello: Describe what you saw.

Bolar: It's like I saw here (gesture).

Marcello: Well, we can't show that on tape, so you are going to have to describe it.

Bolar: Well, that's just the way it looked. It was steaming out, and everybody was cheering, thinking she was going to make it. She had her colors flying, you know, her signal flags. It looked like she was going to get out of the channel, and that's just when you'd see these bombs from the dive-bombers hitting mostly at the bow. According to that book, it says that they torpedoed the bow. They might have, but what I saw was this

(gesture). I was on the dock right here (gesture) at the time.

Marcello: But, again, tell me what you saw because, you see, when you point to things, we can't get it on tape.

Bolar: Well, in other words, there is chaos all over. The Oklahoma had rolled over; the Arizona was caved in; and the California was down in the mud just sitting there. The one big ship of ours, the Nevada, was going to go out and get free. Her colors are flying, and she was steaming. She was underway, and we thought, "There's one that's going to make it!" That's when several of these dive-bombers just started peeling off and bombing it on the bow part of it. Then they backed it into the point there to keep from blocking the channel.

Marcello: When you took the barge over to the Nevada, was the attack over, or was it still going on?

Bolar: Oh, no, no, no! That battle lasted quite awhile. We had these big kapok jackets on. One of the kids that worked for me was talking about this at one of the reunions. There was about eight inches between the dock and the big, huge timber on the outside to absorb the collision as the ship comes alongside. We got down there, and we could see these huge. It was about three or four big horizontal bombers that let these big bombs go, and you could see them come down. The closer they got, they looked like Buick cars (chuckle) coming. They hit out

in the stream naturally. That must have been around 11:00.

I know in the barge we was picking up people. I'm not sure, but I think it was the USS Saint Louis that backed out of what was called the Repair Basin right there at what I think was called Merry's Point. That's where the Fleet Landing was located. Sailors had come in there, and she backed over one of the motor launches. I don't know if she drowned those sailors or what, but I know she backed over. I think it was the Saint Louis. There was two or three of them in the Repair Basin.

Marcello: You mentioned something else here that I want to pick up on. What did you and the barge do after you left the Nevada?

Bolar: Well, we were coming around picking up people out of the water and went back over to report to the admiral to see what he wanted us to do.

Marcello: Describe the conditions of people you were picking up out of the water.

Bolar: They was all slimy with oil and burned. Most of them weren't burned. They just looked terrible because of the oil. They just looked like they were burned because of that bunker oil. We picked some out of the bay and took them into the dock. Then we went back to the admiral and hung pretty close to him in case he decided to do something else.

Marcello: What did you do the rest of the day?

Bolar: Well, later, after things cooled off, why, we went over to the submarine base. They just opened up all the clothes lockers, and we got some dungarees, some clothes, to wear to have at it. Later, we went to the boathouse, and here a guy off the Maryland from my hometown came over, and he asked me, "Boy, have you got some clothes?" He was oily so I gave him some of my uniform, and, believe me, he thanked me for it forty-some years later (chuckle).

Marcello: When you had a chance to look at this scene with a little bit more detachment, describe what you saw as you looked around the harbor--the damage and things of that nature.

Bolar: Just a feeling of being crushed.

Marcello: What did the water look like?

Bolar: Well, as far as over at Battleship Row, it was just a solid sheet of fuel oil burning on the water, and you could see all the black smoke. Some of the motor launches was going through there trying to cut the oil to keep it away from some of the sailors in the water. You'd look over, and there's that poor Arizona and all.

Marcello: What did you see over there?

Bolar: Well, you could see where the whole foremast had crushed down, and the mainmast was. .well, when you went by there, you could see the people burned up in there.

Being a battleship sailor, I didn't think it was ever possible to turn a battleship over as I saw the Oklahoma roll over. I think it was about the lowest I've ever felt.

Marcello: What were your thoughts when you saw that?

Bolar: That it couldn't happen: "Oh, no!" The California settled, and one of the California guys came by and says, "Yes, many, many sailors on the California drowned in fuel oil, and they were hauling them up like beef, by the leg and so forth, in getting them up out of there. They had already drowned in fuel oil.

That night we went over to the submarine base with the admiral, and that's where they took up their headquarters then. That's when the Enterprise, I guess, came in, and they started firing at their planes.

Marcello: Did you witness that? Did you witness the firing on the Enterprise?

Bolar: Oh, yes!

Marcello: Describe that situation.

Bolar: Well, naturally, things had settled, you know--the burning and everything. There wasn't any fire activity during the afternoon, but as dark came along, they seemed to be over by the Officer's Club. Somebody with a .50-caliber machine gun...and naturally every third or fourth round was a tracer. So these guys would start it, and the whole thing would erupt, and it looked like

a shower turned upside down, with the red tracers flying up in the air. I guess a bomber came over from Wheeler Field, and he went in and out, and they never hit him, though. I don't know how he got in through all that and back out. Actually, I didn't see any of the. .I knew they was coming in--I could hear them--but I didn't see any Enterprise planes actually shot down. I understand they were.

Marcello: What kind of rumors did you hear that night?

Bolar: Just like that book says, that they were landing on Oahu, down at the other end of Lualualae, and that paratroopers were coming in and everything like that. The Marines over there were running around, and one would fire, and then the whole gang would open up.

Marcello: Did you believe all those rumors?

Bolar: Yes, truthfully I thought if they went to that length and got in here with that kind of destruction, I didn't see why they couldn't have come on in (chuckle) with the troops. They could have taken the place, I believe, if they had known.

Marcello: What did you do that evening?

Bolar: Just hung around the submarine base pretty close to...see, I was a first class at the time, and I hung around with my chief in charge, Hershelman. He was the one that told me I couldn't go aboard the Pennsylvania, that I had to stay with the admiral. So I hung around

with him and listened to the radio and the rumors. Every once in a while he'd come down and say, "The admiral says to stay put. We was drinking coffee. I never smoked, but I lit up a cigarette, and I thought, "What the hell? I don't need this. I threw it away and never smoked since. But at the time, I was just .you just have to be there, I guess, and be a battleship sailor, too, just to see how they could just do one of them in.

Marcello: What did you do in the days immediately following the attack?

Bolar: Oh, well, I was hauling the admiral around over there. We had to get all the oil and muck off the barge and kind of make it presentable. He'd sail around the bay checking the different things, checking the different ships and the damage. After that, then I came ashore with the admiral, and they made him commandant of the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. Naturally, we moved ashore with him, and I stayed as his driver and barge coxswain, which is very interesting because, as I said, being a classmate of Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Nimitz did consult him on numerous occasions. When I had the duty, I'd take him up and drive him to. .at first he moved up on Makalapa, which was Nimitz's area. Then later, we moved down into the Navy Yard. I know Admiral Nimitz would have long walks and talks with him, and I'd be back with

the Marine. Admiral Nimitz was a real fine person. Like, he said, "Did you have your breakfast yet, Chief?" I said, "No, sir. He said, "Go tell the boys I said to feed you. He was very good, nice guy.

Marcello: And how long did you remain there on the Hawaiian Islands then?

Bolar: I stayed right there (chuckle) the whole time.

Marcello: For the whole war?

Bolar: Yes. I started to put in for a transfer, and they said, "No" In fact, I stayed there when Admiral Furlong got relieved. In driving the admiral, I got in on some things that I wasn't supposed to hear and so forth, and some I won't put on this (chuckle). But, like, the whole thing was that everybody coming out wanted to know why Admiral Kimmel and General Short got caught short. Well, actually, the whole thing was that they figured the danger was going to be from within. You asked about prior to the war. Well, every strategic spot on the island of Oahu was sandbagged, ready to mount machine guns, with the Hawaiian National Guard ready to come out and do their thing. So people ask me who was actually to blame. I said, "The do-gooders in the street saying you've got to appease them. I said, "When I was in Long Beach with the fleet, there was more Jap ships coming in and out with scrap iron and oil than they were anything else--a constant stream of them.

I've always said, "If you were cutting off a person's lifeline, their blood, like the Japs' scrap iron and oil, they are going to do something about it. It's just like it is today. You've got to appease this person and appease this country. Most of those people take might for right, so you better have a good stick. So that was the main thing there. They would come out and ask about it.

Marcello: Mr. Bolar, I think we've covered most everything we need to cover relative to the attack, so I think we'll stop there. I want to thank you very much for your cooperation and your help. I'm sure that scholars will find your comments most valuable when they get to use them.

Bolar: Yes, well, thank you.