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Interview with
LAWRENCE MYERS
June 6, 1980

Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Lawrence Myers for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on June 6, 1980, in Arlington, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Myers in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of Headquarters, 5th Bombardment Group at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack there and at Pearl Harbor and the other military installations on December 7, 1941.

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

Mr. Myers: I was born in 1921 in Weston, West Virginia.

Dr. Marcello: Weston, West Virginia?

Mr. Myers: Yes. I graduated from high school and almost immediately joined the Air Corps.

Dr. Marcello: When did you join the Air Corps? In what year?

Mr. Myers: June, 1939. There were no jobs. At this recruiting

station, I had written about joining the Army or the Navy or something. The recruiter sent back . . . they had three openings in the entire service at the time. So at this recruiting station, there were twenty-seven people or something who were there to take their exam to get in there.

Marcello: When you say there were three openings in the service, do you mean three openings in the combined Army, Navy . . .

Myers: No, in the Air Corps.

Marcello: Just in the Air Corps alone.

Myers: Yes. One opening was in Panama; one was in Hawaii; and one was in the Philippines. There were no openings in the United States. So I scored well enough to get to Hawaii. I thought I'd get to go back home after I took the exam, but they put me on a train and sent me to New York.

Marcello: Where did you take the exam?

Myers: Baltimore, Maryland.

Marcello: So you had to go from Weston, West Virginia, to Baltimore, Maryland, in order to take this exam.

Myers: Yes. This is a distance of probably 250 miles.

Marcello: Awhile ago you mentioned that one of your motives for joining the service was economic in nature. In other words, in 1939 jobs were still scarce. We were still in the back end of the Depression at that time.

Myers: That's correct. My dad had a farm, but I was tired of

farming (chuckle). He had lost a good deal of his farm during this Depression. The only way he had to get any money was he'd sell an acre or two at a time to get some money. We had a fairly large family. There were seven kids, and in order to support them during this period, well, it nearly wiped out everything my dad had. I felt as though I didn't want to ride my dad's and mom's backs, but I knew I had to do something. The service was there for twenty-one dollars month. That sounded like a mountain of money, to me, then.

Marcello: Of course, in addition to the twenty-one dollars a month, you would be getting room and board, too.

Myers: Yes. So I was able to complete the examination to get in the service. Then immediately they sent me to New York-- Fort Slocum, New York.

Marcello: Why did you select the Air Corps over one of the other branches of service? What was your reason for that?

Myers: Well, when I was in high school, I had a little deal that I'd like to become a flier if I could. There was a barnstorming show that came through. I had to go about five or ten miles to see this thing back in those hills. I got a ride for a dollar with a stunt pilot, and I liked that (chuckle). So I did want to get in the Air Corps if I could, which I did.

Marcello: I think a lot of young men had ambitions of flying at that

time. I think we have to realize that, even as late as 1939, flying was a rather novel experience.

Myers: It was novel. Another little thing . . . when I was growing up, there was this flight of . . . I know what they are now, but I didn't know at the time. There were seventeen P-26's that flew at a real low altitude over where our farm was. They was coming from the south going to the north, and where they were going . . . I didn't know what type airplanes they were, but I thought they was pretty. This was after I took that ride in that little ol' stunt plane.

But that guy in the stunt plane, he didn't hold back. He turned it over, and he looped it. He was pretty good in all that.

Marcello: How difficult was it to get into the Air Corps at that time?

Myers: Well, it was pretty difficult. Your eyes had to be perfect. Well, you had to be nearly perfect physically all the way. I didn't have any trouble with the mental exam or the written exam because, shoot, I was just getting out of high school, and that thing was a breeze. They had some good questions in mathematics and English. Although it was the first examination I took, I thought it was fairly easy. It wasn't simple by any means. I don't think a eighth-grader could've passed that exam. Well, the Air Corps back then wasn't taking anyone without at least a high school education. I think the Navy and the Air Corps were the only ones.

Marcello: Was it not kind of unusual for you to have gone directly into the Air Force? In other words, isn't it true that a lot of men who ultimately got into the Air Corps first went into the Army and then got a transfer into the Air Corps?

Myers: I think so. I ran into quite a few. There was some in my old outfit that were that way. They'd had been in the infantry or artillery or something and then came in. We even had one boy that had served one hitch in the Navy and come in.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you went directly from Baltimore to Fort Slocum, New York. Is that correct?

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, what happens when you get to Fort Slocum?

Myers: I spent six days at Fort Slocum. They had the biggest coal pile up there I've ever seen--never seen one as large since.

Marcello: Even coming from West Virginia?

Myers: (Chuckle) Yes. That thing was as tall as these buildings in downtown Fort Worth (chuckle). They were unloading it from the barges, and I spent four days working on them. They had a walkway. This was a large belt that they were putting the coal on. They had a man stationed about every ten feet with a shovel, and you just kept the thing clear. That belt was a long thing. It must have been a half-mile long. Four days I spent up there.

There was only three Air Corps boys in that whole bunch--of the ones I signed up with. I don't think they all came from Baltimore, but there were only three there. Everyone around Fort Slocum that I talked to had been there five or six weeks, two months or longer. It was a shipping-out point for overseas.

Marcello: And I guess they were waiting for a large enough contingent to ship out of there.

Myers: Yes. So after six days, well, I was on ship--no boot camp, no nothing. They just issued me a uniform. I just guessed about what was going on by looking at the other people in my unit. Anyway, my name came up on those shipping orders. I think it was on the fifth day that we got the shipping orders, and on the sixth day they took us to Brooklyn Army Base. This was a downtown building in Brooklyn. I've never been there since.

The night before we got on that ship . . . the USS Hunter Leggett was the name of the ship. We got aboard . . . well, in this Brooklyn Army Base, we got in there. We rode subways or something down to Brooklyn. We went up five or six floors in this building. Boy, it looked like a jail. We just got in there, and they fed us our evening meal, and they slammed those doors. It was just bars on the doors. They just locked us up in there just like you was in jail (chuckle). Well, there was a couple of previous servicemen

in there. They said it always happens that some of the fellows back out, and they didn't want to go. They would just skip out before they'd get on the ship. So they just lock everybody up before this could happen to them. It didn't really make any difference. It was clean, all right--clean beds, white sheets, and everything.

They woke us up real early the next morning, and we headed for the ship. We got aboard that thing. I think we pulled out about noon, 12:30 or something like that, or one o'clock and headed for Panama. It took us, I believe, five days. I don't really remember how many days it took to get . . . I believe it was five days to get to Panama. That was the sight I liked to see the most--when they pulled us through that canal. It was kind of interesting how they do it.

When we got on the Pacific side, they let us get off the ship and go downtown. I didn't buy very much. The only thing I remember buying was that I wanted some Crush--soda pop--and that thing cost me fifteen cents. That was lots of money--fifteen cents--when it was a nickel everywhere else. Anyway, we got to spend the day in Panama. It was pretty, and I enjoyed walking. There was pelicans diving in the water--all kinds of birds. Peacocks were all over the place, and there were thousands of birds of different colors . . . parrots.

Anyway, we got through this Panama deal and got aboard that thing and went to San Francisco. I forget how many days it took to go around there. We got to Fort McDowell just out of San Francisco Bay. You pass Alcatraz getting there. I'd always heard about Alcatraz, so I got to see that thing. We spent four days in Fort McDowell. This is where they changed . . . they took the "O.D." uniforms that we had from us at Fort McDowell and reissued us . . . , no, I guess they didn't. They just issued us GI khakis, tropic uniforms.

Well, we got back on the Republic.

Marcello: This time you switched ships.

Myers: Changed ships.

Marcello: You went from the Hunter Leggett to the USS Republic.

Myers: Yes. We went to Hawaii on the Republic. We landed on the 3rd of July, 1939. They put us in . . . they took us out . . . there was only three of us, now mind you. They took us to Luke Field, and Luke Field is Ford Island in the middle of Pearl Harbor. That used to be the air base. They traded . . . well, while I was there, we moved from Luke Field. . . . well, my boot camp was down at Luke Field. They'd brought a bunch of people in for the infantry and artillery. We did some of it at Luke Field. Mainly we went to Schofield Barracks and took some boot camp with the infantry.

Marcello: Okay, let's back up a minute. What did you think about the

idea of being stationed in the Hawaiian Islands?

Myers: Oh, I liked that. I couldn't have got a better deal. Of course, everybody, I suppose, raved about Hawaii. It was pretty. It was beautiful.

Marcello: You'd mentioned that you'd taken some boot camp at Luke Field, which is on Ford Island, and that you also took some boot camp over at Schofield Barracks.

Myers: Right, with the infantry.

Marcello: I would assume that, even being in the Air Corps, your basic training was very similar to that of anybody who would have been in the infantry.

Myers: That's right. It was almost the same thing. We had bayonet practice . . . just the same thing that was all the way through the infantry. It was approximately the same thing. The Air Corps at that time was a young organization. They'd had the Air Corps since the First World War, but they still hadn't built it up like it is known today.

Marcello: How long did this boot camp last?

Myers: Six weeks. It was the same thing. I believe they have it six weeks now. It was six weeks then. After we got out of boot camp, they assigned you to your permanent squadron. I got assigned to this Headquarters Squadron, 5th Bombardment Group.

Marcello: Headquarters Squadron, 5th Bombardment Group?

Myers: Right. After I got assigned a permanent station . . . well,

they give me a few duties to do. I worked in the technical supply for a while, you know, issuing parts for airplanes and this.

Marcello: And this is called technical supply?

Myers: Yes, I worked in there for, oh, a month or more. Then they took me from there and put me in the sheet metal . . . the welding shop. I guess they needed help in there. So I got an MOS on the deal--555. At this time you took examinations every six months after you'd been there a year. You couldn't take one before you had a year in the service. They issued you books and everything, and you could study up on what you were going to be doing in there--your job. Well, I studied up, and I passed that air mechanic's test. Well, the first time I took it, I passed it. I got my pay raised to \$42 a month.

Marcello: After you took that examination then, what did you become?

Myers: Oh, the squadron sheet metal man.

Marcello: I see, You still continued with the sheet metal work.

Myers: Yes, I continued with the sheet metal work for, I suppose, about a year.

Marcello: Now you mentioned an "MOS" awhile ago. What is that?

Myers: That's your military number for your job. They had each . . . like, clerk had a different number; a mechanic had a number. Everytime you upgrade, you got a different number; everytime you changed jobs, you got a number. Eventually, I . . . they

had another technical school on the . . . after about a year, well, I got into the aircraft mechanic's school. I graduated from it and got to be an aircraft mechanic with a MOS of 747.

Marcello: Let's just back up another minute here. You mentioned that you, for about a year, worked as a sheet metal worker.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: What made you decide to change to become an aircraft mechanic?

Myers: Well, nothing, really. I just wanted to get closer to the airplanes, and this was one way of doing it, which I did. I got out on the line then. See, during this time, when I got that second air mechanic's rating in sheet metal, I also became a corporal because to get one of those air mechanic's ratings, your rate increased with it. When I graduated from the mechanic's school, the aircraft mechanic's school, engines and airplanes, I took the examination for that, and about three or four months after that, well, I got an air mechanic's rating. I dropped my 555 MOS and picked up a 747 because I added another grade on aircraft and engines. There's another thing about this. You could lose that mechanic's ratings by .1 of a point. They graded that close. This was the only way that you could make more money. There wasn't many ratings like sergeant, corporal, and PFC, but there were a few more mechanics, and you had to carry your mechanic's rating to work on airplanes.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you had gone to aircraft mechanic's school. Was this a formal school right there at Hickam Field?

Myers: Yes, sir. They set it up. It was in Hangar Three. This school operated, I think, for eight or nine months. It was a pretty tough school, actually.

Marcello: And did you have formal classes everyday?

Myers: We went to school at 7:30 in the morning, and you took your lunch break, and you got out at 4:30, I believe it was. You just spent the whole day in class--hydraulics, tore down engines, electrical work, everything about it. You studied everything on an engine and the airplane.

Marcello: By this time, then, you had a rating of aircraft mechanic and rank of corporal.

Myers: Yes. When I got that aircraft mechanic's rating, 747, my rank jumped to buck sergeant.

Marcello: Oh, you were a buck sergeant when you became an aircraft mechanic.

Myers: Yes. Well, when I got it, I became a buck sergeant.

Marcello: You'd been a corporal as a sheet metal worker.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: So I went off on another tangent and got myself some more rating, which in the pay was \$72 a month.

Marcello: What kind of planes were you working on here at Hickam now

that you are an aircraft mechanic?

Myers: I first started working on dive-bombers. Well, it was an attack plane, actually, a low-level A-12. I wish I had a picture to show. You wouldn't believe what they look like (chuckle). They had external struts and everything like that. It was an open cockpit with two cockpits--open. It had dual controls.

Also, after you were there for a while, you became a crew chief. Well, you was then also the gunner of that airplane.

Marcello: Was that your ultimate goal, that is, to get into the airplanes?

Myers: Yes, yes. So we flew around after I became a crewman on a plane. Then I passed that exam again and got a better grade, and they gave me a first air mechanic's rating, which raised my pay \$12 a month to \$84 a month. That's when I became a crew chief on the A-12.

Marcello: So as a crew chief, you then were able to actually get into flying.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: You would've served as the second man in that A-12?

Myers: Yes, that's right. The back cockpit had guns as well as the pilot. You had a flexible gun.

Marcello: There was one machine gun that you operated?

Myers: Yes, in the back of the airplane.

Marcello: I would assume that they would start most of the people out of aircraft mechanic's school on a plane such as the A-12, which, I assume, was relatively simple.

Myers: Not altogether, no. This Headquarters Squadron had different types of airplanes. It wasn't all one type. Of course, there was only one general, but I don't even remember his name. The base commander was a colonel. His plane flew out of our outfit. All the pilots that was in Headquarters flew out of our outfit. Eventually, they took all those extra airplanes . . . C-53's, is what we called them. We even had a little ol' P-26, a little fighter, that we flew in order to get the flying time in.

Marcello: So there were a variety of planes in this unit then.

Myers: Yes. Eventually, they took them all. About in 1941, we were down to one airplane, and this was a B-18.

Marcello: As a first class aircraft mechanic, were you actually involved in the flying of the B-18?

Myers: Yes, I crewed on a B-18.

Marcello: Was this a regular assignment . . .

Myers: Oh, yes.

Marcello: . . . or was it an occasional assignment?

Myers: No, it was regular.

Marcello: And what sort of a function did you have on this B-18?

Myers: Well, I served as engineer most of the time one it. You'd count down on the altitude. At this time you read the

altimeter, and you checked the landing gears, and you warmed up the airplane before you took off. You did the pre-flight inspection and all this.

Marcello: So you were advancing rather rapidly, then, in the Air Corps at that time.

Myers: Yes, I was. Apparently, I was because I can look back, and I really was advancing. I wasn't standing still (chuckle).

Marcello: You seemed to be advancing rather rapidly. Is it not true, however, that normally rank moved very, very slowly in that pre-Pearl Harbor service?

Myers: We had people in our outfit that had twelve, fifteen years and were still privates. I don't know if I mentioned it, but you didn't get much rank . . . you didn't go anywhere unless you could pass the service examinations, really. That was right down to where it was at. If you couldn't make it on those exams, well, you wasn't going to go anywhere apparently.

Marcello: That wasn't the case after the war started, though, was it?

Myers: Oh, no. After that war started, well, people . . . they came and went.

Marcello: And promotions were a lot more rapid.

Myers: Oh, yes. Promotions, after the war started, were practically nothing.

Marcello: Hickam Field is right next to the Pearl Harbor Navy Base, is it not?

Myers: Yes, with about a six-foot fence separating us.

Marcello: What kind of a fence was it?

Myers: A chain-link fence.

Marcello: A chain-link fence.

Myers: The best I can recollect, our Headquarters Building and the flagpole right in front of Headquarters Building was north. It wasn't but maybe three-eighths of a mile from that fence. It might have been just a quarter-mile.

Marcello: Could you observe the ships coming and going?

Myers: Not from the barracks. But the west end of Hickam Field is actually at the mouth of Pearl Harbor. You could go up to the docks. See, Hickam Field also had its own crash plane and had its own dock for crash boats. This was right at the mouth of Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: You mentioned your barracks awhile ago. Describe what your living quarters were like here at Hickam Field.

Myers: The barracks had wings. There were three stories and no glass, just screened windows all the way, with columns about every, I think, twelve feet. This barracks covered the whole block. It had ten wings. Those wings projected from the center probably 200 feet.

Marcello: And did each barracks have its own chow hall and so on?

Myers: No, a single chow hall fed every . . . you could go into this barrack, and you could survive forever because it had dayrooms, and it had recreation rooms, your chow hall, your

bathrooms, your PX, and everything.

Marcello: I'm not following you here. Was the chow hall in the barracks, or was it not in the barracks?

Myers: The chow hall was in the barracks.

Marcello: It was in the barracks.

Myers: Yes, it was right in the center. Everybody from . . . we had two bomb groups--the 5th Bombardment Group and the 11th Bombardment Group--and every man that was in those squadrons . . . there were five squadrons for each group, and every man lived in that barracks because that's how large it was.

Marcello: Approximately how many men do you think there would have been in the barracks? You'll have to estimate that, of course.

Myers: Each squadron had in it anywhere from 200 to 250 men.

Marcello: So we're talking about four to five hundred men in the barracks then?

Myers: Oh, we're talking about four or five thousand.

Marcello: Four or five thousand.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: I thought you said awhile ago that there were two squadrons in the barracks . . . or two squadrons in your wing?

Myers: Yes, two squadrons in the wing.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: The first sergeant's and squadron commander's rooms are there,

and everything was right there. Of course, they didn't have elevators. They had stairs that are about six feet wide.

Marcello: Given your rank, did you rate separate quarters, or were you simply in the barracks with most of the other men?

Myers: When I was corporal, I was a squad leader. You also double-dutied there. You were a squad leader when you were a corporal. When you became a buck sergeant, you turned into a platoon leader. A squad had twelve people, and a platoon would be forty-eight. You became a platoon leader, and when you become a platoon leader . . . my outfit had enough room where you were there by yourself. There was another platoon leader with you. It was a two-man room. In other words, you even had your own bath in this building.

Marcello: How pleasant or unpleasant were these quarters as a place to live?

Myers: Well, just offhand I don't think you could have beat it, really, for any kind of organization. These were new barracks, and everything was clean and orderly. Every night the lights would go out at 9:30. You could use the dayroom until eleven o'clock, and then Taps were at eleven o'clock, and every light was extinguished then.

Marcello: You mentioned that these were new barracks, Am I to assume, therefore, that you escaped having to live in the so-called "Tent City?"

Myers: I escaped that, but way back here at Luke Field . . . see, we didn't move to Hickam Field until early in 1940. At Luke Field we didn't have tents. We had a four-man hut. Over there they were built up . . . they were about fourteen feet square with screened--no glass again--windows all the way around. They were comfortable. The bunks were just level, and you had your own locker and everything. They were comfortable. In fact, I wouldn't mind living in one of those little ol' huts. We called them huts. They were comfortable.

Marcello: What was the food like there in the barracks?

Myers: I thought the food was pretty good (chuckle). They served a lot of food there, of course, that I wasn't used to. When I was a kid, I didn't get all the fruit and things that they served. They had kind of balanced diets. Well, I didn't get that at home. We had vegetables and things like that during the summer, but in the winter we didn't have vegetables. We had canned fruit when I was a kid. We had canned vegetables, of course, which isn't the same thing. I thought they fed us real good. They had some good cooks. I didn't mind the chow at all. Now after this Pearl Harbor deal, that cooking went to the dogs (laughter).

Marcello: What did you do for recreation?

Myers: I was on the squadron softball team. After I joined the squadron, I suppose I caught every softball game that they

played while I was in squadron. In the winter, at that time, well, I tried to do a little boxing on the Hickam Field boxing team. In the end of summer, what's called off-ball season, well, I went swimming. I'd go to the beach. I always went to the beach. I didn't go downtown to Waikiki or anything. I went to Nanakuli and Mokapu Point.

Marcello: Didn't they have some sort of a rest and recreation center established up there in Nanakuli?

Myers: That was a Marine recreation deal. This beach was right . . . Well, their camp was a little bit down from this beach. Nearly every Sunday I went to Nanakuli Beach because . . . well, the beach was real narrow. It was only maybe a hundred yards long. I liked it because there was great, huge waves that came in there. You could go out there and swim for three or four hours and just ride around on those waves--just kind of floating. I spent a pretty good bit of time there.

I met a girl up there at Nanakuli. Her name was Myra Huffman. They lived maybe a hundred yards from this. She had a brother, and his name was George. I got to running around with those kids up there. They were about my age. Well, the girl, Myra, she was going to . . . well, she was still in high school. Well, this Myra and George . . . and there was another girl, but I don't remember her last name. They lived down the beach, and Myra's father worked for the

civil service with the biggest crane that I've never seen--anywhere. He operated it over there. Anyway, that's where my spare time went, was with those kids. We went pig hunting and fishing. They taught me how to sand dive. That's diving . . . a big wave comes in, and the water would get five or six inches deep when it was rushing back out, and you'd run and you'd dive onto that shallow water on your tummy and go back in that next huge wave. It'd carry you back up. You'd go just back and forth all day long. Well, I enjoyed those kids. There were about fifteen or twenty kids in that little old Nanakuli village there.

Marcello: How important was big-time sports there at Hickam Field? Now again, all of you were amateurs to some extent, but is it not true that in many cases at that time, the services would go out and actually recruit college football players, college baseball players, and people of that nature?

Myers: I think that could've been true. I don't know for sure, but I know Hickam Field had a crackerjack baseball team. I never did get involved with baseball personally, or basketball. I was always too short for a basketball player, so that didn't interest me.

But I did get involved in boxing. I'll tell you for sure (chuckle), there was some pros in that boxing, not at Hickam Field but at Scofield Barracks. There was some up there. Every winter the services had boxing tournaments.

Your field would go up and compete against those infantry and tank outfits . . . shoot, there were a bunch of boxers, I'll tell you. They had a wonderful ring at Schofield Barracks. It was built around . . . I think that thing would seat probably 15,000. It was just for boxing. It wasn't for anything else.

Marcello: I gather that the so-called boxing smokers were very, very well-attended.

Myers: Oh, yes, they were. They filled that thing up. You'd go in there, and you didn't have to worry about support because (chuckle) if you got out there and you put out and just didn't give up or something, well, you'd get support (chuckle). Those fans would really "get after it."

I met one ol' boy by the name of Lee. He knocked me out just flat as a fiddle in just a little bit. He was a lefty, and I had a little trouble with lefties. He really conked me (laughter). That was all my boxing for that year.

Marcello: How often did you get into Honolulu?

Myers: I didn't get into Honolulu but maybe once a month. A bunch of the guys from our outfit would go down there and go to a show. I ran around with a boy by the name . . . well, one was Oliver Culwell, and we called him "Buck." I haven't heard from him after I left the outfit in early 1942. I haven't heard of any of these fellas. Then there was "Hank" Griffith. These two fellas I ran around with all the time.

We'd go swimming. We'd go down and go to a show. There was a giant malt shack out at Waikiki, and they had the largest malts ever built, I suppose. We'd go out there, and we'd bet a dollar among us to see who could eat two of them. Well, they also had a sales point out there. If you could eat one, they'd give you one free. That's how large these things were, and they were thirty-five cents. Once a month we went down there, and we tried to eat two of those things (chuckle). Neither one of us ever did.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you only got into Honolulu approximately once a month. Why was this? Did you simply not like going into Honolulu?

Myers: No, I didn't particularly like it. I went down to Waikiki Beach.

Marcello: How did the liberty routine work for you there at Hickam Field?

Myers: Well, I was able to buy a car after I'd become a sergeant. Truthfully, I broke up a crap game (chuckle). I got lucky in it, and I got enough money, and the squadron commander gave me permission to buy a car. This is what we'd drive around.

Marcello: You had to have the permission of the squadron commander in order to buy a car?

Myers: Yes, sir. You had to prove that you could pay for it. You couldn't get credit to buy it. You had to pay for it, and you also had to have money enough to get insurance.

Marcello: What kind of a car did you get?

Myers: I got a 1936 Buick coupe, a gray one, and it was a good car.

Marcello: I guess this made you something special because I'm sure that not very many people had cars there on the base.

Myers: Oh, that's for sure. There wasn't very many. What happened to that Buick, I traded that. I got in a . . . the 17th Air Base Squadron had a real casino. I mean, it was something like Las Vegas. You'd go down there. It was run by a bunch of sergeants or somebody. I don't remember.

Marcello: Now this was all illegal, was it not?

Myers: Yes, this was illegal, but you could go over there, and you could bet as much as you wanted. Well, I won \$3,600 over there in that casino (chuckle) in the dayroom of the 17th Air Base Squadron. I was driving by myself. I was driving in downtown Honolulu. I drove by Shuman Carriage Company. They were the Cadillac . . . what was that other great, big, ol' car? He was the Cadillac, Buick, LaSalle, and Packard dealer. Well, on the floor there, they had this Packard 120 convertible sedan. I just pulled over, and I stopped. I was wanting to go in there and look at it, which I did. I asked him the price of that thing, and it was a special order. Somebody'd ordered that thing, and they didn't pick it up. It wound up that I traded that Buick, and I gave him my \$3,600 and got that Packard (chuckle).

Marcello: So you had a brand-new car now.

Myers: I had a brand-new car. I took that car out to the base. Man, eyes popped all over the place. The hard part about it was that everybody wanted to borrow it. Well, I loaned the thing to Johnny Shendock. He was a sergeant in radio. He was a radio sergeant. Well, he went up to Wahiawa or went up by that pass to Wahiawa. That was my old stomping grounds.

I was up at Haleiwa. Eventually . . . now there's something else in along here when I had these cars, too. Haleiwa was thirty miles north, just about ten or twelve miles north of Schofield Barracks. "Buck" Culwell and "Hank" Griffith and I chipped in. We rented a five-room house up there for fifteen dollars a month--right on the beach. We drove up there two or three times a week, and we'd get our gasoline from the quartermaster, see, at twelve cents a gallon. Every chance we'd get, we'd go up there and go fishing. We learned to . . . well, I guess you'd call it scuba diving now, but all we did was spearfishing, was what we were doing. We were holding our breath. We had a mask, and we built some fishing rigs to spearfish. It was nice to go up there to fish and everything. We'd always have us a fish fry and everything. We didn't actually drink a whole lot of beer. We just had a lot of fun doing what we were doing--just knocking around.

Marcello: Getting back to your Packard, you mentioned that you had

loaned it to one of your friends.

Myers: Oh, Johnny Shendock. I loaned that thing . . . well, he . . . the day before I loaned that car to him, I was trying to get back for reveille in the morning. I got up real early, and I was coming up this big ol' hill. It was about six or seven miles long--up out of Haleiwa.

Marcello: In other words, you were coming from the house that you had rented and were trying to get back to the base for reveille.

Myers: Yes, yes. I was letting that Packard out pretty good. I was going about seventy miles per hour, I guess, seventy-five (chuckle). The speed limit was fifty miles per hour. This highway patrolman got after me, so I just stepped down on it and outran him to the Schofield Barracks gate. See, at that time now, the highway patrol or nobody got on an Army post or any military post at the time. So I went in. The MP just waved me in. I went through the back way of Schofield Barracks, went out the back gate, went down to Waipahu, and got back on the highway and got back for reveille.

Well, I loaned the car the next day to Johnny Shendock, and where does he go (chuckle)? He goes up to Wahiawa. I think he was doing fifty-one miles an hour, and that policeman stopped (chuckle). It cost Johnny \$75 for going one mile over. That kind of broke the borrowing of my car.

Marcello: In other words, all your friends now figured that the highway patrol would be looking for that car.

Myers: (Chuckle) Yes, that's the only trouble I had.

Marcello: You mentioned Wahiawa awhile ago, and that particular village has come up in other interviews that I've done with Pearl Harbor survivors. Wahiawa was also a place where people would go for recreation and so on, did they not?

Myers: Yes. I never used it for that, but it was a pretty rough town.

Marcello: And that wasn't too far from Hickam Field, was it?

Myers: Well, yes. Wahiawa was about, shoot, a good sixteen, eighteen miles from Hickam.

Marcello: Was it closer to Schofield Barracks?

Myers: You mean Wahiawa?

Marcello: Yes.

Myers: Oh, yes. It was only about a mile outside of Schofield Barracks. If it was a mile, it'd be lucky for you. I just went through Wahiawa. I might have stopped there for a soda pop or something, but I never did use it for recreation purposes (chuckle).

Marcello: You say it was a rough town. What do you mean by that?

Myers: It was. There was one part of it . . . I don't know which part, but they called it "Blood Town" or something. I think it was next to the bridge where you crossed the river going into Wahiawa. I think to the left was where it was, but they lost a guy who got cut up back in this place. Then I think they had quite a few "girls of the night" in there--it

was bound to have been--because of as many people as there were up at Schofield.

While I was over there, there were some . . . I can't recollect this woman's name. She ran one of those houses. She had her house wired. The windows and everything were wired. Someone--some policeman or something--got against the hot window bars, and it electrocuted the ol' boy. "Speed" Warren was this woman's name. That was her name. She was prosecuted, of course. She did electrocute a man, and I don't know how much time she got out of it. They had a terrible trial. It lasted four or five months, I think.

Marcello: Well, all in all, it sounds that as though you were having a pretty good time in Hawaii. You were advancing in rank; your pay was pretty good . . .

Myers: For that time, yes, it was real good.

Marcello: You also mentioned that the food was quite good; your living quarters were comfortable; and you had your own transportation. So, all in all, you had established a pretty good life for yourself in the service.

Myers: Yes. I had some good friends over there at that time. There were those kids I was running around with up there. I'd go hunt wild pigs with those people and go fishing, squid fishing, and go on luaus. I was having a nice time, really. I was just eighteen, nineteen years old.

Marcello: Okay, let's get back to your training. You mentioned that by

this time you are a first class aircraft mechanic.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: And that as a part of your routine, you are actually going up in the airplanes. These were B-18 bombers.

Myers: B-18.

Marcello: How often would you be going out on these training exercises in the bombers?

Myers: Well, we had to fly four hours a month because you had flight pay. After you got in the air, well, you'd fly four hours a month and get your flight pay. That was 50 percent of your base pay. Generally, probably I'd spend--I don't know--probably three times a week anywhere from one hour to four or five.

Marcello: Per week?

Myers: No, for each flight, because at this time we had to practice landing, practice navigating, and practice night flying. All this took time as far as training. So we kept everything pretty busy, really.

Marcello: Approximately how many of the B-18's were there at Hickam?

Myers: Probably 130 or 140.

Marcello: 130 to 140 B-18's?

Myers: Yes, something in that neighborhood. I expect there was that many.

Marcello: Even by this time, however, is it not true that the B-18 was becoming obsolete?

Myers: B-18, yes. They'd been flying since, I believe, 1937 or

1938 . . . or 1936, I think. It was obsolete, there's no question about it. It didn't have enough guns. It had .30-caliber guns, and it was slow. It was stable and everything. You'd hardly ever crack one of them up.

Marcello: I assume that it didn't carry a very large bomb load, either.

Myers: No, it didn't. I believe it carried 400- or 500-pound bombs. It would carry a ton.

Marcello: Did you ever go on any practice bombing missions and so on?

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: How often did they occur?

Myers: Once a year, usually.

Marcello: Is that all?

Myers: Yes . . . well, no, it was more often than that, but usually once a year, the old battleship Utah, I think it was . . . they had it boarded up, and we'd bomb it for practice. Then time again over Bellows Field we had a bomb range where we'd drop them. I guess we bombed more than I think we did.

Marcello: About how many hours a week, then, would you be flying?

Myers: Oh, let's see. I expect about twelve hours.

Marcello: Approximately, you would be flying forty or fifty hours a month.

Myers: Yes. We had to fly four hours. See, what it was, they had more pilots than they had planes, and since I was crew of the airplane, well, I'd go with everyone.

Marcello: Actually, you were probably getting more air time than any of the individual pilots had.

Myers: (Chuckle) Yes, in all probability.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, could you detect any changes in your training routine?

Myers: Not really, no.

Marcello: It was business as usual right up to that time.

Myers: No, it wasn't. About two weeks before this December 7th deal, we loaded the planes with bombs and live ammunition and everything else. Then, the best I can recollect, on the 5th of December, we were unloaded, and all the guns and ammunition were put away in the armaments section and everything. Then on the 7th we were hit. I know it was a Friday because we lined the airplanes up for the Saturday inspection.

Marcello: You brought up the point, and let me pursue it farther. You mentioned that on Friday, you'd lined up the airplanes for the Saturday inspection. Was this routine?

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: Why line them up?

Myers: Well, it was just wing tip to wing tip for easy access to them. We always shined them up and had all the oil wiped off. They just had regular parking places, and it was uniform like a military deal--everything uniform.

Marcello: And this was a normal procedure?

Myers: Yes, it was normal.

Marcello: I've also heard that the planes were lined up in rows because they would also be easier to guard against saboteurs.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: Have you ever heard that?

Myers: Yes. It could be that. The guards could . . . this parking apron at Hickam Field was more or less wide-open. The closest an airplane was to one of those hangars was probably 200 feet maybe. You could have two patrols and patrol the whole flight line. With one at one end and one at the other, you could look down and see the whole thing because it was just fairly open.

Marcello: In other words, if those planes had been scattered and dispersed, they would have been much harder to guard.

Myers: Oh, certainly, yes. After the war started, now, this is what happened. We did disperse them. When you dispersed them, there was also a man on each airplane after the war started.

Marcello: You mention that about two weeks before December 7th, you were issued rifles and so on.

Myers: I was issued a pistol, and everybody on flight was issued pistols.

Marcello: What was the scuttlebutt?

Myers: The scuttlebutt was just that we'd had an alert. But I do remember that on this Saturday morning inspection that the orders from Washington was that we were to park these airplanes

that way. It was actually . . . it was put on the bulletin board that we was to have a Saturday morning inspection, and all this stuff--bombs and so on--was to be put away. This was the first time since World War I that any troops had ever been issued live ammunition and everything.

Marcello: Okay, let's back up a minute because I'm not very clear on this point. Was the Saturday morning inspection a routine affair? Did you usually have a Saturday morning inspection?

Myers: Yes, even a parade.

Marcello: And it was a routine to have the planes lined up in the nice, neat rows.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: So Washington perhaps didn't give these specific orders, then, about the inspection and lining up the planes. What you were mentioning awhile ago--and, again, I simply want to make this clear for the record--is that the orders that were coming from Washington was that the alert was off, and you were to turn in your small arms.

Myers: That's right. The alert was off, and we were to turn them in.

Marcello: But the orders from Washington had nothing to do with the inspection and nothing to do with lining up the planes.

Myers: No, it was just to go back to normal proceedings or operations.

Marcello: During the period of this alert, was the guard or the number of sentries increased on the base? Was security tightened, I guess is what I'm trying to say?

Myers: Well, I don't believe we were able to go to town. I don't think we were able to go to town. I think everybody was put on base--stay on base. We couldn't go out unless you'd get some kind of a special pass. The best I can remember, I didn't try to go out. During this operation--the alert--well, we practically lived with our airplanes. Even though it was peacetime, we knew there was something different because we had those live bombs and ammunition aboard those airplanes . . . and guns. That just didn't happen.

Marcello: What did you do during this alert?

Myers: Just my normal duties.

Marcello: And this would involve servicing the airplanes?

Myers: Oh, yes, and check the guns.

Marcello: Did you do any flying during this alert?

Myers: Yes, a little bit, not a whole lot. Most of the time, it was on the ground. There was very little flying.

Marcello: What was the reaction of you and your buddies when all of a sudden your liberty was being cut off? I assume from what you said that you were getting liberty almost every night that you did not have the duty.

Myers: Well, I had a Class A pass. Everytime I wasn't on duty, which was every day or every night, every evening, I could go to town.

Marcello: Normally, what time would your day end?

Myers: Oh, at 5:30 in the evening.

Marcello: And you could be gone until reveille the next morning.

Myers: Yes. Usually, though, unless I went up to Haleiwa to that cabin and everything, I was always in by eleven o'clock, before the lights went out. You just don't go stumbling around (chuckle). At least I didn't try to stumble around after all the lights were out and everything. You was supposed to be in bed. The MP's picked you up, actually, and put you in the . . . I don't know. I tried to keep my nose clean about those kinds of things.

Marcello: When you and your buddies sat around in your bull sessions, did you ever talk about the possibility of the Japanese attacking the Hawaiian Islands? Did this thought ever come up?

Myers: No, never. I never heard anyone mention anything about it.

Marcello: When you thought about a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Myers: Well, when I thought of a Japanese . . . I bought gasoline off of them. I can't remember the Japanese's name. Up at Haleiwa he had an Esso service station. He even let me buy that gasoline on credit if I went up there and I needed some gas and didn't have any money. I'd run it up as high as ten or twelve dollars a month. He was a pretty nice fellow. I didn't get acquainted with too many Japanese. Now the Filipinos, I didn't get acquainted with them.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941,

and what I want you to do at this point, Mr. Myers, is to go into as much detail as you can remember concerning events. Why don't we pick it up with the Saturday inspection.

Myers: Well, we got through with the Saturday inspection.

Marcello: This is when you turned in your arms?

Myers: Well, we turned in our arms, on Friday.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: We got through the Saturday inspection. Of course, this all happened around noon. They were always pretty good about that. It came close to being 11:30 or twelve o'clock every Saturday when everything was wrapped up. Of course, when it was over, well, you were free to go.

I forget where I went. Really, I don't know where I went, but I know I was back home by eleven o'clock. I was out the night before. I think I was going up to . . . I really don't remember where I'd been.

Marcello: So you spent Saturday night, then, back in the barracks.

Myers: Yes. I slept in the barracks.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful or uneventful that happened that night in the barracks?

Myers: No.

Marcello: On a Saturday night, would there be very many drunks that would come in?

Myers: Not in our outfit. In my old outfit . . . I should have mentioned this earlier. It was a pretty clean outfit because

anybody that got in trouble, like, go downtown and get drunk and get picked up by the MP's, man, they were gone. I don't know where they sent them, but they didn't have them in our outfit. They was pretty good, and everyone in there . . . we had one or two guys that would get on the bottle pretty often. In fact, one time when I was on charge-of-quarters, one of them tried to fight me, and I hit him with a softball bat, and he got three months up in the guardhouse. Normally, our outfit was pretty clean.

Marcello: So this brings us into that morning, then, of December 7, 1941. Pick up the story as it unfolds on that Sunday.

Myers: Well, it was a normal Sunday morning, I suppose. I got up early enough to go down to the chow hall and get my breakfast. I went back up to my bunk.

I was also a model builder. I had me a model airplane that I was tinkering around with, and I was planning on working on it some.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Sunday was a day of leisure, was it not?

Myers: Yes, nothing to do. That was the only leisure day, actually, that you had.

Marcello: If you didn't have the duty, you didn't have to get up for breakfast or get up at any particular time.

Myers: That's right. You could lay in bed all day long.

Marcello: Generally speaking, would there be a lot of men who would sack in on a Sunday morning?

Myers: Oh, yes, certainly.

Marcello: Were there a lot that Sunday morning?

Myers: There were quite a few. There were quite a few which . . . normally, I'd say, about 50 or 60 percent would stay in bed because you had a pretty early rise to get out all the rest of the week, and on Sunday it was kind of a pleasure to lay in there. I even did sometimes, but on this particular Sunday, I got up. I had breakfast and came back up, and I was making up my bunk when that thing hit.

Marcello: What do you remember?

Myers: I was on the third floor. I looked out the room window, and there was this airplane kind of banking over to the right.

Marcello: Now what made you look at that airplane?

Myers: Well, I heard a bomb drop. I heard an explosion.

Marcello: But it did not shake the barracks?

Myers: No, it was over in the harbor.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: I heard it. It was an explosion, and I heard the explosion, and I looked up. Here was this plane with the red balls on the wings. I said to myself, "Gosh darn!" Of course, we'd . . . well, you just knew the insignias of other countries. I knew instantly who it was; I knew it was the Japanese.

Marcello: And how high was this plane flying?

Myers: This plane was probably 500 feet up because I had to look over this other wing of the barracks to see him. He might

have been even 1,000 feet from the angle I was seeing him.

Believe me, those airplanes got low (chuckle).

Marcello: Were other people looking at this plane, also?

Myers: Well, I went out into the barracks.

Marcello: Well, what was your reaction, first of all, when you looked and discovered that it was a Japanese plane?

Myers: When I saw that airplane . . . I don't know what made me do it, but I grabbed my gas mask and my canteen. The first thing I did was fill my canteen up with water, and I put it on.

Marcello: Well, in the meantime, is there any sort of an air raid warning, or are you alerting anybody else or anything of that nature?

Myers: No. Well, I grabbed their things. I went out into the barracks to see if I could get one of those guys roused out of there, and I told them all to head for the hangar. I was already dressed, and I did--I headed for the hangar.

Marcello: So did you tell these people that this was a Japanese air raid and things of that nature?

Myers: They knew. They knew as quick as I did that that was an air raid. Of course, it only took one shout that that was what it was all about, and everybody was hopping around there. It was kind of chaos in a way. Nobody could think what to do, really.

Marcello: What made you go to the flight line?

- Myers: Because that's where my job was supposed to be.
- Marcello: So you're rushing out of the barracks with your gas mask and your canteen, and you're heading for the flight line. Describe what happens at this point, that is, on your rush from the barracks to the flight line.
- Myers: Well, of course, I got over in close to the barracks wall and followed the barracks wall down the wing and down the other side. Then I had to cross the street in between and across the railroad tracks. They had a railroad track to Fort Kamehameha. It went up through there and was going toward H.A.D.
- Marcello: H.A.D. is Hawaiian Air Depot.
- Myers: Right. Well, I managed to get over there. They'd already hit the barracks by this time. In fact, I cleared that door where it came out of the barracks, and there was a bomb that dropped back behind me. I don't know. . . . I suspect--I don't know--that if I'd been out in the open or been away from that wall, I might not have been here. It wasn't all that far from me when it hit.
- Marcello: So you come out of the barracks, and you're heading for the flight line. What experiences do you have as you go from the barracks to the flight line? Did anything eventful happen during that period?
- Myers: Not really, other than that bomb that hit behind me. Over at the barracks now, another guy, Quentin Teige, he was

another sergeant . . . "Booger" Bower, I don't know what his first name was. Well, that was his nickname, "Booger." We got in there, and we had this airplane. We was going to try to open the doors to the hangar to get the airplane out. Of course, we'd taken it in there to work on--change the oil, get it ready for inspection, and everything. We were going to try to get those airplanes out. We got one door open, and then the hangar was hit.

Marcello: Okay, describe this experience. Now these are huge hangar doors, are they not?

Myers: These hangar doors are . . . the hangar is about fifty feet tall and 100 feet wide . . . at least 100 feet wide.

Marcello: How large are these doors?

Myers: The doors run from the ground plumb to the ceiling. The doors were actually about ten to twelve feet wide. The doors folded back into a rail built into the hangar. They just rolled on rollers. You had to push them open manually. So we were going to . . . we got one door open, and the hangar was hit. In fact, it was hit two or three times.

The one that really blasted us was when we were in the door opening, and a concussion just picked us up and threw us out of there. We landed way out there twenty or thirty feet.

Marcello: How badly were you hurt?

Myers: I wasn't hurt.. I landed there, and I just kind of . . .

Marcello: Were you stunned?

Myers: No, not really. I wasn't stunned. I just couldn't think what to do except lay there because it was concrete and everything imaginable dropping around. Some of it fell on me, of course, but it wasn't nothing to hurt me. I didn't get a scratch.

Marcello: In the meantime, had the Japanese destroyed the planes? What had happened to the planes on the ground?

Myers: The planes on the ground were already gone when that bomb hit. It just ruined them that were left in the hangar.

Marcello: How about at the time that you got over to the hangar? Were the planes destroyed at that time? Had they already been destroyed?

Myers: Oh, yes. They were strafing all the time. It seemed to me like what they were doing, they were coming in over the harbor, and they were dropping their bombs and coming over and strafing us. They'd go out, turn around, bomb us, and strafe the harbor. And they were doing it from more than just two directions. They were doing it from four directions from what I seen.

At the same time, there were some high-level bombers. Now they liked to have ruined us. I think they were the ones that really did some damage.

Marcello: So while you're out there at the field, you are coming under both strafing and then later bombing?

Myers: Bombing and then something else. I didn't know what it was at the time, but later, well, I found out what it was. These airplanes were flying at the top of telephone poles--they were lower than that.

I guess it was the Navy. It had to be the Navy because I found a cone from an antiaircraft shell on the apron out there. They were shooting at them with the antiaircraft guns, and that stuff was going off above us.

Marcello: And the shrapnel was then falling down.

Myers: They were beating the heck out of us over here, see (chuckle). That was the third dimension of this thing. Well, you'd just get you some metal.

After I got blowed out of the hangar . . . when I first went to the hangar . . . I'll back up some. Before we opened this door, we broke into the armaments section, and we got all the guns we could. Everybody that was there got a gun, and I got a .45 pistol.

Marcello: Where was the armament section located relative to the barracks and the hangar?

Myers: You'd have a hangar, and then you'd have a group of rooms for shops--radio shops, welding shops, sheet metal shops, supply rooms, and things--and then another hangar over there. There were two hangars side-by-side, and then in between them were all those shops. The armaments section was in there. They had small arms and Tommy guns and .45's, is about all

it was in there, plus these .30-caliber machine guns that went to the airplanes.

Marcello: Were you among the first to get over to the hangar?

Myers: I was one of the first to get to the hangar.

Marcello: Like you point out, then, you had to break into the armaments section.

Myers: Yes. We broke the lock on the armaments section and got the guns.

Marcello: What particular kind of weapon did you get?

Myers: I got a .45 automatic, that's all. I could see that there wasn't much we could use. There was some Tommy guns there, but I didn't see the drums of ammunition, and I didn't know where they were. Well, I grabbed that and got out of there.

Marcello: Okay, so you grab the .45; you come out of the armaments section; and now you're heading toward the hangar.

Myers: To the hangar door, and this is where I met Quentin Teige and "Booger" Bower.

Marcello: At this time, is the line coming under strafing?

Myers: Yes, it is.

Marcello: Just strafing alone? No bombs at this stage?

Myers: The barracks had got hit, and I think it was a little later when those B-17's started coming in, and they were trying to hit them.

Marcello: Okay. But at this time now--at the time that you're over there at the barracks and you're trying to get this door

open--up until the time that that particular bomb hit, most of the activity is strafing on that line.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: And this was the first bomb that you actually experienced there at the hangar, when you tried to open the door.

Myers: On the flight line?

Marcello: Yes.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: So what happens at that point, that is, after that bomb strikes and you're thrown back out onto the apron again?

Myers: Well, I laid there on the concrete for a little while, waiting until that concrete stopped dropping.

Marcello: In the meantime, are there other people coming out on the flight line or to the flight line?

Myers: Yes, yes. Somebody had got a machine gun up over in between Hangars Three and Five. Somebody had got a machine gun up over there, and they had it thrown across something. I don't remember what it was. They was firing this machine gun at these strafers--the planes that were strafing. I took a potshot at one with my pistol. He was that close and that low. I'm pretty sure I hit it, but what a .45 would do, I don't know.

Marcello: Could you actually distinguish the pilots in these planes?

Myers: Oh, yes.

Marcello: What did they look like?

Myers: Well, just goggles and helmets is about all you could see. I thought this airplane . . . it wasn't a Zero. It was a Mitsubishi, a little fighter. It had fire coming out all over it.

Marcello: Now what are you saying? This plane crashed?

Myers: No, he's strafing.

Marcello: Oh, I see.

Myers: Coming through there strafing.

Marcello: And you say it was or was not a Zero?

Myers: It wasn't a Zero. It was a Mitsubishi. I'm pretty sure. I just got the front-end look at him, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't a Zero. It was another type.

Marcello: Do you think maybe it was perhaps one of the dive-bombers or torpedo bombers?

Myers: Well, I think it was a dive-bomber, really. That's the only time, really, I ever encountered it.

Marcello: The reason I ask you that specific question is because I know that the Zero actually was a Mitsubishi. It was made by Mitsubishi. It was probably a dive-bomber or a torpedo plane then.

Myers: Yes. Well, anyway, I ran into a lot of those later on during the war. We called them Mitsubishis then (chuckle) or "Bettys" or that stuff.

Anyway, he liked to got me there. When I got up out of there, I went back into the hangar.

Marcello: Why did you want to go back into the hangar? That seems like it would've been a likely target.

Myers: Well, I thought maybe there might have been a little cover in there, really. If you could get behind something (chuckle), you'd be a whole lot better off, is what I thought. I got into the hangar there, and my good friend George Martin was hit pretty bad.

Marcello: Now is the attack over yet, or haven't the high-level bombers come yet?

Myers: No, no. This was when it first started.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: First started. Then the high-level stuff came, and they blowed up that railroad track right there five feet from them hangars. There was a train engine right there, and they hit that train.

Marcello: While the high-level attack was taking place, then, you were still in that hangar.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: What were you doing with regard to your friend George Martin?

Myers: Well, I was trying to get him out and trying to help him. He was hit in the stomach. Lieutenant . . . I can't think of his name. He was wounded.

Marcello: This lieutenant was wounded, also?

Myers: (Weeping) Yes, he was mortally wounded. Later on, I took both George and the lieutenant to the hospital. There was

someone who had abandoned a truck, and I put them in the back of it and took them to the hospital, but this was way too late, I think.

Marcello: I guess there wasn't too much that you could do for them at the time.

Myers: There was no first aid or anything. Both of them were hit terrible bad. In the office, which was beside the hangar, well, one of those bombs hit direct in there, and that's where the lieutenant was. It just blew it up, and there were seven or eight fellows in there.

Marcello: I've heard it said that they seemed to be hitting only the hangars that had planes in them. Was that true?

Myers: That's exactly right. That's right. They did this. They only hit . . . Hangar Three was full. Hangar Five over there didn't have anything in it. Hangars Seven, Nine, Eleven and Thirteen was full. They only hit the ones . . . they hit Hangar Seven, which is the one I'm talking about. It was full of planes. The 31st Squadron was on the back end of the Hangar Seven, and we were on the front end of it.

Marcello: I'm sure this was the source of all sorts of speculation after the attack was over.

Myers: Yes. Well, there was all sorts of speculation after the attack was over.

Marcello: We'll talk about that in a minute. Let's continue with the attack. So your buddy and this lieutenant had been hit quite

badly, and, as you say, they ultimately died. They had been mortally wounded. So you try and make them as comfortable as possible, I assume.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: And what happens at that point then? We're not very far into the attack yet.

Myers: No, no. We're just pretty early into the attack. Well, after I got straightened up a little bit, I went back outside. There was a little ol' palm tree over across the road over there, and this boy had a Tommy gun over there. Well, he lost his life, too. I went over and got his Tommy gun.

Marcello: In other words, when you went over there to this palm tree, he had already been killed?

Myers: Yes. I got his Tommy gun, and I started using it.

Marcello: Why did you go over to that palm tree?

Myers: I couldn't think of anything. I just wanted something to shoot, really.

Marcello: Could you see that he had fallen when you were over at the hangar?

Myers: Oh, yes, yes, because it was just right across the street.

Marcello: I see.

Myers: You had, what, a twenty-five or thirty-foot street and a railroad track, and it wasn't more than fifty or sixty feet over there.

Marcello: So you now have the Tommy gun.

Myers: No, no, I used up all the ammunition shooting it at these

low-flying planes.

Marcello: They evidently are not taking notice of you.

Myers: Well, I worked myself back over to the corner of Hangar Nine, which was next to the ramp and the taxi strip. This was when they were working over the flight strip where all these parked airplanes were. At this time, one B-17 came in there, and he was in a heck of a shape.

Marcello: Describe these B-17's coming in and what the Japanese were doing to them because I think this is an important part of the story.

Myers: Well, I think they were helpless, really, because as far as I know, they weren't armed.

Marcello: They were unarmed in order to make them lighter for a flight across the ocean.

Myers: Yes, yes. I knew that. I flew in B-17's later, and to make that trip, they couldn't carry anything. The ol' boy, he . . . this one B-17, well, he got it down on the ground. Well, he disappeared down at the end of the ramp. I think it was pretty well shot up. Then there was another one that got a direct hit right there on the runway.

Marcello: In the meantime, as these B-17's are coming in, low on fuel and trying to land, are the Japanese fighters all over them?

Myers: Oh, yes, yes. They're swarming on them. They're coming over there. They're trying to get them down. They're sitting ducks, actually.

Of course, there's no time to feel sorry for them, but, boy, you have feeling for them. You know that they . . . a man would just have to have all kinds of luck to get out of something like that, you know, which some of them did. Some of them were pretty wise, and they took off and flew somewhere else. I think one landed up there at that little old Haleiwa fighter strip. You couldn't hardly land a P-40 on that thing, let alone B-17's, but they did.

So far as I know, we didn't get anything off the ground. We might have got an A-20 off about a hour or two after that thing was over. Probably that was about the only thing that would fly, you know, that they didn't hit. But all this time, well, we were getting pretty well hit.

Marcello: At this point, the high-level attack hasn't really occurred yet. Is that correct? The high-level planes haven't come over yet?

Myers: It hit just about when I went over there after that Tommy gun.

Marcello: I see. And is this before or after the B-17's are coming in?

Myers: This was before the B-17's, I think.

Marcello: The high-level attack occurred before the B-17's are coming in.

Myers: Yes, I think so. I think it came in before the B-17's.

Marcello: Okay, describe the high-level attack.

Myers: Oh, they were up there, and they just saturated . . . it seemed to me like they came right down the hangar line.

Marcello: Are these two-engine planes? Could you tell?

Myers: Yes, they were high, and they were two-engine planes. The best I can remember, they had that sky-blue color, you know. They were pretty high. I'd say they had to have been at 17,000 or 18,000 feet, maybe a little more.

Marcello: And, of course, the base is helpless against these planes.

Myers: Oh, yes, you're helpless against that because you don't have anything to shoot.

Marcello: Well, there's nothing flyable, for one thing.

Myers: Well, there's nothing flyable, nothing to shoot at them with. You know, you can't shoot at something that high with a Tommy gun.

Marcello: Okay, so describe what takes place during that high-level attack.

Myers: Well, it seemed to me like this is when it was so bad, you know. The sound . . . and the earth was quivering, and I was quivering along with it because I wasn't but about a hundred feet from where all these things were dropping.

Marcello: Now where are you located?

Myers: Out to the edge of Hangar Nine.

Marcello: Did they seem to be trying to get the hangars?

Myers: Oh, yes, they came right down on the hangars. I guess it was wide enough because they hit that barracks real bad.

Marcello: The barracks or the hangar?

Myers: The hangars and the barracks. They hit the hangars and the barracks real bad, and they got the fire station, and they

got . . . they got everything that was of any consequence. They fixed us up royally. But we didn't have anything to do anything with after they got through with us.

Marcello: So about all you can do during this period, then, is simply head for cover? Try and keep your head in?

Myers: Yes. Well, I just lay flat on the ground out there in a corner, and I guess that was the best place to be as far as . . . I survived it.

By this time, well, it was still . . . these high-level bombers passed, and the strafing had kind of let up some, and so I worked myself back over to the hangar. This is when I got that scout car, kind of a pick-up truck.

Marcello: And you were still trying to help your buddy?

Myers: Yes, this is when I went and got George and the lieutenant and put them in the back of that, and I headed for the hospital.

Marcello: This is probably an unfair question to ask, but I'll try it on you, anyway. How much time lapsed between the strafing and the coming of the high-level bombers? Again, you would have to estimate this, of course.

Myers: Well, it was going on at the same time, the best as I can remember. The strafing was going on at the same time as the high-level attack. There were still a bunch of them flying around.

Marcello: But I guess what I'm saying is, how soon after the strafing

started did the high-level bombers come over?

Myers: Maybe thirty minutes, something like that. That's just guessing because you lose . . . I lost track of time. In fact, I thought they were there for eight hours instead of the short time that they were.

But I don't know if anyone ever mentioned to you about our flag.

Marcello: I've heard the story, but I'd like to hear it in your words.

Myers: I drove these two boys . . . the hospital's over there next to headquarters and the flagpole.

Marcello: About how far away?

Myers: Well, this means from the big barracks and two blocks away is the hospital. Well, I had to go down about a half a block to get on the road to cross over there, which was beside the parade ground. On the parade ground, when I passed, I don't know how many people was on it. You know, it was pretty well covered up, so I don't know if they were just laying there or if they was just . . . everybody got out of that barracks, apparently, after it was hit. Now I wasn't over there, but it looks like they tried to get out in the open away from it, see. They got out there where that strafing was, I think.

But, anyway, our flag . . . they hit that flag right in the corner where the blue and the red and the white is. It had a hole in it, and I've often wondered whatever happened

to that flag, you know. But it was a sorry-looking sight.

Marcello: I've heard it said that it appeared as though the Japanese were deliberately trying to take out that flag.

Myers: Yes, they had to be because . . . you know, of course, they could be shooting at Headquarters and the radio tower.

Marcello: They were close by?

Myers: The radio tower for the air base, you know, for the runway, was over here (gesture), and the parade ground was a block long and a block wide. Then probably a quarter of a block away was the flagpole, and then right immediately behind the flagpole was the Headquarters Building.

Marcello: And what you saw represented the aftermath of the action that took place there. You actually didn't see the Japanese planes and so on coming in when you first observed the flag.

Myers: No, I didn't. I saw that one airplane, and I took off. I had just time enough to get my gas mask.

Incidentally, they hit a water main over there near our hangar, and we were without water for a long time. I had my water, and I don't know how I ever thought of that; but I did think of it, and it lasted me way into the night.

Marcello: So you go over to the hospital, and you . . .

Myers: I get some fellows to help me with those boys. The hospital was chaos, and there wasn't room inside for them, and we just had to put them out there on the yard. There wasn't enough people to do anything with over there. Of course, we helped

out as much as possible. But after it seemed that they were being looked after a little, well, I headed back over to the flight line.

Marcello: Nobody is really giving orders, however.

Myers: No one's giving orders. In fact, I don't remember anybody telling me to do anything. I guess everybody was for themselves.

Marcello: By this time, the attack is over. What do you do now when you get back where the flight line is?

Myers: Well, I tried to get the remaining doors pushed back. They'd jumped off the tracks. Some of those doors had been blown plumb off and out and over into the back of the hangars. This is backtracking a little bit but when Quentin Teige and "Booger" Bower and I was blown out of there, we landed twenty or thirty feet out in between those hangars. Well, these doors came sailing by, and they were about, oh, three or four feet up above the ground, and they were just sailing like . . .

Marcello: Spinning.

Myers: Just spinning and just sailing like a darned leaf.

Marcello: And these are fifty-foot doors that we're talking about.

Myers: Yes. These doors were a good eight to ten inches thick, and were just sailing around like frisbees or something. It's remarkable what kind of power is behind one of those things.

But, you know, I never did fully get to count all the bomb hits on the barracks, but some say that it was hit

fifty-four times. I'm not sure.

Marcello: This is the barracks that you were in?

Myers: Yes, that we lived in. Some said that it was hit fifty-four times. I don't know this for sure, but I do know the way the lockers was lined up in the barracks. They were lined up down the middle, and each man had a locker. Well, there was a bomb that came down through this wing where we lived, and it penetrated the roof and the third floor and the second floor, and it exploded between the first and second floors. It heaved the floors up, and it generally tore it all to pieces, really. I've heard some guys say that they never have fixed those barracks. I don't know. They apparently use them, but they never have fixed those. They said they're not going to fix them.

Marcello: Getting back to the flight line, you're over on the flight line after the attack is over. What happens at that point? What do you do?

Myers: Well, I was trying to get the doors open, like I say, and we couldn't get those out, so we got parts of . . . started cleaning up the floors and everything--the debris and everything around there. We had to get it pushed aside somehow, so we could get in there and be doing something, I suppose. But that's what we did all afternoon.

Marcello: Is there anything inside this hangar?

Myers: Oh, yes, there's airplanes.

Marcello: There are airplanes in this hangar.

Myers: Yes. We had four in there.

Marcello: Had they been destroyed?

Myers: Oh, yes, they were pretty well . . . they weren't any good.

Marcello: Is anybody giving you any orders still?

Myers: No, no. No one's giving orders. We were just trying to . . . we knew that we needed to get our airplanes.

Marcello: Are there any officers at all around?

Myers: The only officer I saw was . . .well, let me see if I can think of his name.

Marcello: That lieutenant that was hit?

Myers: That's the only officer I saw.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you're just kind of on general clean-up, and you worked the rest of the afternoon.

Myers: Yes.

Marcello: While all this action is taking place, what sort of emotions or feelings and thoughts do you have? Do you have time to be scared?

Myers: Yes, I was scared. I was scared, and the longer the day went, the more so I got, I guess.

That night, there was one airplane that came in. It was a friendly plane--one of ours. I don't know what kind it was, even. But, I'll tell you for sure, I wouldn't have wanted to have been in that thing because everybody was shooting at it (chuckle).

Marcello: Was this one of those planes off the carrier Enterprise that was coming in?

Myers: I don't know, but (chuckle) everybody was keyed up, and we figured that they'd be back. See, that's what I was worried about more than anything else, I suppose. If they came back, what were we going to do? We didn't have anything to do with.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors you heard floating around at that time?

Myers: Oh, man, we heard that they'd landed over at Kaneohe and around over . . . rumors, boy, they was all over the place. There were rumors that they'd sabotaged out in the cane fields, where they had burned arrows in the cane fields. I don't know if these were rumors or not. They say that there actually was arrows pointing out toward Ewa. They say there was actually a big ol' arrow pointing toward the harbor--burned out over there in the cane field. I don't know; this is just hearsay.

But I know everyone that I was close to worried about what was coming next. I absolutely believe that if the Japs had followed through, they would have took us because we didn't have to do with.

Marcello: How did you sleep that night? How much sleep did you get?

Myers: I didn't sleep hardly any. I might have dozed off for twenty or thirty minutes, but in the meantime, when it started getting

dark, I moved away from the hangars. There was an engine test block, way, way out in the field across the runway, across the taxi strip, and that's where I spent the night-- out there in that engine test block. That thing was solid concrete. That's where I was going to make my stand.

Marcello: In the meantime, did you hear all sorts of shooting going on that night?

Myers: Oh, yes. Shoot, yes. There was airplanes coming by, and they . . . well, shoot, man, you just didn't want to move right. I guarantee you, that you wouldn't have been around long if you had. That was bad medicine.

Marcello: Were you out there at that engine testing block by yourself?

Myers: No, there was three or four other fellows out there. I guess they had the same idea I did.

Marcello: What did you guys talk about out there at that engine testing block?

Myers: We talked about a little bit of surviving and . . . incidentally, I was the only one that had any water out of the bunch, and I let them use some of my water. I didn't have anything to eat since breakfast. I don't know . . . we just talked about little ol' things that didn't amount to much out there. We knew what we was up against and that we probably wasn't going to survive. We did know that. That's the way we was talking about some.

Marcello: What did you do the next day?

Myers: I went back to the hangar and tried to put some of these airplanes together. We did that for the next two days. In fact, I didn't even find where my outfit moved. They'd moved out of barracks and down into "officers' country"--the houses down in there. I didn't even know where they'd moved. I hadn't even gone back to the orderly room.

Marcello: In the meantime, was the field blazing? Were there fires going all night?

Myers: There were lots of fires. I think the majority of them was put out, except the enormous ones. What didn't get blown, it was burning, I'll tell you that. It was bad.

Marcello: How many planes were you able to put together from what was left?

Myers: Oh, we got three or four.

Marcello: B-18's?

Myers: Yes, we got three or four back. Everybody was kind of working on the same thing. We patched them with anything we could get.

Marcello: How did your attitude toward the Japanese change in the aftermath of the attack?

Myers: Well, I guess you'd say we was all "gung-ho" to get them.

Marcello: So is it safe to say that perhaps the fear of the first day changed to anger in the second day?

Myers: Yes, yes, that's the way . . . anger and then . . . I don't remember exactly how long it was, but they started . . . well, it would have to be two or three days. After something like

that, well, I lost track of time, really. We started getting some airplanes in from the West Coast. I don't know how we were getting them over there, but they got a whole bunch of B-26's in, and they had the wings off and the engines off. They just covered the field up with those things. We had to put those back together, so we was working night and day until all that was done and secured.

Marcello: Mr. Myers, were you able to salvage any of your personal belongings out of the barracks?

Myers: I didn't get a thing. I didn't get a thing out of the barracks.

Marcello: Did you go back to see if there was anything to be salvaged?

Myers: Yes, yes, I went back, but my locker was right where that bomb went through. He must have wanted my locker, and I didn't get a thing (chuckle). I was reissued clothes, and I actually wore coveralls from there on out, just about the whole war, in fact. See, I didn't get back. I went over there in 1939, and I spent the entire war in the Pacific, just about.

Marcello: How soon was it before you got out of the Hawaiian Islands?

Myers: There was one group of airplanes that went to the Philippines, and I guess I was in probably the next bunch and went to the South Pacific. We went down in B-17's at this time-- B-17C's. We had just changed over and didn't have a whole lot of training in them. That's what we got.

Marcello: And when did this occur? Approximately how long after Pearl Harbor?

Myers: Probably maybe a month-and-a-half, two months, something like that. It was maybe even three months. I've kind of lost track of time. But what we actually went down for was to get in the . . . we lost the Lexington down in the Coral Sea Battle. We went down there to get in it, and the British had told us we could land on a little ol' field in the Fijis. Well, we got there with these B-17's, and it was a fighter strip. It was right dead in the middle of the jungle, and we landed in the jungle there, but we couldn't take off. We had to land; we was out of gas. We stayed there three days. Our colonel hired every native he could muster to start chopping that jungle down, and they did. We got into New Caledonia a day late for that Coral Sea Battle.

Marcello: Well, this is probably a good place to end this interview. Mr. Myers, I want to thank you very much for having talked to me. You have a remarkable ability to remember details, and, of course, that's the sort of thing we're looking for in these interviews.

Myers: There's some of these things that you don't forget, you know.

Marcello: I want to thank you very much for participating, and I'm sure that historians will find your comments very valuable when they use them to study Pearl Harbor,

Myers: Well, all right, I appreciate giving it to you.