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Interview with

O. H. Sauer

May 15, 1976

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: O. H. Sauer
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Oscar H. Sauer

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Date: May 15, 1976

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Oscar Sauer of the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 15, 1976, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Sauer in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the battleship USS California during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Sauer, 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. Sauer: I was born and raised on February 2, 1912 in Gonzalas County. I have a seventh grade education. I attended Westhoff High School and . . . of course, I had a lot of self-education after I joined the Navy.

Dr. Marcello: Okay, where did you say you attended school? What was the school that you mentioned?

Sauer: Westhoff High School.

Marcello: When did you join the Navy?

Sauer: I joined the Navy in 1939, in November.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the service?

Sauer: I decided then that the service . . . I thought or I believed, anyways, that we were going to war sooner or later. And I thought I ought to join the Navy and acquaint myself with the military service in case of war.

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

Sauer: I believed that the Navy was more to my liking. I guess it was because of the cleanliness of the living conditions.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Sauer: In San Diego.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think ought to be a part of the record?

Sauer: Well, I'll tell you that all I can say is that they worked at it (laughter).

Marcello: It was a typical Navy boot camp. How long was boot camp at that time?

Sauer: It was about three months.

Marcello: And it was later on that they cut it down to as little as six weeks, I believe. Okay, where did you go from boot camp?

Sauer: I went aboard the USS California.

Marcello: Was this voluntary duty, or were you simply assigned to the California?

Sauer: I asked for battleship duty.

Marcello: Why did you want to go aboard a battleship?

Sauer: It is the biggest ship I can find (laughter).

Marcello: Was there some sort of glamour associated with being aboard a battleship?

Sauer: Well, yes, they told me aboard the battleship that the discipline was a little bit stricter. I don't know why, really, that I went aboard the battleship, but I figured the . . . I'd taken the aptitude test, and they said I was very well-qualified for radio, and I figured that aboard the battleship I could get more training.

Marcello: So when you went aboard the battleship, did you become a radioman striker?

Sauer: I became a radioman striker aboard the battleship. That was first duty.

Marcello: Describe what your on-the-job training was like on the California as a radioman striker. Was it good? Fair? Poor?

Sauer: I'll tell you what, it was good but . . . the first thing I was told was that I had to learn how to make a good cup of coffee. If I couldn't make a good cup of coffee, I couldn't stay in there (chuckle). And that's true.

Marcello: What sort of training did you undergo to become a radio-man?

Sauer: Well, I had to take Morse code and learn how to receive it. I also had to learn how to take care of my typewriter. I became rather adept at it, and I became typewriter repairman plus my other duties. Then . . . oh, I was in that about two months, I guess, and they needed a radio material man working in the transplant room to take care of the equipment.

Marcello: What sort of a job is this called? Radio material man?

Sauer: Yes. That was the technical end of it. One was sending and receiving--radioman--and the other one was technical end of it. So I decided that I would try for that because it fascinated me--radio material--and I went into it.

And then some months after that--I forget how long --I went in to get me a haircut one day, and the head barber says, "How about trying out for a barber?" I said, "Shoot, I have never cut a head of hair before in my life." He said, "You look like you might be able to cut hair." He said, "You know, you get quite a bit more pay up here." Of course, at that time money always looked good because you never had any. So I applied for a barber's job, and sure enough, they accepted me. I was a barber, then, until Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, I went back into radio material and went on with that.

Marcello: I see. What was the morale like aboard the battleship prior to Pearl Harbor?

Sauer: I would say that it was very high. We were a happy-go-lucky bunch. We had some sort of an idea, especially after May of '41, that we were closer toward it than we had ever been.

Marcello: How did you get this idea?

Sauer: We were confronted by the Japanese Navy in the northern waters in '41, and that didn't set so good.

Marcello: What sort of a confrontation was this?

Sauer: They laid a sub across the bow of our flagship, which was the California, and challenged it.

Marcello: What happened?

Sauer: We were ordered to proceed to Pearl Harbor, and then we went into Battleship Row.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the California during this pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Sauer: I would say that the food was good. I had no complaints about the food. I thought we had real good food. We had some real good cooks.

Marcello: What were the living quarters like aboard the California?

Sauer: Regular bunk-type. They were collapsable and usually four deep.

Marcello: In other words, you missed the hammocks?

Sauer: I did have to sleep on a hammock aboard the USS Lexington

my first two weeks out to sea. I boarded the Lexington to get aboard the California. I had to sleep in a hammock on it.

Marcello: In other words, when you got out of boot camp, you boarded the Lexington and picked up the California in Hawaii.

Sauer: No, I picked her up in Bremerton.

Marcello: Bremerton. And then the California proceeded over to Hawaii?

Sauer: Yes.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of having duty in the Hawaiian Islands?

Sauer: Well, we actually didn't have duty in the Hawaiian Islands prior to the time I came aboard the California. We would be at various places. Then after awhile, we were tied up in the harbor there at Pearl. I didn't like it much.

Marcello: Why is that?

Sauer: Well, you had all of those big ships in a row in that narrow harbor there. There's no way for them to get out. Another thing I didn't like was that they only let us have one round of live ammunition on topside.

Marcello: You mean one round of live ammunition per gun?

Sauer: Per gun.

Marcello: Are you referring to the 16-inch guns, or did the California have 14-inch guns?

Sauer: No, she had 16-inch guns. But I'm talking about those from 5-inch guns on down. They had only one round of live ammunition.

Marcello: Why was that?

Sauer: Yes, that's a good question. I'd say that's a good question.

Marcello: Now after the California was based in Honolulu, or at Pearl Harbor, describe what a typical training exercise would be like when the California left port.

Sauer: We didn't leave port.

Marcello: The California never left Pearl Harbor at all to go on any training missions?

Sauer: No.

Marcello: Well, the other battleships did, though.

Sauer: Some did but I don't remember that we went out any, not from . . . oh, gosh, I couldn't pinpoint the dates, but it was after May of '41. Prior to that we'd go out. But after the confrontation with the Japanese force, we never left the harbor.

Marcello: You never left the harbor after that?

Sauer: No, not to my knowledge. I don't remember it if we did.

Marcello: When the California was in Pearl Harbor, what sort of liberty did you receive?

- Sauer: Oh, you could have practically whatever you wanted. You know, prior to that, there was only one battleship allowed to go into the harbor at one time--and not more than one. Even prior to that, at stateside we were at a state of emergency. And when we'd head stateside, then there would be a state of emergency. They would only allow only 10 per cent of the men to go ashore. But up until Pearl Harbor, when we were at Pearl, I don't know what percentage that was allowed to go over, but I'd just like to bet you that we didn't have not more than 60 per cent of the personnel aboard that Sunday morning.
- Marcello: But how would the liberty routine work? In other words, was it a port and starboard liberty?
- Sauer: Yes, it was port and starboard.
- Marcello: How many sections would they allow to have liberty at one time? Three sections?
- Sauer: I'll tell you what, I believe they let more than that go ashore. Whether they were lax or what, I don't know. There was no one that needed to stay aboard. Well, to give you an idea, we had six barbers aboard the ship, and they would get liberty, and only one of the six needed to stay aboard.
- Marcello: Now when you did have liberty, what time did you have to be back aboard the California? Did you have a twelve o'clock curfew?

Sauer: No, you could come back the next morning.

Marcello: In other words, you just had to report for a muster the next morning.

Sauer: Except like if you went over on a Saturday, why, you could come back Sunday night or either Monday morning.

Marcello: In other words, in some cases you would get forty-eight-hour passes?

Sauer: Oh, yes, sure, a lot of them did.

Marcello: Well, your routine, then, obviously differed for that of the other battleships, and this is probably because you never went out on maneuvers.

Sauer: Well, it could be. There were a few of the battleships in this latter period that probably went out on maneuvers but we never did that I know of.

Marcello: Now when you had liberty, what did you usually do?

Sauer: When we had liberty?

Marcello: When you had liberty, personally?

Sauer: Well, I was married, and I didn't go ashore too often--just once in awhile. I usually went in to see a picture show. I had a friend of mine, and he'd like to go over there and get drunk, and he wanted me there to bring him back because I didn't drink (chuckle).

Marcello: Now where was your wife at this time?

Sauer: She was stateside, and she was just planning on coming to Hawaii.

Marcello: You mean when the attack occurred?

Sauer: If it had been three weeks later, she would have probably been in Hawaii?

Marcello: Now when the crew came back off liberty--let's say on a Saturday night--what sort of condition would they usually be in?

Sauer: Well, most of them would be in just about the same condition that they were in when they left the ship. Some of them would come in a little raunchy, but I guess they were no different than people in civilian life. They are just as much of a cross-section as civilians. Some of them liked to drink and carouse around, and others didn't.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during this period in Pearl Harbor, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your mind?

Sauer: Well, we'd got to see quite a few on the island, but we didn't think too much of them one way or another. In fact, I believe that one of the cab drivers was a Japanese. We all knew him, and he seemed okay.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old salts talk about the fighting qualities of the Japanese Navy or anything of this nature?

Sauer: No, I really didn't. I talked to quite a few of the old salty sailors, but I don't think that they actually knew themselves, though we knew that the Japanese had a first

class navy. We knew that it was a pretty good navy--about the best, I guess, next to ours. They might have even been better. I don't know. I don't think it was. Well, I'll tell you what. I guess it's because Americans had a little individual ingenuity there that the others lacked. I believe that's what won the war.

Marcello: When was payday aboard the California?

Sauer: Last of the month. I don't even remember what day it was.

Marcello: What rank were you at the time of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?

Sauer: I was a seaman first class.

Marcello: Okay, I think that this brings us up to the days immediately prior to the attack itself. What I want you to do at this point, Mr. Sauer, is to describe in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was on Saturday, December 6, 1941. And then we will go into the actual Sunday itself. Let us start, however, with Saturday, December 6, 1941.

Sauer: I think that that Saturday we went through the regular routine of our inspection, and after the inspection liberty passes were handed out, and men could go ashore--those who were entitled to it or asked for it. I stayed aboard. I don't even remember what we did that afternoon.

Marcello: How about that evening?

Sauer: Probably I was at the library. That's where I spent a lot of my time--in the library.

Marcello: What did you do that evening?

Sauer: That Saturday evening?

Marcello: Yes.

Sauer: Well, I know that I went to a movie, and then I went to bed. That's about it.

Marcello: Did anything out of the ordinary happen that Saturday evening that you can recall?

Sauer: Nothing worth saying. It was all routine.

Marcello: Were there very many drunks that came in that night, or were there no more than usual?

Sauer: I wouldn't know (chuckle). I was sound asleep.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into Sunday morning, then, and what I want you to do at this point is to describe events as they unfolded on Sunday morning from the time you woke up till the actual attack occurred.

Sauer: I woke up at the usual time and ate breakfast and cleaned up the barber shop. Let's see, that day there were . . . I believe that almost all of the barbers were aboard that morning. I'm sure they were all there, all except one that was the officers' barber. I think he was ashore. I just had put up my mop, and I stepped through the hatch, and I was going to go to the bathroom. As I stepped

through the hatch, somebody yelled, "The Japs are here!"

Marcello: Up until this time you heard nothing or felt nothing?

Sauer: Heard or felt nothing.

Marcello: Where was your battle station?

Sauer: My battle station was immediately forward of the barber shop on the main deck. It's what we called the recreational quarters, and it was a dining area and also where the bands practiced and where we did all the recreational work.

Marcello: What is your function at that particular point?

Sauer: I was in the repair crew, and that was my battle station.

Marcello: What sort of a repair crew would this be?

Sauer: It was taking care of the bulkheads and all in case of a fracture in the bulkhead.

Marcello: In other words, you were a part of damage control.

Sauer: It was damage control.

Marcello: Okay, so the word is passed down that the Japanese are attacking. What do you do at this point?

Sauer: Well, I didn't question it. I just immediately went to my battle station and started . . . one of my duties was to close all the portholes. So I was closing the portholes, and, as you know, the portholes have a glass part and then a steel part to go over it. Well, I closed three of them, and the fourth one, as I was closing it, well, I looked out toward Ford Island and saw a Jap plane.

That boy looked at me right in the face, torpedo and all, and he dropped that torpedo, and, of course, he zooms off.

Marcello: Okay, describe this in a little bit more detail. Here you look out the window, and you see this Japanese plane. How low was it?

Sauer: It was real low, and I could see the pilot's eyes. That's how close he was (chuckle).

Marcello: And you actually saw it drop the torpedo?

Sauer: Yes, sir. The torpedo was hanging there, and it looked like it was going to hit me right between the eyes. I didn't know . . . but I started praying.

Marcello: Could you actually see the wake of the torpedo as it was coming toward the ship?

Sauer: No, it was too close. When he dropped the torpedo and it hit the water, that was about it. Then I couldn't see anything anymore.

Marcello: So what happened at that point?

Sauer: I started saying my prayers. I just knew that I would be blown sky-high. The whole ship just shook. It kind of rattled my teeth a little.

Marcello: Were you knocked off your feet or anything of this nature?

Sauer: Oh, no, no. I said, "Oh, gosh, that isn't bad," so I kept on closing portholes. It wasn't long until here came another one--right in the same spot.

Marcello: You saw it?

Sauer: I saw it. Well, that one scared the socks off of me, but it didn't do no more than rattle this ship even. But after I closed the portholes, two more hit that I felt. And then I felt something go through.

We had a little old boy . . . I don't know how old he was. We always said he was fourteen years old. He was standing or leaning up against the locker (cough) with communication phones on as they hit below. They were battle phones, actually, is what they were. And he was standing up against the bulkhead there, and I said, "Son, would you like for me to take over now?" He said, "I sure would appreciate it."

So he gave me the phones, and then I felt the awfulest tremor right back of the bulkhead that I was leaning up against. We were in this compartment that was built right around the conning towers of the superstructure going up. In this bulkhead back here (gesture), aft of it, is where I was leaning against. There was a porthole open right below me, and one of my barber buddies, he had the phones on down below on the next deck, and the hatch was open, and you could see down in there. With all of this taking place, I could see a locker--I can just see it like it was yesterday--a locker flying through the air, and it hit that old boy right there (gesture).

Marcello: Now he's on the deck below you, and you are seeing this through the hatch?

Sauer: Now there was an angle, and I could just see part of his head, you know, but I could see that locker flying through there. It killed him. And then I don't remember nothing. That was all that I remembered there.

Marcello: Why is that?

Sauer: I was knocked out.

Marcello: You were knocked out by a bomb concussion or what?

Sauer: Well, see, the bomb went . . . I later found out that the bomb went through right in back of this bulkhead that I was leaning up against, and it set off the magazine down below. Of course, that created a tremendous explosion and fire. When I woke up, I was laying on the side of the ship, and it had swept all the mess tables, the piano, organ, all the musical instruments . . . all the stuff was leaning--lockers and all--were leaning against the bulkhead.

Marcello: Now you were still inside of this recreational room.

Sauer: I was in that trash over there. That's where I came out of. So I could crawl . . . I crawled out of there and up the conning tower.

Marcello: How many decks down were you?

Sauer: I was on the main deck.

Marcello: I was right on top of the . . . I'll tell you what probably saved me was that I was standing right on top of the armored deck, see. And when the bomb went off . . . it was

an armor-piercing bomb, and it set off the ammunition within this armored box, we called it. So I crawled out of there, and the ship . . . it was settled already.

Marcello: By this time the ship had already settled on the bottom of the harbor?

Sauer: Yes. In the compartment I was in, if I wouldn't have closed the portholes, I would have been drowned because the water would have gotten in there. This way, it didn't.

Marcello: Oh, this compartment was actually under water?

Sauer: It was under water.

Marcello: Well, how did you get there?

Sauer: I went up through the superstructure.

Marcello: I see. You went up through the conning tower. There was a hatch . . .

Sauer: Oh, yes.

Marcello: . . . in the recreational room which went up through the conning tower?

Sauer: That's right. All the way from the bottom of the ship, you could just zig-zag your way up there.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened at this point?

Sauer: Well, when I got topside, it was deserted, and I kind of felt funny (chuckle).

Marcello: In other words, the abandon ship order had already been given.

Sauer: Oh, yes, it had been given . . . well, it was given and

then they came back aboard, as I understand it now.

Marcello: Now wait a minute. The abandon ship order had been given, and then the order had been rescinded, and people were coming back aboard the ship again?

Sauer: Yes, and then they abandoned it for sure, you see.

Marcello: And all of this time you were literally knocked out?

Sauer: Yes. I didn't know nothing about it.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens at this point?

Sauer: So I went topside and couldn't get aft very far. The water was over the stern. So then somebody saw me, and they sent a boat over, and about that time there was an old boy coming off from the crow's nest. He came down from there. So we went ashore.

Marcello: Were you hurting in any way?

Sauer: Oh, yes, I had my back all wrecked, and my head was split open.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that a boat came from someplace and took you off the California?

Sauer: From Ford Island.

Marcello: You could get off the battleship and into this boat on your own?

Sauer: No, they had to help me get in there. Well, when we got over there, why, they took me over to the Marine mess hall. That's where they had all of the wounded. I don't remember ever being put in there, but I remember getting

off the boat and being taken over to that place. Well, then I don't remember nothing until about twelve o'clock --midnight. Sometime during the night I heard some groaning, and I looked up and I saw one of the men laying there on the bench of a mess table. He had both legs burnt off right at the thighs. I saw that and I said, "Lord, this is no place for me!" So I took off.

Marcello: Where did you go?

Sauer: Well, I must have gone out on a ballpark because that's where I woke up the next morning. I was laying on a life preserver, and somebody says, "My, my head hurts!" And there was an old boy--I can still see him, redheaded--and he was scalped. Yes, sir, all of his hair was hanging back here (gesture) with the scalp off. I said, "My gosh, your head ought to hurt!" I said, "You haven't got no hair on top of your head! You're scalped!" He said, "Do you reckon that if you pulled that over my head that it would feel better?" I said, "Well, it might." The sun was hot. So I pulled that scalp over his head. He said, "Man, that feels cool!"

Marcello: So what did you do from here? Now you woke up on the ballpark on Ford Island.

Sauer: Yes. We wound up back over there at the Marine barracks.

Marcello: In other words, you walked over there on your own.

Sauer: Well, this other guy . . . we could both walk. I was

taped up from the waist to the shoulders real tight. We walked over there, and he was looking for somebody to take care of his scalp. Now whether he ever found anybody . . . he probably went over to the mess hall. And myself, I met up with a Marine. He had a rifle, and I had found one .30-06 shell. And we was talking, and he says, "You know what?" He says, "You know, those darn Japs are liable to come back! We ought to dig us a foxhole somewhere." So we went out there near the water, and we dug this foxhole (chuckle). One rifle and one shell (chuckle).

Marcello: Were you able to observe very much of the damage around you at all?

Sauer: Oh, yes. We saw . . . I don't exactly remember, but it was either on a Wednesday or a Thursday . . . I believe it was a Thursday morning, and we were going aboard the ship to carry off the dead, and I saw the Oklahoma was not far from us--in back of us--and it was turned upside-down, and the keel was sticking up there, and we was some men up there. They had dug a hole in that thing. And two men walked out--crawled out of that hole. I said, "Man, those poor devils have been inside of that ship all this time!" One had a monkey wrench in his hand, and he was tapping with it. You know, they couldn't take that wrench away from him. He was hanging onto it. I guess I would have hung onto it, too.

Marcello: Now getting back to the foxhole again, you mentioned that you and this Marine dug the foxhole along the beach.

What did you do at that point then?

Sauer: We stayed there all night. We spent the next night there.

Marcello: You hadn't received any orders or anything during this time?

Sauer: No, everything was turmoil.

Marcello: Now this would be the night of December 8. Is that correct?

Sauer: That would . . .

Marcello: The night of December 7, you slept on the ball diamond.

Sauer: Yes, it was the night of December 8. We couldn't get any water to drink. Man, I was a thirsty booger!

Marcello: Did you have any food?

Sauer: No food. I saw a crust of bread laying on the ground, and I sure did want to eat it (chuckle). A thousand feet had gone over it.

Marcello: What kind of physical condition were you in at this time? Were you still hurting?

Sauer: Well, I was hurting awful bad.

Marcello: How come you didn't go back to the hospital?

Sauer: Hospital? You mean that mess hall?

Marcello: Yes, the mess hall.

Sauer: Oh, you wouldn't have gone back there, either. I wouldn't have gone back. No, shoot, I would have died first.

I'll tell you what, it was pretty tough to look at all of those burned people, and mutilated. It was terrible. I tell you what, when you see a person that has his legs burned off and he's lying there with about that much of his bones sticking out (gesture) and the other one that's charcoaled on the end, that's pretty rough going. And you often wonder how in the world can that man survived.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that several days after this, you were on a detail that was retrieving bodies out of the ship?

Sauer: Yes.

Marcello: That must have been a pretty gruesome job, also.

Sauer: It was worse. That was pretty rough. I couldn't do anything much more than just help identify them.

Marcello: Were you doing this on the California?

Sauer: Yes. And I did go back aboard the California on Wednesday-- I think it was Wednesday--afternoon. This boy that got his head cut off . . . another boy and I who were friends of his, why, he said, "You know, we ought to go down there and get all of Herbert's stuff out of there." And I said, "We sure ought to and send it to his folks."

Marcello: Now you said that the guy that had his head cut off. This is the one that had been hit by that locker?

Sauer: Yes. So he said, "Let's get in and see if we can find us a flashlight." And we looked around the Marine barracks there, and, sure enough, we found a flashlight. And we

went into the barber shop there where Herbert had all of his belongings. And you know, this boy and I forgot all about the barber shop and collecting the dead. A flashlight in a ship inundated makes a beam about that big (gesture) --three inches in diameter. I don't care how far you shine it, it just don't spread. It was dark. Oooooooh, it was black!

Marcello: Well, now did you just go out to the California on your own? Where did you get a boat?

Sauer: They were going back and forth. So we went out there, and we got inside, and we walked in the barber shop, and, gosh, the stench was awful. I said, "Man, we can't take much of this." So we opened up this locker, and we got all of his stuff and his bags packed. I stumbled and fell face first down on those dead bodies (chuckle). Gee, that was rough.

We came off of that, and we went back to the island. We went to take a shower, and, of course, they wouldn't let us have any fresh water. We had to use salt water. And I scrubbed for hours trying to get the stench off of me, and you just can't get it off. I tried to wash my head, and in the meantime I didn't know that I had hit my head there. And when I was trying to scrub my head--I knew it was all matted--boy, it hurt. So I told the old boys, "What in the world is wrong with the top of my

head?" He looked at it and said, "Man, that thing is layed open about six inches." I said, "No wonder it hurts!" (chuckle) But anyway we managed to take the old boy's bags back to him, and his personal belongings, to his folks.

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

Sauer: Well, I'll tell you what, you know I never had any . . . I guess I could have killed anyone that stuck his head in front of me, and yet I didn't feel any hatred there. I knew it just had to be done. I don't know just what my feelings were. I knew I had a job to do. Let me say it this way. I knew that it had to be done and that I was going to be part of it.

And I needed medical attention, so, oh, I believe it was the second week that there were about 27,000 of us in what they called "Tent City." And there were men from all stations, ships, and what-have-you out there. I had never gotten any word off the California one way or another what they were doing. So the Chicago pulled into port, and they announced over the speaker that the Chicago wanted ninety volunteers. I said, "I believe I'm going to volunteer." So there were ninety of us who volunteered, and I went aboard her.

Marcello: Now the Chicago was a cruiser?

- Sauer: Yes, a heavy cruiser. It was sunk later in the Northern Solomons. I needed medical attention, and we couldn't get it there at the island. There just weren't . . . you know, there were too many people that really needed it. I could get around, but I still needed medical attention. I figured that if I go aboard the Chicago, which was a heavy cruiser, why, I would probably get pretty good medical attention.
- Marcello: Now did you say that this was about two weeks after the actual attack had taken place?
- Sauer: Approximately.
- Marcello: Well, Mr. Sauer, I've run out of questions concerning the Pearl Harbor attack itself. I think you have done a pretty good job in describing your part in that attack.
- Sauer: Well, that's the way I remember it.
- Marcello: That's what we wanted--the way you remembered it.
- Sauer: I imagine there are a lot of things that would come to a person of the actual happenings. It all happened so fast that you just get a flash here and a flash there.
- Marcello: Plus the fact that you were out cold for a good deal of what went on.
- Sauer: I want to tell you something else. I didn't have one stitch of clothing left on me.
- Marcello: You mean by the time you woke up and got off the California, you had no clothing at all?

Sauer: No clothing, even my shoes were gone. They had taken my shoes, socks, underclothes, and everything. Now I was real dark. I sent a picture to my wife some weeks after this happened. She said, "My, you've got a deep tan!" It was the dust and stuff impregnating my skin. I couldn't wash it off.

Marcello: Well, I think you've said a great many valuable things, and I think that historians are going to find this quite useful when they write about Pearl Harbor.