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Interview with  
WILLIAM ELLIS  
September 17, 1988

Place of Interview: Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: William R. Ellis  
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

William Ellis

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

Place of Interview: Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing William Ellis for the University of North Texas Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on September 17, 1988, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. I'm interviewing Mr. Ellis in order to get his reminiscences and experiences while he was aboard the naval supply vessel USS Antares during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Ellis, to begin this interview, please give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, start by telling me when you were born and where you were born.

Mr. Ellis: I was born on February 18, 1923, in Dennison, Texas.

Dr. Marcello: Tell me a little bit about your education.

Mr. Ellis: My education included the tenth grade, and that was it as far as schooling.

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

Mr. Ellis: I entered the Navy on February 6, 1941.

Marcello: So you were approximately eighteen when you went into the service.

Ellis: That's right.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service in 1941?

Ellis: I had a very good friend that wanted to join the Navy. I didn't particularly want to join the Navy at that time. I was working; I had a good job. This fellow talked me into it, and that's just about it. I passed the physical and all the tests, which he didn't pass, by the way. I went in the Navy, and he didn't get to go. The war began before he got in. He finally got in a year later (chuckle).

Marcello: How long was the enlistment at the time?

Ellis: Six years, I believe.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Ellis: Great Lakes Training Station, Illinois.

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

Ellis: I believe nine to twelve weeks.

Marcello: From what you said, you evidently went through Great Lakes in the wintertime.

Ellis: It was very winterish weather. We did have winter weather--right. We had miserable weather up there. I pretty near froze my hands there. We carried real rifles in our training, and it was pretty cold.

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 the fact that it was cold?

Ellis: It must have been normal for pre-war, I'd have to say.

Marcello: Where did you go from Great Lakes?

Ellis: As I remember, I went from Great Lakes to the Naval Air Station, Terminal Island, California.

Marcello: And how long did you remain there?

Ellis: I spent at least two months there.

Marcello: And what did you do during that period of time?

Ellis: All I did there was...it wasn't my permanent assignment, but I was to catch my ship from there. At the time all I did was the normal upkeep of the place as a seaman and so on. My duties were just following orders, really. That's all I did for close to two months, I think.

Marcello: Was it here in California that you picked up the Antares?

Ellis: No, I picked up my ship in Pearl Harbor. Do you want me to describe how I got to Pearl Harbor from Terminal Island Naval Air Station?

Marcello: Yes, please do.

Ellis: I went aboard the...I believe it was the Argonne. I forget if it was the Argonne or the Wharton. It was one of those two. I believe both were transports. I can't quite remember that. It was one of those two ships. We sailed to San Diego, and we spent a day or two in San Diego. Then I took one or the other of those ships from

San Diego to Pearl Harbor, and that was in the summer months of 1941.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of being stationed in the Hawaiian Islands?

Ellis: Well, I didn't particularly like it at the time.

Marcello: Why was that?

Ellis: Well, I suppose it was because we were restricted to the ship for the most part except for normal liberty weekends and so on. We never had an opportunity for too much looking and sightseeing and so forth. The duties aboard the ship were pretty...I got in the fire room right away, I guess, when I boarded my ship. It was to be my permanent place.

Marcello: Let me back up a little bit because I have some other questions I want to ask you at this point. So you take either the Argonne or the Wharton to Pearl Harbor, and that's where you pick up the Antares. Describe for me what kind of ship the Antares was in terms of its functions and its operations and that sort of thing.

Ellis: We took aboard repair parts for the most part at that time, as I can remember, for naval vessels. We carried aircraft parts and machine tools for our ships in the fleet--you know, repair parts in general. That was what we were supplying generally, as I can best remember. I didn't have much to do with supply because I was below decks in the fire room, and my duties were with the

boilers--handling the boilers and the ship's movement as far as steam control and so on.

Marcello: In other words, this was not a repair ship but, rather, was a supply ship. You had spare parts and things of that nature.

Ellis: No repair ship, really. We handled supply and repair parts. We may have handled other supplies, but generally it was repair parts, as I can remember--bolts and nuts and just general supplies for the Navy.

Marcello: Okay, describe for me the process by which you eventually became part of the fire room.

Ellis: Well, let's see. In going overseas between San Diego and Pearl Harbor, I spent that time as a deck sailor, just swabbing decks and stuff. I did the duties of just an apprentice seaman. I got over there, picked up my ship then, and I stayed a deckhand for a very short time. I became interested in engineering because of a guy down below decks, I guess. I don't know if it was somebody I knew or what. I went down below decks as a fireman apprentice or...let's see...fireman third class we were at that time, I believe, and advanced from there. Then my duties were strictly watch standing and the upkeep and repair of the boilers and all the equipment in the fire room. I never got anyplace but there the whole rest of the time I was in the Navy, which was until February, 1946.

Marcello: So you were striking for fireman.

Ellis: Yes, right. That's right.

Marcello: And I'm assuming that the training that you received aboard the Antares was essentially on-the-job training under the supervision of some petty officer.

Ellis: Yes.

Marcello: How would you describe the training that you received to become a fireman striker?

Ellis: Very good. It was very good. I had very good training from guys that had been in the Navy for many years. I had very good training and very thorough training, which I liked. We had some "hardheads, but for the most part they were real good guys. after the training was completed, I eventually got up to first class. I never made chief before I left the Navy. I took the examinations aboard the ship right out of the books and so on from various rates. It was very good training. In fact, I've never forgotten it; I've used it. I worked in boiler shops after I came out of the Navy, welding shops and so on. I had good training in the Navy, and I'm glad I did. Of course, we had gunnery training, too. We got guns after...well, we'll get into that, I guess.

Marcello: How slow or fast was promotion in that rating before December 7?

Ellis: Oh, it took years, I guess, to go from fireman third



class, second, first. You probably became a third class within a year or two. Of course, then the war began, and ratings were then received much faster. You became rated faster because of all the recruits coming in.

Marcello: I'm assuming that some of those petty officers who trained you before the war had several hash marks.

Ellis: Yes, every one of them, every one of them. They did have several hash marks. I can remember some names of guys, but their ratings are hard to remember except for those who were right close to me.

Marcello: Once you get aboard the Antares and you become a fireman striker, what is the Antares doing? In other words, you obviously wouldn't be going out on the exercises all the time with the ships of the line, so to speak. What exactly would you be doing during that period before Pearl Harbor?

Ellis: You mean the activity of the ship?

Marcello: Yes.

Ellis: Before Pearl Harbor we handled supplies from Pearl Harbor down to all the islands in between Pearl Harbor and Canton Island, which was some, I'll say, 1,500 miles from the equator. I can't remember how far below the equator that was, but it was almost directly due south out of Samoa and all islands between there. I think we were on our second voyage and were coming back before the war began. The first one was a short voyage. The

first trip, I remember, was to Palmyra Island, which was in the South Pacific.

Marcello: So, in other words during...

Ellis: We handled barges. We towed barges on the back of the ship. We had a towing winch on our fantail. We towed barges to the islands, so we carried a pretty good load.

Marcello: In essence, then, any movements of the Antares during that period before Pearl Harbor would be mainly to deliver supplies here, there, and wherever they were needed.

Ellis: Yes, right in the South Pacific.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, could you in your position, being a new member of the ship, detect any changes at all in the routine of the Antares? Now you go aboard there in the summer of 1941. As the year proceeds and you get closer and closer to December 7, could you detect any changes in your routine or procedures of the Antares?

Ellis: The only detection of any changes I can remember would be some fifteen to eighteen days before December 7. Down at Canton, I believe it was, we had a big fire on the beach which we thought at the time was nothing but a warehouse fire. We hadn't had any knowledge of it being anything different. A fire erupted there in the warehouse, blew up cases of beer and whiskey and things

that had been stored there. I think there were both supplies for maybe several islands there, and we had the Pan American planes come in there. I believe they were Pan American planes. There were Marine and Army people there, and I think these were supplies for them. I know there was this big fire there that took place, and we'd sent a fire and rescue party ashore to handle this thing. It went into the night before they got back. I never left the ship. I was in the fire room. We were in very rough seas down there, and we didn't anchor. We stayed pretty much underway while we were unloading and loading. We loaded and unloaded down there. We had barges to unload. We had to blow up a barge, by the way. I think that must have been after we left there and were coming back. I think she sprung leak. She had some supplies aboard. As a matter of fact, we had been to Palmyra, and on the way back, I believe, the thing sprung a leak. She was trying to sink out there, so I think we brought her alongside and unloaded the thing--whatever there was aboard that barge--and then sunk it. We sunk it out there.

Marcello: But now what is the significance of this fire on Canton? Does it have anything to do with, say, the coming of war or anything of that nature?

Ellis: Not that we knew of. It just happened, and it did mess up our schedule somewhat. We got back to Pearl Harbor

on December 7 at 4:00 in the morning or something. So we were delayed for one reason or another, and we spotted a submarine down there. She would not identify herself. This was a Japanese submarine.

Marcello: Excuse me a second. Did all this occur on that trip down to Canton?

Ellis: Yes, this is right on the Canton trip. We left Canton, and I believe we were right off the island when the submarine was known. We discovered that we had the submarine with us.

Marcello: And how far in advance of December 7 was this?

Ellis: This was fifteen days. We left Pearl Harbor on November 3.

Marcello: So you were down there quite a while.

Ellis: Yes, we were down there...I wouldn't know if we had been there a matter of days, really, or any more than a week, if that long. We couldn't have been there very long before we discovered the submarine and when we had the fire. Whether we discovered the submarine or had the fire first, I don't know.

Marcello: Talk a little bit about the presence of this submarine.

Ellis: I can't remember just how we discovered it or how we knew the submarine was there, but we got word of the submarine, and we were trying to make some kind of radio contact with this thing. But it never happened. We couldn't make any contact whatsoever, but she was there.

She made herself known there. When we left Canton, this thing stayed with us. Before we left Canton, though, the skipper...we had a commodore aboard our ship, a four-striper. We called those guys commodores. A lieutenant commander was our captain, but we had a commodore aboard. Why he was aboard, I don't know. I don't know why he was aboard. I never did know that. But he was with us, and this man was very knowledgeable. This guy was a smart guy. He pulled some good things, we thought.

Well, what he did, he got word back to Pearl Harbor about this submarine, and in a very short time a destroyer appeared and stayed with us. I got here in my notes that she was a four-stacker, but I'm not positive of what type ship she was. I know she was a destroyer. Whether she was an old destroyer, a four-stacker, or a later version with two stacks, I don't know. However, she stayed with us and made the trip back with us. On our way back, we didn't take a direct course. Of course, we were in rough seas all the while, too. But this submarine would appear at night. We'd spot her at night, and that destroyer was with us and screening all the time. That thing tailed us all the way back to Pearl Harbor. You asked about something unusual. This was the unusual thing.

Marcello: Were there any Japanese mandates close to Canton? Where

was Canton, let's say, in relationship to the Marshall Islands perhaps?

Ellis: No place close. Canton has to be almost, I'd say, due south or right at due south of Palmyra, which was just north of the equator. It was a hot region down there, so Palmyra has to be fairly close to the equator. We were either below the equator or almost due south from Palmyra. If we had maps, you could see that. It's nowhere near the Southwest Pacific.

Marcello: Anyway, so you have this unidentified submarine trailing you back to Pearl Harbor.

Ellis: Yes, right.

Marcello: Okay. Like you mentioned, you get back to Pearl Harbor sometime around 4:00 in the morning of December 7

Ellis: Yes, it was. We were inside of Pearl Harbor about a quarter till 4:00. The reason I know that is because I went on a four to eight watch that morning in the fire room. We are prepared to be in the fire room at fifteen minutes until 4:00. Fifteen minutes before the hour is when we are to report for duty on our station. Well, at a quarter till 4:00, our watch takes over, so at a quarter till 4:00 you could look off the gunwales of my ship and see the lights. We were within...well, the horizon has to be within ten miles, so we were four to six miles from the island, I'd say, roughly at a quarter till 4:00.

Marcello: Okay, let me come back and talk about this later on, and this is where we'll pick up the story when we get into December 7. Let me ask you this to get some more background information. When the Antares was in Pearl, how did the liberty routine work for you and the crew during that period?

Ellis: Prior to the war?

Marcello: Absolutely. Everything I'm asking you has to do with before the war.

Ellis: Okay, as I can remember, every two days or something like that, we had liberty. You could take liberty and go ashore.

Marcello: Okay, so if you're in port, then, on a weekend, you might have either a Saturday or a Sunday?

Ellis: Yes. I believe there was a possibility of having a complete weekend at that time, and we were probably looking forward to it. At least somebody was. Somebody aboard ship was looking forward to a complete weekend. Well, of course, there wasn't much left of the weekend since it was Sunday, but we were looking forward to liberty. We'd been gone to sea for thirty-three days or something, so we were looking forward to getting ashore, you know. I'd have to say we'd get at least a day, a twenty-four-hour period. Sometimes you had a forty-eight-hour liberty. You probably had to ask for it special or something. Seventy-two-hour liberties I

can remember, but I think it had to be really something special.

Marcello: When you went on liberty, what did you personally do? What was your liberty routine?

Ellis: Probably drinking and eating. That was probably my routine...and sightseeing (what little there was). I didn't do much bumming around the cathouses. Some of the guys did. I won't say I didn't, but I very rarely did that. My shipmates and I would try to see some of the things there were to see, which we didn't have time to do a whole lot of that. But that was the extent of my liberty.

Marcello: So for the most part, from what you just said, you tried to stay away from the houses of prostitution down on Canal and Hotel Street.

Ellis: I passed them up because the guys I went ashore with didn't go in much. I won't say I stayed away from them, but I didn't especially go ashore to go there.

Marcello: Now before the war, would there be lines of people to get in these houses of prostitution?

Ellis: Before the war?

Marcello: Yes.

Ellis: Yes, there were lines. Yes, there were. I won't say there were lines outside. I can remember that there would be lines down some of the steps of these places. I can remember that. Of course, up in there, why, they



probably had probably pretty good lines. I think they had seating spaces up there for the guys.

Marcello: Prostitution was legal in Hawaii at that time, was it not, in certain places?

Ellis: It had to be, since it went on continually. I guess it had to be legal. I don't remember ever having seen any disturbances because of prostitutes.

Marcello: Okay, so the.

Ellis: Drink, tattoo, and eat--that's probably all I cared about back there, though (chuckle).

Marcello: I notice that you have tattoos on both arms and tattoos other places as well. Did you get those in Pearl Harbor prior to December 7, or did you get those afterwards?

Ellis: Before and after. In fact, I had one on my chest that I started before November 8 and didn't finish because I couldn't take it. There was a man and woman tattooing me on my chest, and I called it quits about 11:30 at night. We sailed out of there, and after we got back, we didn't get ashore for three weeks after the war began, and that's when I finished it (chuckle).

Marcello: A lot of those tattoos of that size almost had to be put on gradually, did they not?

Ellis: Especially by hand. Boy, it's the stupidest thing, you know. It really is.

Marcello: It was a part of being "salty."

Ellis: I don't know. I was eighteen years old. My shipmates

and every one of my better friends were tattooed. So I was as stupid as them guys.

Marcello: And most of those tattoo parlors were down on Hotel or Canal Street, weren't they?

Ellis: They were. Yes, they were. Well, that's the only place we really hung around if you didn't have much time ashore. I had one or two shipmates that had cars, and we'd jump in the car and go someplace else if we had time. Generally, most liberties were right down around town--Hotel Street, King Street. We'd go down to Waikiki occasionally, but we generally had a longer hike out there.

Marcello: Okay, so let's talk about that weekend of December 7, 1941. You have been to Canton. You've dropped off supplies at Canton and maybe some other places. You have this submarine sighting on your way back.

Ellis: Right.

Marcello: And the submarine stays with you almost all the way back. You're coming into Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7. To the best of your knowledge, you are within sight of Pearl Harbor at the time that you go on that 4:00 to 8:00 watch.

Ellis: Right, yes.

Marcello: You also mentioned something else awhile ago that I would like to pick up on. You said you saw the lights, and that's how you knew you were close. Were these the

lights of Honolulu itself, or were these lights off the naval vessels or what?

Ellis: Well, this had to be the city of Honolulu. It had to be also lights coming off Pearl Harbor. I don't think things were any different. I can't believe things were any different than when we left, you know, and we were well lit up that night in the harbor. Well, when you come back aboard ship, I can't remember having to do anything in the dark when we returned from liberty before we sailed out of here. I don't think it was any different this morning at 4:00. I think it had to be lighted. Pearl Harbor had to be lighted as usual. There were entertainment places around the harbor there. You know, we had the...what did we call it...where sailors went right there off shore on Ford Island. I don't know if it was on Ford Island or right on the beginning of the road that goes to Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Bloch Arena?

Ellis: Yes, like a recreation center. It was a recreation center for sailors, soldiers. I think everybody hung around these places, day or night both, at that time.

Marcello: Now when the Antares was coming in that night, did it have its usual running lights on and so on?

Ellis: I'm sure we did. I'm sure we did.

Marcello: So it was business as usual.

Ellis: In that respect, yes, it was.

Marcello: Okay, so pick up the story at this point. You're coming into Pearl. Are you challenged or anything of that nature coming in? Do you know anything about that?

Ellis: Okay, at sometime between 6:00 and 6:30...let's see...we got all the way up to the entrance to the channel. We towed a barge. We had a barge that we brought back from Palmyra. She was empty, as I remember. I think they had to send a tow boat or something out of the harbor to pick up the barge before we could enter the channel. Okay, this was daybreak. I guess it must have been about daybreak, 6:00 or 6:30 or something like this in the morning. Well, we were steaming in circles out there, waiting for something to come and get this barge off.

So we lost our airflow to the fire room. I was on watch. Since I was a fireman, I was instructed to go on up and trim the vents to the fire room as we were doing on the entire trip anytime we lost the wind to the fire room. When we'd get out of the wind, we'd trim our vents. We had reach rods that would go up, and we could do these by hand down below. But then these reach rods didn't work very good. In fact, one was broken on one of our vents. So we had to have somebody up there occasionally anytime at sea to trim our vents into the wind so we'd have the benefit of the wind. We didn't have forced draft in our fire room; we had natural draft

into fire room. It'd come out of these big vents up on the boat deck.

So at 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning, I went to the boat deck to trim these vents to the fire room. During the time I was up there trimming the vents, boy, I mean, the scrambling around the bridge of the ship just went goofy. The officer-of-the-day, the signalman, and the radioman were all there. The signalman was out on the wing of the bridge throwing signals. We had a PBY bomber up here (gesture) circling above us and dropping flares out there because there was a submarine. We thought it was the same submarine that had been tailing us all the time. Whether it was or not, there's no proof. I can't believe it was a miniature sub, but that's the only reading you ever see. But I thought this was a pretty good-sized submarine. I seen this thing.

Marcello: What did it look like? Describe it.

Ellis: Well, the conning tower was all I could see. The conning tower came up out of the water, and just about the time this happened, this PBY bomber was dropping flares on this submarine. The destroyer...and, here again, I thought it was the destroyer that had been with us all the while. However, it wasn't. The Ward was the destroyer that I spotted out there. I didn't know at the time, but somehow I have found out since that the

Ward wasn't away from the harbor. She was somewhere in the vicinity. Whatever destroyer that was with us, I don't know where that thing went, but at the time that was the destroyer I thought was out there.

Marcello: Okay, so you're up on the stack. Is that where you're at?

Ellis: I'm on the boat deck.

Marcello: You're up on the deck.

Ellis: That's just below the bridge of the ship, and you have perfect visibility in any direction you look almost.

Marcello: And you're trimming the vents.

Ellis: Trimming the vents to our fire room.

Marcello: And all this activity is going on.

Ellis: All these guys are active up on the bridge. Out on each wing of the bridge, the signalmen are flashing signals to the destroyer and also to the plane above. Beings we have a commodore aboard our ship, a four-striper, I got to believe he was the senior man in the vicinity.

Marcello: Okay, so what else do you see out there? What else is going on?

Ellis: Well, just the signaling, the flare dropping, and this submarine coming out of the water with its bow right at us. Here we are, and we think we are ready to enter the channel, and these are the things happening right here. I believe the barge was already gone. I think they'd taken the barge from us, and we are ready to enter the

channel. This is 6:30 now.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Normally, there was a submarine net across that channel, wasn't there?

Ellis: Yes, there was.

Marcello: Okay, now obviously for you to come in, that submarine net would have to have been drawn back.

Ellis: They would open the nets. They had to open the mine fields.

Marcello: And I'm assuming that perhaps that submarine was trying to get into the channel when you entered.

Ellis: No, we didn't think that. What we thought was that the submarine was trying to get us as we entered and sink us in the mouth of the channel. That would have blocked the channel more than the submarine probably. She might have been trying to get in, too, but this thing had her bow right at us. Our commodore up there believed that that submarine was trying to sink us right there. That was what was surmised from all the talk of the crew of the ship--the guys that were up there and had the communications with both the destroyer and the PBY.

Marcello: Could you overhear any of the conversation going on on the bridge?

Ellis: I talked to a radioman, a radioman friend of mine. I wish I could tell you his name. I went through Great Lakes Training Center with this guy. He just happened to be not one of my closest shipmates even though I knew

the guy. It's not that I didn't like him or he didn't like me, but we weren't in close contact. But we still ended up being on the same ship together.

Marcello: Okay, so you had a conversation with this radioman. What was he telling you?

Ellis: He was telling me these various things that I was just telling you. The communications from our officer-of-the-day, the commodore--the signals--that were passed between the three vessels there was: "Sink that submarine!" That's what this radioman told me.

Marcello: In the meantime, what is the Antares doing, or what can it do? You're not exactly a warship.

Ellis: Nothing more than just communicating is all we were doing. That's all the PBY did outside of dropping flares. The next thing I knew is that that destroyer was blasting the conning tower off that thing with a 5-inch gun. I call it a 5-inch gun. I believe it to have been a 5-inch gun. This occurred just as her bow was facing us and when we were ready to enter the channel. So we're right at the mouth of the channel, and it looked very much like she was coming out of the water and was going to let us have it right there. That's the word being passed between the officers up there--what they surmised. The word that came down to me from this radioman is that the commodore issued the orders to sink that thing.



Now I have read other things...what little I read about that day there. It's a rare thing to find any readings about what happened before the war started. But what little I have found didn't mention the Antares, didn't mention the PBY, didn't mention anything except the Ward taking it upon herself to come out there and sink this submarine. Personally, I don't believe that to be the case. There's other things involved, other facts involved. It was all beared out because, boy, there she was.

Then this destroyer--after all this signaling that was going on, the communicating between the three vessels there--fired at this submarine and blew the conning tower off of that thing. She fired one shot, maybe two. I think I've got it here in my notes as two, but I'm not sure.

Then the destroyer took a different course and came across the top of this submarine where she was in the water and dropped a depth charge. At least two depth charges went off. Then the ocean heaved up with this thing. I'd never seen a submarine blown up in water, but I had to believe it was a big submarine. It could have been a small submarine--I don't know--but I believe it was a big submarine.

Marcello: Did you see any parts or portions of the submarine that would indicate that it had been hit?

Ellis: Oh, no doubt about it. The ocean was full of it. We weren't 200 yards from the thing. We were ready to enter the channel, and this thing was right there. I mean, the destroyer had to be aware of us; and if she wasn't watching what she was doing, she could have rammed us because that's how close we were. But she didn't. She spun around, and they did some pretty damned good maneuvering to spin around and come across the top of the submarine and drop that depth charge just exactly in the right spot. But she was already going down. They had already blown the conning tower off of this thing, and she was going down then. And that just heaved the ocean. The ocean just heaved with this submarine. You could see the debris and all and the bodies, I'm sure, too, with it; but I don't know.

Marcello: You certainly saw debris, though.

Ellis: Oh, yes, no doubt about it. The submarine had been sunk. No doubt about it.

Marcello: Two questions come to mind at this point. First of all, what kind of a night was this in terms of visibility?

Ellis: It wasn't night; this was daybreak.

Marcello: I see.

Ellis: This was sometime before sunup and after daybreak. I can't believe there was any clouds in the sky that day. I think the sky was clear. If the sun wasn't appearing out there, it was close to it.

Marcello: So visibility was pretty good.

Ellis: Very good, right. Plus, we were very close.

Marcello: I have a second question. While all of this is taking place, has General Quarters sounded aboard the Antares?

Ellis: No, no.

Marcello: Isn't that strange?

Ellis: No, because we were a supply vessel. We didn't even have much training with the term of General Quarters until after this day. Up until then we never traveled in any convoys. We were a ship all by ourselves, just traveling more like a merchantman, you might say. We had drills and so on aboard ship for safety, as far as escape or anything happening aboard ship. As I know the term General Quarters, I can't really remember that we ever had it. We never had a gun aboard this thing. We had a gunner's mate. We had small arms in the armory. We had a saluting battery up on the bow, which we never had any ammunition for, so that thing was nothing in the world but...it looked about something like a 3-inch gun, is what it looked like. But there was no ammunition for it. A saluting battery is all it really was, and if it had ever been used, I don't know.

Marcello: How long does this activity go on?

Ellis: Well, this activity didn't last very long. After that submarine was sunk, of course, all I could think about was to get below decks and tell my shipmates down there

what happened. When I went down those steel ladders, I never hit a rung on them things. I went from one deck to the other on the handrails. Below decks nobody could believe a word of this without each man going up topside and find out for himself.

Marcello: When you went down there, were most of the people awake? I'm thinking they would be as a result of the dropping of these depth charges and so on.

Ellis: I didn't go by any sleeping quarters. I went directly down to the fire room, and all those guys were on duty. So I didn't pass any quarters of the guys who had been on earlier watches. Yes, they were asleep. The depth charges did move the ship, and the guys below decks thought...what they thought it was...the first thing that came to their minds down in the fire room was that the barge they'd brought alongside was bumping the ship and moving and banging into the side of our ship. For what reason and why they thought that? Because this very thing took place in the South Pacific when we...I mentioned the barge that we sunk. We brought her alongside in rough seas, and that thing bounced off the ship and made a racket out there during the time that they were unloading this thing with winches--going down in with nets, cargo nets--and bringing the cargo aboard. This thing was just like this (gesture) out there--bouncing. That was the first thing that entered the

guys' minds.

I came down and told them what happened on topside. "Oh, hell, that was that barge! They have that barge alongside unloading or doing something!" They didn't believe me, but each guy had to go topside to find out for himself. All the men below decks and on duty, operating the ship as far as the engine room and the fire room was concerned, one at a time had to go up topside to find out for themselves. This was at the hour of 6:30, between 6:30 and 7:00 now, so that was the time of day it happened.

Marcello: Did the thought ever run through your mind that this was a Japanese submarine?

Ellis: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Or did the thought simply run through your mind that it was a submarine that wasn't supposed to be there?

Ellis: The radioman that I talked to told me it was a Japanese submarine. In fact, probably up until that minute, I didn't really have any idea what was going on. It really all happened so quickly. I stood there watching them dropping these flares from this PBY bomber up there on top of the submarine--right at the place the submarine was, I should say--before she came out of the water. Then the thing appeared, and it wasn't, boy, I mean, very few seconds or minutes, let's say, until here comes the fire from that destroyer, the Ward. But

during that few minutes, when the flares are being dropped, why, the commodore was up there directing orders to the signalmen to be sent to both the vessels. That's why I've got to believe what radioman told me, that our commodore issued the orders to sink that thing. That's just the way it went.

Marcello: Okay, so all this take place, and now you are entering Pearl Harbor. Pick up the story.

Ellis: We didn't enter Pearl Harbor then. Really, what we did for the next hour, I don't know. I went back down below decks, and, really, why we stayed there right at the mouth of the channel, I don't know. But we didn't leave the mouth of the channel, and I don't know why we were right there. I think I remember having seen a tow boat out there close to us before I went back down.

Anyway, here we spent close to an hour right there at the mouth of the channel. I don't know whether we dropped the anchor or what. I don't know what they did, I don't know what the deckhands did up there. At any rate, we didn't stray from right where we were. We were steaming and we were changing course, but we didn't go back to sea, and we didn't go to the Honolulu docks yet. That's where we ended up, but we never started that until after the planes got to it.

The next thing we knew, we were coming off the watch. We were being relieved by the 8:00-12:00 watch

at a quarter till 8:00. I was down in my quarters at a quarter till 8:00, fifteen minutes till 8:00. I conferred with the rest of the crew that had gotten up and the guys that were on watch with me about what happened; and we were telling other guys down there what happened. The conversation was nothing but that up until we were ready to go off watch for breakfast.

We ate at 8:00. So here it was at quarter till 8:00, and we'd been relieved, and I was going to take a shower and go have breakfast. I was in the shower, right at the edge of the shower, with my shipmate at five minutes to 8:00 or whatever it was.

Marcello: And you're still outside the harbor?

Ellis: We're outside. We're still right at the entrance of the channel--right there. Whether we were anchored...I don't know whether we "dropped the hook" out there or not. I think we were still steaming on our own, is what I think. But we were alone all the time with our supplies. We'd been out at sea all this time alone.

But at any rate, it was close to 8:00, and we were just ready to enter the shower. I was going to take a shower and go up and eat, and, boy, here comes the fire from the machine gun coming through the wood hatches aboard the ship. I hadn't heard any planes yet. The first noise we heard was the slugs coming through the wood deck out here. Our engineering quarters was

covered by the steel decks on both sides of the ship. In the middle of the ship was the wood hatches, and these wood hatches were taken apart piece by piece when the ship was being loaded and unloaded. These wood hatches were thick wood, and they went down...there was a ladder that came down to our quarters, which surrounded a hatch, and then the hatch went all the way down to just above the bilges, I guess. It was wide-open spaces in here, so we had to put the wood hatches in place when we'd go to sea, unless we'd have cargo that we couldn't do it. As I remember, these wood hatches went in place both up above us and then right here in our quarters. And these wood hatches...boy, the slugs were coming through these hatches, hitting the hatches, and hitting the sides of the ship.

Then we started hearing the planes. Here I was, standing over here at the scuttlebutt with a shipmate of mine. We were talking about what happened before, and all these guys that heard this--the few guys that were not sleeping, who had come back off of watch--tried to get topside and up our ladder, which was just an open hatch up there. The thing that sticks in mind right at this moment is that we were standing over here (gesture), and we heard all this and the slugs hitting the ship. Then these guys starting running topside to find out what was going on. As soon as the last guy got



up the ladder, about ten of them came flying down the ladder because, boy, the planes were hot and heavy up there. They were coming in, and they were going right over us, I guess, right up to the Fleet Landing and then to the ships in the harbor, which was all, you might say, in view. At least the whole harbor is in view from out there, as far as ships' masts and so you know. I think some of the dry docks, the equipment in the dry docks, the cranes and so on, were all in view from where we were at.

We didn't know the planes were over the harbor yet, but they were over us. Whether they dropped any bombs at us or not out there...there were geysers of water that you could see. We got topside very shortly after this, snuck up there. Then we got into our "nest egg" up there, which had cover, and the shipmate that was standing with me was Bob Marty.

Marcello: Okay, what do you see when you go up there?

Ellis: After this group of guys came flying back down the ladder...boy, it was a funny sight because, you know, all these guys have is a ladder with rails--if you want to call them rails...just rope is all it is. These guys came flying down this ladder and started telling us what was taking place up there. They recognized these Japanese airplanes. We went around and tried to get people up first, I guess, the guys in our quarters there

that had been on earlier watches. We tried to get them to get up.

Marcello: In the meantime, there's still no general Quarters sounded aboard this ship?

Ellis: No, there was never any General Quarters. There was word sent into Pearl Harbor. The reason I know that is that the radioman told me later that there was word sent into Pearl Harbor. At the time that the submarine sunk, they did notify Pearl Harbor that this happened out there...of the happenings out there. That was at 6:30 or shortly after. But as far as sounding General Quarters aboard my ship, no, there was nothing. I don't know what General Quarters would mean to seamen except just that they'd have a fire station or something like this. To my knowledge we had no General Quarters sounded, no. If these happenings had took place later, when we all did have general quarters stations and so at all hours of the day, why, I would have had a general quarters place to report to and be at.

But here I was, standing at the scuttlebutt and ready to take a shower. I'd come off watch, and all we were thinking about was eating breakfast and going ashore. That's all we were thinking about. As far as the submarine being sunk out there, well, that was not a thing of the past. We were, you might say, forgetting about it: "Boy, we're going to make liberty today. We

were getting ready, and I didn't care whether I had breakfast or not, probably.

Marcello: At that point how were you dressed?

Ellis: Well, at that point right there, I was just about naked. I was ready to jump in the shower, but after seeing these guys coming back down into the quarters there...I mean, they were scared. These guys, of course, were scared and really gave no explanation yet as to what was happening. Then after we did find out what was going on, well, I probably put my dungarees on, got dressed, and at the same time was going around trying to get guys up and closing portholes. We had portholes at that time right into our quarters, which were just below the main deck up there. We had these portholes--quite a few of them. They were all welded up right after that. But at that time, we started slamming portholes closed and getting the guys up that were in their bunks.

Then after doing that, we headed for topside. I think probably the machine-gunning probably quieted down a little bit, and so we tried to get up topside. Then is when we found out what was going on in the harbor. I mean, then we could see the planes coming in over the harbor, dive-bombing. We'd see formations of planes over the harbor, and then we'd see them, one at a time, coming down through the smoke and dropping their bombs and then going back up. I think we seen the smoke.

That was the first thing we seen, whether it was the Arizona or what. At the time we thought it was just oil drums or something just blowing up in the harbor or fuel tanks or something. As far as being ships, no, we didn't think they'd been hit. Of course, we already knew the planes were there but didn't associate it with what was going on at Pearl. I guess everything had to generalize to you as it developed. When we saw the planes come down through the smoke, then we knew what was going on, of course.

Marcello: In the meantime, is the Antares simply just circling around out there?

Ellis: We're still right here (gesture) at the entrance of the channel, and we didn't know what to do, I guess. I guess the next thing I remember is that General Quarters, as you called it, sounded, but we didn't have anyplace to go. But they started trying to go down to the armory and get guns, just handguns. We had some .30-caliber machine guns, and we set them up on the gunwales and tried to use them. Now, not us guys. We were the engineers, and we weren't instructed to do anything, in fact. This shipmate and myself stayed close to the "nest egg" there, but we peered out to try to watch and see what's going on. But still, as far as having anything to do, no, we didn't. I never even had a gun in my hand, never got to the armory at all. The

seamen did, and I guess the other deckhands did.

Marcello: I'm assuming that when those Japanese planes strafed the Antares, the Antares was offering no resistance. It had no armament set up to defend itself.

Ellis: None whatsoever. None, absolutely none. As I said, we thought we seen geysers that was out close to the ship on both sides. It might have been some bombs, but it could have been debris falling from something else maybe.

Marcello: During those strafing attacks, was the ship itself making any violent turns or anything of that nature to evade those planes?

Ellis: I think we began to get underway then. Our speed was ten knots; that's as fast as we could go, anyway. Ninety-eight RPMs might have been our main shaft speed. Ninety-eight RPMs is probably it. I don't know. I think, as far as when we got underway, we wasn't like a damned destroyer or cruiser or something. We just eased off. While the bombing was going on, we were out here just offshore, and right there at some moment the skipper decided we were going to go up to the Honolulu docks. I don't know if they were expecting us there by that time or not. This was something like five miles away, I believe.

Marcello: To get to the Honolulu docks, you would not be going into the harbor.

Ellis: No. We turned away from Pearl Harbor. We did turn and came on out, and then we steamed along the shoreline and around into the Honolulu docks, which might have been five miles away.

Marcello: And by what time, then, do you dock there in Honolulu?

Ellis: We got over in the Honolulu docks...let's see...we might have gotten there--I don't know--sometime between 9:30 and 10:00, I guess. But we weren't in there very long, and the attack ended, I think, at 10:30 or something. By 11:00 it was all over with, as far as we could tell. It was completely over with, and from that point on it was nothing but horror that you heard for the next couple of days.

Marcello: What are you guys talking about--you and your shipmates?

Ellis: Well, of course, we pulled into the docks, and as we got into the docks, I think I got back down into the fire room. I didn't have any initial duties to perform right here at this moment or at this time. We were four hours on and eight off at the time. I believe that's what our watch standing was. Sea duty watches was four hours on and eight hours off in peacetime. The eight hours off was strictly your time unless there was some emergency or if we had to get into the fire room to repair something. It would have to have been an emergency or somewhat of an emergency for the movement of the ship or something. But we had the eight hours off, and that's

just the way it was. We'd had the four to eight watch. We were off, then, from 8:00 until 4:00 in the afternoon. Then we'd go on watch again, or being a Sunday, we'd look forward to going ashore.

Marcello: Okay, so this activity takes place, and you go from the entrance to Pearl Harbor into Honolulu. What do you and your buddies talk about during that time? What does the conversation center on? What are you speculating about?

Ellis: Just the fact that we are being bombed. We know what it is, and it's going to be total war now. I'm sure everybody was within his own thoughts. Getting into the harbor and getting someplace out of range is what we were probably thinking about. I don't know. We were scurrying about, I guess. The deckhands up there set guns up, and they were trying to be aware of planes coming at them. I think that during the course of this time when we were...okay, we'd taken off along the shoreline there and were trying to get away. We did spot a...I remember looking out over the one gunwale, and here we spot these low planes coming at us; and one big plane veers off, and she's coming down directly at us, right here off the water. Marty and I were standing here at this gunwale on the port side of the ship and were looking at this plane coming right off the water at us; and, boy, we thought she was going to hit us. We thought the plane was going to drop a bomb at us,

machine-gun us or whatever, and we just eased down on behind the steel rising on the gunwale right there. We sat back down, and I thought, "Buddy, here it is! Buddy, we're gonna get it now, so just sit down and forget about it all because this guy is gonna get us!" Well, this big ol' plane veered up over the ship, and it was one of our own planes. I think she came right over the mast of our ship, boy; I mean, she was low on the water, right off the water. And that was it, and she flew away. It was one of our planes, and, man, oh, man! Okay, this was after we had already taken a course for the Honolulu docks. As to what was said among the other guys, I don't know. I can't really give you any real good answer on that.

Marcello: What happens when you get into the Honolulu docks?

Ellis: We get in there, and we tie up. I think we got back down to the fire room. I think we were instructed to get down in the fire room again. At least that's where we ended up, all of us guys who had the earlier watches. We came down, secured the fires, and secured the boilers and the main engines and all. We were sure we were going to have to be here now; and whether we were going to go ashore in some kind of rescue parties or what, we didn't know, but we thought we probably would, I guess. As far as the fire room was concerned, we just didn't carry on any kind of duties that day. But people were



coming aboard from the city there, and sailors and Army guys were coming aboard and telling us all the happenings from over in Pearl Harbor, describing the whole thing, you know.

Marcello: What kind of rumors were already beginning to float around the ship?

Ellis: Well, of course, I guess the first word that was passed was that nobody was allowed to leave the ship unless they were instructed to or something. We were stuck aboard ship; we knew that. As far as there being any kind of liberty, which was the first thing we thought of when we spotted the island...we were fixing to go ashore. That's the first thing that entered most guys minds. They were going to get to go ashore that day. Watch lists were being made out for whoever was going to get to go ashore and so on. Of course, nobody could leave the ship; nobody was allowed to leave the ship. There might have been some deckhands up there or somebody who maybe had gone ashore to help the situation around, but as night came on, of course, the place was just darkened and black. We had a watch list made out for in port, and that consisted of less people on each watch than the sea watches. But then, heck, everybody ganged in at their own quarters. The engineers stayed in the fire room or in the engine room--that was in the engineer gang--whether they were on watch or not, the

whole night. I can't remember if I ever left the fire room all night long.

Marcello: Well, did you hear any rumors floating around as to what was going to happen next? In other words, what were the Japanese now going to do, or what had they done?

Ellis: That night, boy, they had posted watches up all throughout the deck, I guess, to see that there wasn't anybody trying to get aboard that shouldn't be getting aboard or anybody trying to get ashore that shouldn't be. We were tied to a dock at the Honolulu docks. There was surmising going on: "Suppose they will try to invade. What are we going to be able to do?" But there was nothing really done that night as far as us doing anything. Everybody was just thinking to himself. There weren't any actions taken that involved us guys down in the engineer department because strictly our duties were just the ship's movement, whatever it took to get the ship underway. Well, of course, we had to keep steam up for the ship's galley and everything. They had to be supplied with steam. For electricity and so on, the generators were kept running. But, boy, it was dark and black in there all night long. I don't think anybody slept. Where the time went, those hours--right after we got back into the Honolulu docks or even just shortly before that and up until that night--I can't recall anymore than just anxiety of what was going

to happen next, I guess.

Marcello: Did you hear any sporadic gunfire that night?

Ellis: Oh, yes, there was gunfire all night. Oh, man, there were reports of this guy shot off the top of a warehouse or this guy walking around and being shot by a Marine on duty. All night long there was gunfire.

Marcello: What did you do in the days following December 7?

Ellis: I think we may have taken on a few supplies the next day, ship supplies such as food, and we may have taken on fuel oil. But immediately we went back to Pearl Harbor. We sailed back out of there just as soon as we could take on enough supplies. It might have been the next day. It had to be right shortly at least. As soon as we could get fuel and food aboard, we steamed out of there and steamed back into our...we had a berth in Pearl Harbor. As you go up the channel, I think our berth was up beyond the dry docks and the submarine base over to the right of Ford Island where the battleships were. So we steamed back, and we came up the channel in daylight. Probably the next day...I don't know. I can't be sure of that. Oh, man, that place had deep oil on top of the water, and motor launches were pulling guys to the Fleet Landing. We seen that. Bodies were being towed out. I guess that maybe they had been killed when the planes were doing the machine-gunning. I think they came through there and across the Fleet

Landing. We had reports that guys trying to get back to their ships that morning, waiting for their boats out there at the Fleet Landing...there was this big Fleet Landing that I'm sure you've heard about. The boats from all the ships congregated there at the Fleet Landing to offload sailors going on liberty. They'd then go by car or bus, wherever, into Honolulu, and then they would come back to the Fleet Landing. That's where they'd pick up their boat to go back to their ships, you know. At this Fleet Landing, there was guys falling all over that thing on Sunday morning generally from overnight liberty, Saturday night and stuff. After this happened they were still taking bodies out from underneath the Fleet Landing and pulling them from the debris around there for days later. This was some of the things we saw coming up the channel. Now the ships, of course, were all destroyed and everything.

Marcello: Were you actually out on deck observing this?

Ellis: Yes.

Marcello: Describe what your reactions or feelings were when you saw all this destruction.

Ellis: Well, of course, I think we already heard the report about war. As soon as there was any kind of communication allowed that we could make use of, why, we probably already heard about war being declared and everything, I imagine, by this time. Well, just knowing

what was ahead was...that we were going to find our berth, and then probably parties would go ashore and do what could be done for the clean up and so on. Just everybody was in shock, of course.

Marcello: What happens when the Antares does dock?

Ellis: Well, let's see. Okay, I think the first words were that there wouldn't be any liberty for some three weeks or a month. That was some of the first information that, I guess, was passed among the crew, that nobody could get ashore except for mail or, I guess, supplies or whatever business. But as far as us guys below decks, we didn't get off the ship. We didn't even get off on the docks until...I take it back. We did. I remember us having the opportunity to walk down to see the Cassin and Downes, which were in dry dock right in front of the Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania had taken a bomb or had been hit at least. The Cassin and Downes were totally destroyed in the dry dock there, and they were just remnants of just roasted hulks, is all they were; I mean, they were just burned hulks, was all they were now. Of course, their crews were not there. The place was just empty down there in the dry dock. I think we had a chance to walk down through and see some of this. How we ever got on the docks, I don't know, because we weren't allowed ashore. I don't know how some of us had the opportunity just shortly after. This might have

been the next day or two days after we had pulled in and come back to our berth.

Marcello: How long were you in there before you got out of Pearl again?

Ellis: Well, we didn't get out of Pearl until March or...we went in dry dock. As soon as the dry dock was available for us, we could go in--whatever time that took. It was real short because we went in dry dock, and they just dismantled our ship entirely. We tore the boilers down below decks, and so our duties was getting the fire room prepared for sea again, of course. These were normal duties, really, nothing we hadn't been used to--us guys down there. But they brought workmen aboard, and they brought equipment for general repairs. When we went into dry dock, I think we did clean the bottom of the ship at that time, too, and got the barnacles off. All that was done in the dry dock. I think we secured the fire room entirely then, and all the power was brought to the ship from the docks. We didn't furnish the power anymore, so we were able to get into our machinery and get ready for sea and so on. The civilian workmen then came aboard and put gun mounts up. We put a 5-inch gun on the bow, a 5-inch gun on the fantail. We put a 3-inch gun on both of the forward well decks. They put a 3-inch gun on both the port and starboard. Then they put .50-caliber machine guns all over the ship. They

put those up on the wings of the bridge and up on the boat deck and back aft. After getting all those machine guns mounted, and during the course of building the mounts, they put the big steal panels up to shield the guns. What do they call them?

Marcello: Gun tubs. Don't they call them gun tubs?

Ellis: Whatever they call that steal plate that went around and shielded the gun where the guys were that handled ammunition. They put all the machine guns up there, something like eight .50-caliber machine guns. Later, they pulled all these machine guns out and put 20-millimeters in their place. That's when the 20-millimeter became, I guess, a real good gun. They had mounted these .50-caliber machine guns, and then they pulled them all off of there and made space for these 20-millimeters. We had--I don't know--eight or ten of those things that they put on the ship on different spots up where the machine guns were. Then we had two 3-inch guns and two 5-inch guns, so, boy, we had all these damned guns on this old iron tub. This ship was built...oh, I don't know. Heck, I don't know if this thing was in World War I or not. She'd probably been built in the 1920s. I don't know.

Marcello: But when you went into dry dock, they did make all kinds of changes on it.

Ellis: Oh, we did. That's when we took on the name of

"auxiliary cruiser. That was added to our being a supply ship.

Marcello: And when was it that the Antares then got out of Pearl?

Ellis: We stayed in there all of January and February. It had to be in March or April, I think, when we came out of Pearl.

Marcello: And where did you go?

Ellis: I never got back to Pearl Harbor the whole time I was in the Navy--from the time we left that day.

Marcello: So you essentially went all over the Pacific?

Ellis; All around the Pacific, New Hebrides. We got all the way up to Okinawa. When we came out of Pearl, Samoa was our first stop. Oh, I'll tell you what would tell you the exact time. We were on our way to Samoa. I don't think we had yet arrived in Samoa when the Battle of Midway took place.

Marcello: That would have been in June in 1942.

Ellis: Was it that late?

Marcello; Yes, Midway took place in June.

Ellis: June?

Marcello: Yes.

Ellis: Well, okay. How long had we been at sea?

Marcello: The date isn't that important. The only point I was trying to establish is when you were getting out of Pearl Harbor, and I gather from what you said then that you were essentially following the progress of the war



as it went across the Pacific. You were doing what you were supposed to be doing.

Ellis: I can think of another thing that took place before we pulled out of Pearl Harbor. The ships came back and came into Pearl Harbor that had been in action against the Japanese in the Marshalls and Gilberts. Do you know what date that was or about that date?

Marcello: It wasn't too long after Pearl Harbor. I don't remember, but, again, those dates are part of the record, and we're not interested in getting them for this interview.

Ellis: Okay. Let me pull that folder out. We could have been in Pearl Harbor until May, then, maybe. I don't know-- April, May--April or May. I got that in here. I remember one thing. I remember having such a lack of sleep that you could almost sleep standing up in those days. We were talking about general quarters. I mean, that was around-the-clock, boy, after that. If there was any break in the general quarters, it was only for minutes or maybe a couple hours or something. We had GQ continually the three weeks before anybody could get ashore. I think we finally began to get ashore after three weeks in the dry dock. But all that time, hell, GQ was constant.

Marcello: Well, I think that's a pretty good place to end this interview, Mr. Ellis, because we've really gotten the

bulk of what we needed relative to Pearl Harbor. Again, you have given me a slant on the Pearl Harbor attack that I had never received from anybody else.

Ellis: Never have?

Marcello: Of course, we are always looking for information of this sort. I want to thank you for taking your time to give me this information.

Ellis: I was hoping maybe you had contacted somebody just to compare my story. I thought you may have had some conversation with somebody that had been on the ship at the same time.

Marcello: Well, we'll, of course, continue to look for them, but I'm not sure whether we will find them or not. If not, we're really glad to have your particular viewpoint.

A P P E N D I X

U.S. NAVY UNITED STATES  
NAVY HISTORY OF USS ANTARES  
COMMAND OF LT. COMM. BELLINGHAM  
(SNOW WHITE) 1 YEAR OF 1941

NEED TO LOCATE SOME SAILOR OR AIRMAN WHO WAS PRESENT ON ONE OF THE THREE VESSELS AT THE SCENE OF THE HAPPENINGS AT THE MOUTH OF THE CHANNEL ON THE ISLE OF OAHU LEADING TO PEARL HARBOR, ON THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 7, 1941 FROM 1 1/2 HOURS TO TWO HOURS BEFORE JAPANESE BOMBERS ARRIVED - IN ORDER TO VERIFY SOME OF THIS STORY WRITTEN FROM MEMORY OF THAT DAY AND THE PRECEDING 33 DAYS SPENT AT SEA BY USS ANTARES.

SEEMINGLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TIMING OF THE BOMBING OF PEARL HARBOR WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL THE EVENTS OF THIS VOYAGE, WHICH BEGAN I BELIEVE ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 3, 1941. ANTARES SAILED FROM PEARL LOADED WITH CARGO AND TOWING AT LEAST ONE STEEL BARGE LOADED ALSO WITH CARGO AND BOUND FOR SOUTH SEA ISLANDS, NAMELY PALMYRA CLOSE TO THE EQUATOR THEN ANOTHER ON BEYOND THE EQUATOR - I SAID TOWING AT LEAST ONE BARGE BECAUSE THERE ACTUALLY WERE TWO BARGES ON OUR TOWING CABLE, EITHER FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE VOYAGE OR - MEMORY DOES NOT NOW SERVE ME WELL ENOUGH - WE COULD HAVE PICKED UP SECOND BARGE AT PALMYRA. AT ANY RATE ONE OF THE FIRST EVENTS TO AFFECT OUR SCHEDULE WAS ONE OF THE BARGES SPRUNG A LEAK POSSIBLY DUE TO ROUGH SEAS WHICH WE HAD ENCOUNTERED THIS ENTIRE VOYAGE. THE BARGE WAS SINKING SLOWLY, SO IT WAS DECIDED SHE WAS TO BE BROUGHT ALONGSIDE AND ALL CARGO TRANSFERRED TO THE SHIP WHICH WAS A TIME CONSUMING DANGEROUS JOB; DUE TO THE STORMY SEA AND THE HEAVY BARGE BANGING THE SHIP.

THE TRANSFER OF CARGO WAS, HOWEVER, SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT MISHAP, THEN TOWED BY WHALE BOAT TO A SAFE DISTANCE, DYNAMITED AND SUNK TO PREVENT THE POSSIBILITY OF COLLISION WITH SOME OTHER VESSEL.

THE SHIP WAS STOPPED SOMEWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF EQUATOR FOR THE KING NEPTUNE CEREMONIES WHICH MAY OR MAYNOT HAVE BEEN FIGURED INTO OUR SCHEDULE. AT ANY RATE, WE HAD A QUIET SEA AT THE TIME - SOMEHOW I DO REMEMBER THIS.

FURTHER SOUTH I REMEMBER SOME SCUTTLEBUTT ABOARD THAT WE HAD BEEN BLOWN CONSIDERABLY OFF OUR COURSE AND FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS COULD NOT GET OUR BEARINGS DUE TO VERY ROUGH AND STORMY SEA, HAVING A DEFINITE DELAY ALSO TO OUR SCHEDULE. THEN AFTER FINALLY ARRIVING AT CANTON ISLE, WHICH IS SURROUNDED BY SHALLOW CORAL REEFS, VERY DANGEROUS ESPECIALLY IN THE ROUGH SEA PREVALENT DURING OUR WHOLE STAY HERE. WE HAD TO KEEP THE SHIP UNDERWAY, PRACTICALLY THE ENTIRE TIME EVEN WHILE TRANSFERRING CARGO. THEN THE LIQUOR WAREHOUSE ON THE BEACH BLOWING UP AND BURNING FOR WHICH WE SENT ASHORE A FIRE AND RESCUE PARTY. I DID NOT LEAVE THE SHIP AT ANY TIME AT CANTON, HAD TO STAND EXTRA WATCHES IN THE FIREROOM KEEPING THE SHIP UNDERWAY. THE RETURNING MOTOR LAUNCHES FROM THE FIRE HAD SMUGGLED INTO THEIR BILDGES CASES AND BOTTLES OF LIQUOR THE SAILORS HAD MADE OFF WITH FROM THE FIRE. A GOOD PORTION OF IT MADE ITS WAY TO THE ENGINEERS QUARTERS, AS SOME OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE PARTY WAS FROM OUR DIVISION.

WELL, IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT WE FIRST RECEIVED WORD OF THE SIGHTING OF AN UNIDENTIFIED SUBMARINE. IN THE AREA SEVERAL ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO CONTACT THE SUB, WITH NO RESPONSE HOWEVER, COMPLETELY UNIDENTIFIED.

THEN SOME DAYS LATER WE SUDDENLY HAD THE COMPANY OF A FOUR STACKER  
DESTROYER, <sup>OR SISTER</sup> USS WARD, SENT FROM PEARL HARBOR TO ESCORT US BACK.

SEEMS OUR SKIPPER OR THE COMMADORE WE HAD ABOARD HAD ASKED PEARL  
HARBOR FOR THE ESCORT. I DON'T KNOW NOW WHY WE HAD THE COMMADORE  
ABOARD, BUT WE WERE GLAD FOR HIM, I THINK HE WAS THE ONE WHO MADE  
OR SUGGESTED THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS WHICH HAD TO BE MADE. HE WORE  
FOUR ONE INCH GOLD BARS. HIS RANK, JUST UNDER REAR ADMIRAL.

WE SOON STEAMED AWAY FROM CANTON, BOUND FOR PEARL HARBOR WITH A  
DESTROYER SCREENING ALL THE WAY AND THE SUB FIRST WAY AHEAD AND THEN  
BEHIND, BUT HAD BEEN SIGHTED SEVERAL TIMES, SO WE KNEW SHE WAS WITH  
US ALL THE WAY. MANY TIMES THE WARD WOULD SUDDENLY WITH A BURST  
OF SPEED WOULD MOVE OFF IN SOME OPPOSITE DIRECTION, GENERALLY STAYING,  
WE FIGURED BETWEEN US AND THE SUB. THAT WAS THE EXTENT OF THE EXCITE-  
MENT, HOWEVER, UNTIL SOMETIME AFTER MIDNITE ON THE MORNING OF DECEMBER  
7 - OAHU, PEARL HARBOR, AND THE SHINING LIGHTS OF HONOLULU CAME  
INTO VIEW.

SO THIS DAY DECEMBER 7, 1941 BEGAN AT 3:45 A.M., WHICH WAS THE TIME  
FOUR OTHER SHIPMATES AND MYSELF RELIEVED THE FIREROOM WATCH FOR WHAT  
WE THOUGHT TO BE THE LAST STEAMING WATCH OF THIS 34 DAY VOYAGE, AND  
LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING ASHORE IN HONOLULU, SEEING ALL OUR FRIENDS  
AND FUN PLACES. BY THE END OF THE DAY, AT ANCHOR, LIBERTY LISTS  
HAD ALREADY BEEN POSTED. AS SOON AS THE SHIP WOULD BE AT ANCHOR  
OR TIED TO THE DOCK, LIBERTY WOULD COMMENCE FOR HALF THE CREW.  
AS WE LEFT OUR ENGINEERS LIVING QUARTERS (AT 3:45) TO GO TOPSIDE,  
ON OUR WAY FORWARD TO ABOUT MIDSHIPS WHERE WE ENTER A HATCH TO DESCEND  
ABOUT 40 FEET OF LADDER TO THE FIREROOM, WE HAD TO STOP TOPSIDE  
FOR A MINUTE TO TAKE IN THE BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF LIGHTS AND SCENERY  
ALL AROUND US. COMING HOME AFTER THIS MONTH OF SEA, HOW HAPPY WE WERE.

WE RELIEVED THE WATCH WITH THE IDEA THAT SHORTLY AFTER DAYBREAK WE WOULD ENTER THE CHANNEL ON OUR WAY TO OUR OWN BERTH ABOUT 200 OR 300 YARDS FROM WHERE THE ARIZONA WAS BERTHED AT FORD ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF PEARL HARBOR. YOU CAN IMAGINE THE KIND OF CONVERSATION, AND THE FRAME OF MIND WE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN OVER OUR FIRST CUPS OF COFFEE ON WATCH. CAN'T REMEMBER ANYONE MENTIONING THE SUB, GUESS WE HAD FORGOTTEN HER. ALL WE HAD TO DO WAS WAIT UNTIL A TUG FROM THE HARBOR WOULD COME OUT TO TAKE THE BARGE FROM US WHICH WE HAD BEEN TOWING FROM, I DON'T REMEMBER WHERE, I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER IF THERE WAS CARGO ABOARD THE BARGE, I THINK NOT THOUGH. I THINK WE HAD TOWED HER FROM PALMYRA, ANYWAY WE COULD NOT ENTER THE CHANNEL UNTIL THIS WAS DONE.

THEN SOMETIME AROUND 6:30 AS THE SHIP WAS STOPPED WHILE THE BARGE WAS BEING TAKEN, OUR AIR, WHICH COMES DOWN TO THE FIREROOM THRU BIG VENTS, WAS CUT OFF DUE TO THE SHIP MOVING ABOUT WHILE BEING STOPPED. NOW THERE WERE TWO OF THESE VENTS LOCATED ON THE BOAT DECK WAY ABOVE THE FIREROOM WHICH COULD BE MANUALLY TRIMMED INTO THE WIND, SO AT ABOUT 6:30 I HAD GONE TOPSIDE TO TRIM OUR VENTS. I HAD NO MORE THAN GOTTEN TO THE BOAT DECK AND LOOKING UP TOWARDS THE BRIDGE ABOUT 30 FEET AWAY FROM ME, I COULD SEE ALL KINDS OF EXCITEMENT AMONG OFFICERS AND WATCH UP ON THE BRIDGE, SIGNALMEN FLASHING AND WAVING SIGNALS TO A PATROL PLANE ABOVE US. AND THERE LAYING TO OFF OUR STARBOARD BEAM WAS THE USS WARD ALSO FLASHING SIGNALS. THEN FLARES FALLING FROM THE PLANE, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN US AND THE WARD, AND LOW AND BEHOLD WHERE THESE ELARES ARE LANDING, UP COMES THIS BIG BLACK CONNING TOWER OF THAT SUBMARINE WHICH WAS, WE FIGURED, WITH US FOR MANY DAYS.

THEN CAME TWO BLASTS FROM THE WARDS BIGGEST GUNS, NO DOUBT FIVE INCHERS, EXPLODING ON THAT CONNING TOWER. WITH THAT THE WARD WITH FULL STEAM, BLACK SMOKE POURING OUT OF THOSE OLD STACKS, DIRECTLY ON COURSE TO RAM THAT SUB. I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANY CONTACT, BUT SHE THEN LAYED DOWN DEPTH BOMBS, AND BOY THAT OCEAN HEAVED THAT SUBMARINE ALL OVER THE DRINK AROUND US.

SO THIS WAS THE REAL BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II, WHICH AT THE TIME WAS ABSOULTELY UNBELIEVABLE BY ANYONE, EVEN THOSE ON WATCH BELOW WHO FELT THE SHIP BEING SLAMMED BY THOSE DEPTH BOMB BLASTS. ANYWAY, AS I GAZED OFF OUR STARBOARD BEAM AT THESE SUDDEN HAPPENINGS I COULD NOT AT ALL UNDERSTAND WHAT REALLY WAS TAKING PLACE, UNTIL I MOVED OVER TO THE RADIO SHACK END OF THE BRIDGE AND TALKED TO AN OLD SHIPMATE RADIOMAN ON WATCH WHO HAD ALL THE DOPE. THIS RADIOMAN, BY THE WAY HAD ENTERED THE NAVY PRACTICALLY SAME TIME AS I. I WISH I COULD REMEMBER HIS NAME, BEGAN WITH "D" I THINK, BIG GUY WHO BEGAN BOOT TRAINING IN GREAT LAKES SAME DAY AS I, SAME COMPANY (30) AS I. HE HAD DUTY ON EVERY SHIP AND STATION AS I RIGHT UP TO THIS DAY AND AT LEAST 3 OR MORE WAR YEARS LATER REMAINED RADIOMAN ABOARD OUR ANTARES, AS WELL AS I REMAINED BELOW IN THE FIREHOUSE AS WE CALLED IT. THE ONLY OTHER SHIPMATE REMAINING WITH ME FROM THE BEGINNING THAT I CAN REMEMBER WAS BOB MARTY, A MACHINIST IN THE ENGINEROOM, ONE OF MY CLOSEST SHIPMATES (FROM COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA.)

OK - THE RADIOMAN HAD INFORMED ME - OUR SKIPPER AND THE COMMADORES THINKING WAS - THAT THIS SUB WAS ABOUT TO LET GO WITH TORPEDOES TO SINK US IN THE MOUTH OF THE CHANNEL BLOCKING THE SHIPS IN PEARL HARBOR FROM ESCAPING TO SEA.



DUE TO THE FACT SHE (THE SUB) WOULD NOT IDENTIFY HERSELF, ALSO HER POSITION IN RELATION TO OUR POSITION AS SHE WAS SURFACING AND AS WE WERE ABOUT TO ENTER THE CHANNEL - THIS ALL SEEMED TO BE THE REASONING OF OUR COMMANDERS ACTIONS.

SO THE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN OUR RADIO SHACK, OUR SIGNALMEN ON THE BRIDGE AND THE PBY AIRCRAFT ABOVE TO DROP FLARES AND TO THE USS WARD TO DESTROY THIS JAPANESE SUBMARINE WERE ACTIONS DECIDED UPON AND CARRIED OUT BY ONLY THE COMMANDERS OF THESE THREE VESSELS WITH THE COMMADORE ABOARD OUR ANTARES AS THE HIGHEST IN RANK, AND WHO, WE THINK DIRECTED THIS ACTION ON THIS CLEAR SUNDAY MORN AT DAYBREAD ABOUT 6:30, 12-7-41. ALL OF WHICH WAS COMPLETELY UNBELIEVABLE BY ALL NAVY AND ARMY AUTHORITY WHICH WE COMMUNICATED WITH IN PEARL HARBOR INFORMING THEM OF THESE SO IMPORTANT ACTIONS - ACCURATELY, QUICK-WITTINGLY, GREATLY INTELLIGENT, UNHESITATING DECISIONS MADE BY THESE COMMANDERS WHO SHOULD HAVE HAD THE HIGHEST HONORS OF OUR LAND BESTOWED UPON THEM.

YOU CAN IMAGINE THE GOINGS ON FOLLOWING ALL THIS. I RUSHED BELOW TO TELL MY FELLOW WATCH BOTH IN THE FIREROOM AND ENGINEROOM - NO ONE BELIEVED IT OF COURSE - SO ONE BY ONE WENT TOPSIDE ONLY TO RETURN WITH THE SAME WIDEYED SCARED EXCITEMENT AS I. THEN AS OUR WATCH ENDED, OUR RELIEF 8 TO 12 WATCH STANDERS MOSTLY INFORMED OF WHAT HAD HAPPENDED WHILE HAVING THEIR BREAKFAST BEFORE RELIEVING US HAD TO REINFORM US ALSO. WE THEN ENTERED THE MESS DECK FOR BREAKFAST, WHICH DIDN'T TAKE LONG AS WE WANTED TO RETURN TO OUR ENGINEERING QUARTERS TO AWAKEN AND INFORM THOSE WHO HAD LATE WATCHES DURING THE NITE AND WERE STILL SLEEPING IN.

MOST WERE UP AND DISCUSSING THE EARLIER EVENTS WHEN WE RETURNED TO OUR QUARTERS SO SOME OF US WERE PREPARING TO BATHE IN THE SHOWER ROOM BEFORE AWAKENING THOSE WHO WERE NOT DISTURBED BY ALL THE COM-MOTION. THERE WAS NOT ANY BATHING FOR ME THIS DAY, HOWEVER, FOR THIS WAS THE HOUR OF AROUND 8:00 a.m. ABOUT TO ENTER OUR SHOWER ROOM MARTY AND I LINGERING STARBOARD SIDE OF OUR QUARTERS, SUDDENLY CAME THE SOUND OF MACHINE GUN SLUGS BEATING THE STEEL DECK ABOVE US TO THE PORT SIDE. AT THIS MOMENT WE COULDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND ABOUT SIX OR EIGHT GUYS STARTED UP THE LADDER AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ALL MANAGED TO GET TOPSIDE AND OUT THE HATCH ABOUT THE SAME TIME. AT THIS TIME WE COULD HEAR THE AIRCRAFT ABOVE, THEN THE SLUGS AGAINST THE DECK AND GUNNELS. THEN CAME A MOST HILARIOUS SIGHT AS ALL THOSE SAILORS CAME TUMBLING THRU THAT HATCH AND DOWN THAT LADDER AND YOU COULD NOT RECOGNIZE ONE FROM THE OTHER AS THEY ALL HIT THE DECK IN A HEAP AROUND THE BOTTOM OF THE LADDER AND ALL YELLING "JAP PLANES BLASTING US."

WELL WITH THAT WE GOT DRESSED, BEGAN SLAMMING PORT HOLE COVERS, CLOSED AND DOGGED, THEN AWAKENING OUR CREW WHO HADN'T YET COME TO, AND TRY-ING TO TELL THEM WHAT WAS GOING ON. THE MACHINE GUN ATTACKS ON US DIDN'T LAST TOO MUCH LONGER AND AS IT SUBSIDED WE BEGAN TO EASE TOP-SIDE. THE DECK HANDS WERE PASSING THE WORD, GUNNERS MATES OBTAIN HAND GUNS FROM THE ARMORY AND PASSING OUT LIFE JACKETS. DECK HANDS AND OTHER TOPSIDE SAILORS WERE SETTING UP 30 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS ON THE SHIPS GUNNELS, BUT I DON'T THINK THESE WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE TOWARDS OUR DEFENSE IF THOSE ATTACKERS WOULD HAVE REALLY ATTEMPTED TO SINK US.

THE WARSHIPS IN THE HARBOR WERE THEIR REAL TARGETS. I REMEMBER SEVERAL GEISERS OF WATER SHOOTING UP CLOSE TO THE SHIP ON BOTH SIDES, I THOUGHT AT THE TIME IT WAS BOMBS DROPPED AT US FROM HIGH ALTITUDE, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN FALLING DEBRIS OR SHELL SCHRAPNEL. OUR WARSHIPS THAT DID GET OUT OF THE HARBOR PUT ON SOME BEAUTIFUL MANOUVERS, FOUR STACKERS BELCHING BLACK SMOKE WITH FULL SPEED AND ALL GUNS FIRING INTO THE SKY. ONE ATTACKING PLANE SEEMED TO EXPLODE HIGH ABOVE A DESTROYER COMING OUT OF THE CHANNEL. THESE BOMBERS WERE LEAVING FORMATIONS HIGH ABOVE THE HARBOR, DIVING DOWN THRU THE BLACK SMOKE, ONE FOLLOWING ANOTHER, LEVELING OFF DROPPING THEIR LOAD AND PEELING OFF INTO THE SKY DISAPPEARING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. AS WE BEGAN TO PROCEED ON TO HONOLULU DOCKS THE ATTACKS ON OUR SHIP ENDED. ABOUT THIS TIME IT WAS THAT WE GOT OUR WORST SCARE OF THE DAY, A BIG PLANE VERY CLOSE TO THE WATER COMING EXACTLY AT US VEERED UP OVER OUR FAN TAIL - ONE OF OUR ESCAPING PBY CRAFTS, WE FINALLY RECOGNIZED HER, BUT WE REALLY THOUGHT THIS WAS IT AND WE WERE REALLY TAKING COVER. NO MORE ENEMY CRAFT CAME NEAR US AS WE STEAMED AWAY FROM THE CHANNEL, BUT THE TERRIBLE SIGHTS SEEMED CLOSE. WE SECURED TO A BERTH AT THE HONOLULU LOADING DOCKS ABOUT 10:30 OR 11:00 a.m., ALL PLANES DISAPPEARING BY THIS TIME. THE REMAINING DAYLITE HOURS OF THAT DAY WE HAD, CONSTANTLY, VISITORS COMING ABOARD GIVING US THE DRAMA WHICH TOOK PLACE ASHORE AND AFLOAT THRU OUT THE AREA. SOME OF OUR CREW WAS DISPATCHED TO HELP IN THE BLASTED AREAS AND DRY DOCKS. OUR BLACK GANG KEPT THE ENGINE ROOM AND FIRER ROOM PREPARED FOR SEA SO WE WERE RESTRICTED TO THE SHIP INDEFINITELY AND I BELIEVE IT WAS THREE FULL WEEKS LATER BEFORE WE FINALLY GOT ASHORE. THE NITE AFTER DARK OF DECEMBER 7 WAS THE MOST TERRIFYING, THERE WAS COMPLETE

DARKNESS BOTH ASHIP AND ASHORE, GUNS POPING ALL NITE. I AND MOST OF THE FIREROOM CREW SPENT THE NITE IN THE FIREROOM I DON'T THINK A SOUL IN THOSE ISLANDS CLOSED HIS EYES THAT NITE LET ALONE HAD SLEEP, IN FACT ALL THE DAYS AND NITES IMMEDIATLY FOLLOWING YOU ONLY SLEPT WHEN YOU COULD NO LONGER STAY AWAKE, WE WERE EXPECTING THOSE PLANES TO RETURN AT ANY TIME AND POSSIBLE INVASION. TOTAL ALERTS WERE FREQUENT AND LASTING FOR HOURS, BUT WE WERE LUCKY AND KNEW IT. THE ISLANDS BEING TAKEN BY THE JAPS FOLLOWING PEARL HARBOR WERE OUR BIG CONCERN WHILE PREPARATIONS FOR TOTAL WAR WERE BEING MADE. OUR SHIP WENT INTO REPAIR YARD AND DRYDOCK EQUIPPING AND PREPARING FOR CARRYING CARGO BETWEEN ALL THE FAR WEST AND SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS OF WAR, AND THAT IS JUST WHAT WE AND THE OLD USS ANTARES DID TILL SUMMER OF 1945. WHEN WE FINALLY SAILED AGAIN, SOMETIME IN THE MONTH OF MAY 1942, WE STEAMED OUT OF PEARL HARBOR LOADED WITH CARGO, AND AMUNITION HEADED FOR SAMOA. AFTER THE SHIP WAS WELL AT SEA ALL OUR CREW BEGAN DRILLING CONTINUOUSLY AT GUN QUARTERS WITH CONSTANT BATTLE CONDITIONS BEING THE ORDER OF EVERY DAY, BECAUSE AS THE OLD ANTARES SAILED INTO HONOLULU THAT EVENTFULL DAY WE HAD NOT ONE GUN MOUNTED ON THAT SHIP, BUT NOW AS WE SAILED WEST AND SOUTH WITH OUR COUNTRY AT TOTAL WAR WE HAD A TOTAL OF 12 GUNS MOUNTED ABOUT THE SHIP. WE HAD 8 20MM GUNS EACH HAD 3 OR 4 CREWMEN TO OPERATE, WE ALSO HAD TWO 3 INCH GUNS MOUNTED ON FORWARD WELL DECKS, A 5 INCH ON THE BOW AND A 5 INCH ON THE FAN TAIL. COMPARED TO A WARSHIP THIS ISN'T MUCH FIREPOWER, BUT WE NOW THOUGHT WE HAD A CHANCE, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE GUNNERS STARTED HITTING THE TARGETS; HOWEVER, ALL OUR TRAVELS ABOUT THE FAR PACIFIC WE ONLY HAD A FEW SUB SCARES UNTIL OKINAWA IN APRIL, MAY OF 1945.

THERE THE KAMIKAZE PLANES CAME IN EACH NITE AND THE 20 MM ALWAYS HAD A WORKOUT. THIS IS WHERE I TOOK LEAVE OF THE ANTARES ALMOST AT TIME MY YOUNG BROTHER BOBS SHIP "USS BATES" DESTROYER ESCORT WENT DOWN WITH HIM ABOARD OFF OKINAWA MAY 25, 1945.

ONE OF OUR SHIPS COOKS, 2 OTHER SAILORS AND I SAILED FROM OKINAWA ABOARD A MERCHANT SHIP BOUND FOR SAN FRANCISCO - 500 MARINES & SAILORS AND NO FOOD, 17 DAYS ON SPAGETTI, I STILL HATE THE STUFF. BUT GOING HOME WAS THE GREATEST SO IT DIDN'T MATTER. BEFORE THAT WE HAD ALWAYS HAD GOOD FOOD, AND GENERALLY PLENTY.

THEN AFTER RETURNING I RECIEVED SOME WORD ABOUT THE CHIEFS QUARTERS OF THE ANTARES HIT WITH TORPEDO SOMEWHERE OFF OKINAWA, BUT SHE MADE IT HOME LATER, AND THE LAST WORD OF HER WAS SHE WAS SENT TO SAN DIEGO SHIP YARDS, AND CUT UP FOR SCRAP.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT SOME PART OF THE U.S. NAVY AND REQUEST A COPY OF THE SHIPS LOG OF U.S.S. ANTARES - ESPECIALLY OF THOSE YEARS 1941 THRU 1945.

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