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Merle Newbauer
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Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

Merle Newbauer

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Merle Newbauer for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 6, 1976, in Dallas, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Newbauer in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the battleship USS Maryland during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Now Mr. Newbauer, 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. Newbauer: I was born on October 13, 1919, in Dayton, Ohio. I joined the Navy. . . well, it was myself and a friend of mine who was also a Pearl Harbor survivor--who is at the Pearl Harbor Convention now--named Robert Matheny. We joined at Dayton, Ohio. He went in the day after Christmas in 1939. I failed my first examination, and

I were together. . . we were raised from about kindergarten together; we went into the old CCC together; we went into the Navy together.

As I say, when we first went in from Dayton to Cincinnati, I failed my first physical examination. I looked about like a toothpick at the time, and I just barely made the weight limit. He was a strapping young man, and he went on. He got sent to Newport, and I got sent to Great Lakes, Illinois.

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

Newbauer: Because of the fact that we had discussed this quite a bit, and it was back in the depression days, and we had searched. We made honest efforts to find work, and we couldn't find it. So we were just walking down the street, and we passed the big post office there in Dayton that said, "Join the Navy! Uncle Sam Wants You!" Or "The Marines want you." I was never a combattant enough person to figure I wanted to go into the Marine Corps. I didn't ever feel that. . . I liked to shave and take a bath and eat three square meals a day.

So, you ask why I went into the Navy? I guess at that time it was because I wanted to get my three square meals a

day, and I wanted to be able to take a shower. And I knew that that would be the thing. And besides, being inland like that, it was somewhat more of a thrill to me as there was Army posts around Dayton, and it was no particular thrill to me to see a soldier walking down the street. It was always quite a thrill for me to talk to a sailor or something and talk to him about this thing. And so the Navy always had been an interest for both of us.

So we went in to. . . when we were just walking down the street one time, we come up and asked for a job. It was that old thing, "Don't call us. We'll call you." And they never called, so we were going by the post office, and they said. . . saw it up there, and we just looked at each other and grinned and went on up the stairs, and both of us went in. We got an appointment. At that time, I was nineteen years old. You had to have parental consent to get into the service then, until you were twenty-one. So he was a couple of years younger than I was. But anyhow, we went back and it was no great difficulty to get parental consent, although we could hear the war drums beating in Europe, and we knew that there would be a war eventually. We didn't know we'd be caught at Pearl Harbor, or you wouldn't have gotten us in that for any amount of money.

Marcello: Well, you know, you mentioned economic reasons awhile ago as being one of the primary factors in your decision to enter the service. You know, that's a standard reason that's given by a great many people of your generation for having entered the service. It was a matter of economics. Times were hard; jobs were scarce; the service represented a certain amount of security. In other words, you got three square meals a day, and you got a regular paycheck, even as small as it was. So it wasn't a very bad deal all of the way around.

Newbauer: That wasn't the main reason. I would say that was probably the greatest. But back then. . . you mentioned my generation. Back then, there was quite a thing. . . the patriotism that was going on there. And as I said before, we could hear the rattle of the sabers and the beat of the drums over there. And we knew it was going to be an eventuality. Maybe we just entered for selfish reasons. We figured, "Let's get in there while the getting is good so we won't be sitting out there with a .30-30 across our shoulder. Let's get in there and get something and let's win." Also, at the time, the Navy didn't. . . well, none of the services dwelled on learning a trade then. But the Navy always had a higher degree on learning a trade then. But the Navy always had a

higher degree of appeal to all of us than did. . . I say all of us. I'm talking about the group that we ran around with.

Marcello: Now where did you say you took your boot camp?

Newbauer: Great Lakes, Illinois.

Marcello: How long was boot camp at that time?

Newbauer: I believe it was twenty-one weeks, but at the time we were there the fleet was getting ready to go out on Fleet Problem Twenty-One. And they cut our boot training a little bit short. We were supposed to get a boot leave, which I got. But that was cut real short, too, so we could come back. And we came back immediately, and they had our assignments ready for us.

I was assigned to the battleships. As I said, my friend Matheny had gone through, and he went to Newport. I think the first ship he went on was the Holland, which was a submarine tender, and then later on that he was transferred to the submarines. And he had made the Navy Times magazine because he stayed on one submarine longer than any other man in history. He stayed on one ship. He was satisfied like that. Me, I was more satisfied by moving around from one ship to the other. I was on staff by the fact that I was a printer, so I traveled around from one ship to the other.

Marcello: Now was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think ought to be a part of the record, or was it mainly the typical Navy boot camp?

Newbauer: Well, I don't know what can be classed as typical Navy boot camp or not, but if it was anything typical, I guess my trip through there was just typical. There was nothing noteworthy about it.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were assigned to battleships upon graduation from boot camp. Was this a voluntary thing, or were you simply put in battleships?

Newbauer: Oh, no. There was no volunteering. I think sometime while I was in boot camp. . . at the time, I was a high school graduate. You asked me that before. I was a high school graduate. And at the time, a high school graduate was some sort of a rarity in there. And due to that, I had a . . . I'm not saying this to brag, but I did have a high IQ in the clerical and the arithmetic and the other qualifications went into the IQ test there at that time. I don't know whether the same type is conducted today or not, but I placed very high. As such, and with my printing that I had in high school, I had a chance to stay at the print shop at Great Lakes, Illinois. I was approached on it.

But I didn't want any part of it. I joined the Navy to see the world and get away. So that's where I wanted to

go. I wanted to go aboard ship. So I believe my orders were cut before then, which could have been changed. The chief printer could have probably had enough drag to change them and keep me there at the station, but I didn't want to stay there. It's too darn cold in Great Lakes. I didn't want no part of that.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of being assigned to a battleship?

Newbauer: Oh, I was thrilled to death about it. I had already read the . . . we had the literature there at boot camp about battleships and the role they played. Of course, they're obsolete now, but I knew I was going to one of the "Big Three." So when I found out I was going to the Maryland, I was thrilled to death. There was the great big old sixteen-inch rifles there on the biggest ship going. That just thrilled the heck out of me.

Marcello: You mentioned the "Big Three." What were the "Big Three?"

Newbauer: Let me see if I can remember. There's the Maryland, the West Virginia, and the Colorado. I believe they were the three that had the sixteen-inch rifles. Those were mounted with triple turrets with two guns as opposed to the rest of the battleships that had four turrets with twelve and fourteen-inch guns on them.

Marcello: Now when you went aboard the Maryland, were you put in the deck force, or were you given some other assignment?

Newbauer: When I first went aboard the Maryland, I had had a little bit of fighting experience--fisticuffs--which was necessary around that part of Dayton, Ohio, to survive. As a result, I was placed in the X-Division, which there was no such division aboard ship. But this was created especially for the influx of the boots that came aboard, the boots being the recruits. And we went aboard there, and I was placed in the custody of Joe Skoke, who was a coxswain at the time. He was the lightweight wrestling champion of the service, and you could see he had taken quite a few tumbles on the mat after talking to him. But anyhow, he started using me for my. . . trying to bait me, I guess, trying to get me to take a poke at him or something. I don't know what it was, but anyhow, he wanted me to get into the athletics, which I did.

But anyhow, we went into this X-Division there, and it was just a matter of a few days until they came around and said they needed volunteers to go into A-Division, volunteers to go into communications, volunteers to go into anything. And so, my first assignment was to go to the M-Division, which is the machinists' division. I was down in the boiler

room down there, and I could see right there that that wasn't my cup of tea. I didn't like that.

So I was wandering around the ship, and I found a print shop on the Maryland, and so I talked to one of the seamen who was in the print shop. He said, "Well, we need another man down here. Do you know anything about printing?" I said, "Well, I had about three years of it in high school and then a little bit of it on the outside." He said, "Let me get your name and your division, and we'll talk to the chief."

And much to my sorrow, the chief came up and found me, interviewed me, talked to me. He went to the division officer. His name was Ensign Marks. He's still alive, incidentally. I ran across him at one of these Pearl Harbor Survivors meetings. And he was the captain's writer, so he got me into the print shop. I said there a minute ago, "Much to my sorrow." It wasn't because of the fact that I went into the print shop and furthered my education and furthered my training, but I think the man that I went to . . . well, I think that was the meanest chief that ever lived in the world. In my personal opinion, he was no good.

Marcello: Now did you remain in the print shop from that time on while you were aboard the Maryland?

Newbauer: Yes, I stayed there all of the time I was on the Maryland. And as I said earlier, I was a staff printer. The Maryland at the time wasn't a flagship. The flag was on the Pennsylvania. And as the flag transferred from one ship to the other, then I went into the Flag Division. I was transferred around with the flag, but I always seemed to end up on the Maryland with Chief Biggs on there. He is since deceased, God rest his soul. But he was the chief there. Basically, I was on the Maryland from then on until well after the attack.

Marcello: Now I'm not clear on one thing here. You actually didn't move from ship to ship.

Newbauer: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Oh, you did?

Newbauer: Yes, I did. But not on a permanent basis. I went along there. . . when the flag would move over, we'll say, from the Maryland to the California, then I went along. I was still stationed aboard the Maryland, but I went along with the staff and worked with them, and then I was living out of a sea bag on there and helping out with the printing that was necessary for the admiral who was referred to as the flag. I was going along and helping him out with the printing on it. But my locker and all of my clothes and all of my personal belongings were still aboard the Maryland.

- Marcello:** How long did the flag actually stay aboard a particular ship?
Or would this vary?
- Newbauer:** Well, it would vary, yes. The flag was stationed aboard that ship, and that was his home ship. That was his home port. Like the Pennsylvania was the flagship. And then when the flag would go to the yards for something, they would transfer him to another ship. Well, they always transferred . . . there was always a flag coming onto the Maryland because of the fact that the Maryland was a . . . well, it was one of the bigger, meaner. . . and it was a showboat, is what it was, more than anything else. It was the showboat of the battleships.
- Marcello:** Okay, in reference to something that you mentioned earlier, I am assuming that you had some rather unhappy experiences in the print shop with this particular chief. My next question is this: What was the morale like aboard the Maryland during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?
- Newbauer:** Oh, the morale, I think, was just as high as it was to go. I think we had more athletic trophies than any ship in the fleet; I think we were. . . I think the morale was very high. There's nothing at all. . .there was quite a bit of dissatisfaction amongst us about us being at Pearl Harbor so long. We wasn't happy about that. But compared to any of the rest

in the fleet, I think the morale was very high. I really do. I don't think there was a thing wrong with the morale of the men.

Marcello: You mentioned the athletic competition awhile ago, and from all that I've read and from all of the people that I've interviewed, I gather that athletics played a very important part among the fleet at that particular time.

Newbauer: Very, very much so. I think it still does, but it was very, very keen there. There was a . . . good night, you fought for your ship's championship. You went from your ship to your . . . like, we'll say the Maryland. You fought for that division. Then you went to Combat Div, Combat Division. We were in Combat Div Four. And then we went to the district and everything. It was very high. Sports competition was very high there.

Marcello: What were the living accommodations like aboard the Maryland during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Newbauer: Well, the living conditions. . . they are clean. We had enough men aboard there to keep them clean. When I was stationed on the M-Division, we had one locker, and we kept our clothing in there and then our sea bag was stowed in the sea bag locker there. And we had little lockers running up and down the insides of the ship there that we stowed our hammocks in. And when it came time to go to sleep, we

broke out our hammock, untied our seven half-hitches that was in the hammock and swung our hammocks between the clues, as they called it. We grabbed hold of the pipe, hoisted ourselves up in there. If you didn't have good balance, you had a sore head because you'd fall out of the thing. It was six or seven feet above the deck when you went up there. I say six or seven feet, and I think I remember that because I had fallen out of them a few times.

Marcello: Evidently, it did take a little bit of skill or experience to learn to sleep in one of those hammocks.

Newbauer: I think that was the main reason for boot training--to teach you how to sleep in that thing. I didn't learn anything else about the fleet. Yes, it took a little bit of dexterity to stay in them (chuckle).

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Maryland during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Newbauer: Very good. Very good. We didn't have any food problem at all aboard there. When I first went aboard, they had family-style feeding, where you would sit down there at a table. I think there was ten men who sat at a folding table that was suspended from the overhead between meals. Of course, they had to go after the attack because they didn't want to . . . when those sixteen-inch rifles cut loose, anything would fall. But you sat down there at the table. When they'd

pipe "chow down," you sat down there and there was mess cooks. They'd be running back and forth to the galley with tureens full of hot food and give it to you. As I said earlier, one of the reasons I went into the Navy was for the food, and I soon lost my toothpick appearance and put on a little bit of weight anyhow. So I'd say the food was very good.

Marcello: Well, I think you've just mentioned several things that would have contributed to the high morale. You mentioned the living quarters were clean and not too bad; you mentioned that the food was very good; and you mentioned that the athletic competition and so on kept people interested and probably played a part in the high morale. And, of course, there's one other factor. Everybody was a volunteer, and I'm sure that helped.

Newbauer: Right, right, yes. Oh, it always has been that way in the Navy. There's never been a draft in the Navy, even during the war. And I think another thing that contributed to the high morale is that we kept busy. We didn't lay around too much. We kept busy while we were there. And we had every confidence in the world in our officers. We had good officers, and we knew it. We trusted. . . we had faith in our officers. As I said earlier, we knew that it was inevitable that we were

going to go to war. We didn't know that the attack back then was coming, but we knew that war was coming. And we were safe. We felt that. . . we didn't think that nothing lesser than God himself could damage the Maryland or any of the other battleships.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit about the on-the-job training that you had aboard the Maryland. I suppose that we have to come back to that chief petty officer that you mentioned earlier. Okay, talk a little bit about the on-the-job training aboard the Maryland. In other words, do you feel that it was excellent training? Good training? Fair training? Poor training? How would you describe the on-the-job training that you received?

Newbauer: Well, I would say on the on-the-job training there, there was also. . . at that time, they started the schools. I don't believe at the time they had a school for printers in there because a printer was a rarity in the Navy. As a matter of fact, the emblem for the printer used to be the open book. Being a sailor, we'd go ashore with the open book emblem on my arm before I got a rate. But I had the emblem on my arm, and I'd perform many a marriage for one night's duration, of course, by telling these girls on the beach I was an enlisted chaplain. I don't think we fooled them any, but anyhow, it happened (chuckle).

Marcello: But did you find that most of the people in the print shop aboard the Maryland were quite willing to help and teach you?

Newbauer: Oh, yes. It was a small thing. And I had printing in high school coming through. It was just a further continuation. There wasn't a whole lot of teaching on it. The only thing new was a linotype machine, and I was taught by the chief printer and the other men around there to use the linotype machine. I had done the press work before, and there was just the gaining of confidence with repeated usage of it. I didn't actually go to a printing school until much, much, much later. . . well, after the war was over, when the Navy started swinging over from the hot metal to the cold metal process. That was when I went to school there. I'm still a competent hot metal or a cold metal printer as far as that was concerned. The only thing is now that my eyes won't . . . as a matter of fact, I was working down there at the Dallas Times Herald for many a year and held the situation down there for years.

But to get back to your question, yes, I think that the training was adequate, and as much as possible, I was doing my job, which was printing the forms that were necessary aboard ship, which would be quite a few of them. I learned how

to make those forms, and I learned how to run them off. I learned quite a bit, yes.

When I mentioned the fact that the chief that was on that thing was somewhat of a miserable character, I don't want you to think that anyone sat there and just picked on me. Because this opinion was shared by every man that met him. The chiefs would sit up there on deck, and they'd have shuffleboard contests up there every night. And all of the chiefs would get back on the fantail, and the crew would sit around there and watch the chiefs. And they had a big time watching it. The chiefs would be playing shuffleboard on the deck. And as soon as this chief printer would walk on the deck, every chief on there would just walk off of the thing. No one liked him. He was. . . as I say, he's probably listening in on me. I don't know whether he's downstairs or upstairs (chuckle), but he's probably listening in now. I've got my opinion where he is. He didn't spend a whole lot of time teaching us anything. It was just learning ourselves, learning amongst ourselves, actually.

Marcello: When did the Maryland move to Pearl Harbor?

Newbauer: We went to Fleet Problem Twenty-One in. . . I believe it was April of 1940. We were supposed to be gone for six weeks, and the six weeks were stretched into many years before we came back. We did come back a couple of times, two or three

times, in between that period for various yard periods. For instance, we came back and got the blisters put on, which was the voidage for holding our oil for long, extended cruises. And we took off some of the obsolete armament that we had there then. And we were the first ship. . . and I believe . . . I don't know, but I believe we were the only battleship that was present at Pearl Harbor that had the 1.1 pom-pom, which was one of the reasons why we kept alive. We knocked down a lot of planes that morning with those 1.1's. They were good guns. They soon became obsolete, but they saved us during the attack.

Marcello: Now you mentioned Fleet Problem Twenty-One awhile ago. What is it?

Newbauer: Well, it was just going out. It was the training where all ships went out, and they divided up into task forces. It was simulated warfare where one ship would attack another one. A ship would attack another. Of course, we didn't use guns. We had. . . the Marines, for instance, they had .30-06 rifles mounted on the barrel of their 5-inch guns. And they'd go around there like you used to when you was kids. You'd go around and you'd get something in your sights, and you'd pull that blank cartridge on that .30-06, and you'd hear a bang. You know, when you was kids, you'd say, "Bang,

bang! I got you!" It's the same thing. But, anyhow, we were training and leveling our guns at a ship that was attacking you. We was very well-trained. We were very well-trained.

Marcello: We'll talk a little bit more about your training exercises and maneuvers later on. What did you think about the idea of moving to the Hawaiian Islands?

Newbauer: Well, we didn't go out there to move to the Hawaiian Islands. We went out there as a fleet problem. As I said, we were supposed to come back in six weeks. And as far as I was concerned, the first six, eight, ten weeks that I was out at Honolulu, I ate it up. I loved it! After three or four years of it, though, I got so I didn't like Pearl Harbor. Of course, there was a million men on that island then, and there was no recreation facilities at all. You'd stand in a line for a mile long to go to a movie. Anywhere you done, there was no reason. I mean, there was nothing there. And being a normal, healthy young man with a complete lack of available young women over there. . . that was. . . and myself being over there with the rest of them, that was the main thing why we got to where we disliked the island of Oahu.

Marcello: Okay, now you mentioned that you moved there sometime in 1940, that is, you were more or less stationed in the Hawaiian Islands at Pearl Harbor in 1940. Now after you got there, describe what a typical training exercise might be like for

the Maryland. In other words, when did you go out, how long would you stay out, what would you do when you went out, and when would you come back in?

Newbauer: Okay.

Marcello: That's a lot of questions.

Newbauer: Well, okay. I don't recall the exact number of battleships that were there at the time of the attack. Well, we'll say there were eight of them--eight battleships there. And so they'd be divided up into two task forces. I think there was a blue and the gray fleet. One portion--one-half--of the ships would be out at sea at all times. And then when they got through with their exercises. . . I think we went out for two-week periods at a time, going out and operating off of the coast with the carriers and destroyers and cruisers and other components of the fleet. And we would have simulated warfare, and we would simulate the bombing islands. . . bombing enemy held positions and things like that.

And aerial warfare at the time was in its infancy. We had heard about it in Europe, but we knew what was coming. So we started preparing girding ourselves for air attack. We were well-trained I can't get that across to you enough. We were prepared; we were ready for them. And being on an equal thing, everything being equal, which was proved time and time again, when we knew the enemy was going to meet us, they

never once that I recall--did they ever once--emerge victorious on any naval battle. We proved that at the Coral Sea, at Midway, at Guadalcanal, and at everyplace else. And that's a test to our readiness at the time. That was that readiness that was drilled into us from the time we went out there.

Getting back to your question, I think we went out for two weeks, and we came in for a few days. Now when we came in for a few days, that meant the other part of the fleet was out, and then they would be out for two weeks. So we stayed in there for a few days, and then we went out, and we meet that fleet out there. We went out looking for our enemies, and we went out and they were our enemy, so we went out looking for them--in drill, of course. So we went out and engaged them in combat.

But I would say that the majority of the time the battleships were out at Pearl Harbor. There were no battleships in there at all, and there were no carriers in there--the majority of the time. When we'd come in, and there'd be some of them in there for recreation and relaxation at all times. But never at any time do I recall the whole Battleship Row being filled up there like it was that two or three days before the attack.

Marcello: In other words, what you're saying is, if I'm interpreting you correctly, the training was a constant thing.

Newbauer: Right. It was constant. It was very brief, very brief time periods in between where we'd go in for our recreation.

Marcello: You brought up the subject awhile ago, and I'll pursue it a little bit farther. Just how much emphasis was placed upon antiaircraft training when you went out on those maneuvers and exercises?

Newbauer: Well, everytime we had the thing, we'd go out and we'd have general quarters sound. When I first went aboard there. . . now this was thirty-five years ago, and so I can't speak with absolute accuracy, but we had the main battery, which was our 16-inch rifle. We had our secondary battery, which was mounted on the top decks and the 01 and 02 decks, I believe they were. And we had our 5-inch batteries there. And then on our main deck, we had coming out of the ports there, coming out of a hole there, the openings there, we had our 5-inch antiaircraft guns. I believe they were 5-inch .38's at the time. I'm not sure. And the Marines manned those batteries there. And everytime we went out, we was assuming that we were fighting not only surface ships, but aircraft as well. So we put lots of emphasis on antiaircraft defense. And they had their own call for . . . the bugle call. . . of course, everybody aboard ship knew what the call was. I wouldn't recognize it today if I heard it, but it was the antiaircraft defense call. So we manned our

antiaircraft defenses, of course. We manned our main batteries at the same time. I mean, we just didn't send one group out and say, "Okay, we've got a plane coming in. You boys take care of it. That isn't our job." We all went to general quarters. And the Marines there done one heck of a good job on their batteries.

Marcello: Would it be safe to assume, however, that the Maryland had a heck of a lot more antiaircraft weapons after Pearl Harbor than it had before Pearl Harbor?

Newbauer: I would say that during the attack on Pearl Harbor it had a heck of a lot more because we had just come back. Not too long before that, we had come back from the Navy yard. As I mentioned earlier, we had our 1.1 pom-poms mounted up there, which, at the time, was probably the deadliest anti-aircraft guns there was in the world. And we had adequate amounts of them that they kept.

We was moored right alongside the Oklahoma. And it didn't stop them from sinking the Oklahoma because those torpedoes were loosened before we went to general quarters. Well, after we got to general quarters, I'll guarantee you that those planes would not have got in there to get to the Oklahoma or any other ship there.

Marcello: Where was your battle station aboard the Maryland during this period?

Newbauer: I was in the repair station below decks. We had a ship-fitters' shop right alongside of the print shop, separated by a wire cage sort of thing. My battle station was on the patrol in that area in there. I worked out of that thing. I was a phone talker coming out of that repair station on one of the passageways below decks. I think we were on the first deck below the main deck. I know we were. I can't remember what number the deck was, but mine was the first one, just about at the waterline, anyhow. And I was the phone talker on one of those patrols. In other words, if something were to happen in there, I would phone back to damage control, and the damage control center would have sent the men up to repair the damage on there. Along with that thing, in my area we had ammunition hoists, and I think that they supplied the 5-inch batteries. I know they didn't supply the 16-inch batteries. But I don't recall whether it was the antiaircraft of the 5-inch secondary battery that they did. But that was my area, anyhow, to patrol in through there.

Marcello: Did you actually help with the ammunition hoist in addition to being a telephone talker?

Newbauer: No. That was my full-time job--being a telephone talker and reporting anything at all to damage control. They also

had a talker in there which went direct to the captain--on up to the combat intelligence center. That was two different types of phones on there.

Marcello: I have one last question concerning your training routine in this pre-Pearl Harbor period. As one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as relations deteriorate between the United States and Japan, did your training routine change any?

Newbauer: No, not as far as I recall. If they called for a change, I would say it would be possible to intensify it a little bit more. But the method. . . is what you're getting at--the method of training?

Marcello: Yes.

Newbauer: I don't think the method changed at all. It was very thorough to start out with, I thought. I thought it was ideal. I never want to see any combat again, but if at that time I had known I was going into battle, I would rather have been on the battleship Maryland than meet them man-to-man, ship-to-ship, than anything in the world. We were ready. But I didn't see any difference or change as the nearness to war came closer. We'd learn some of the battles that the British had with the German fleet. I'll tell you this, we never thought. . . it had been taught to us all of the time that we could come on over and. . . as a matter of fact, Halsey

made the statement, "We'll be home for Christmas." He forgot to tell us which Christmas, of course, but it took us quite a while. They were fierce little fighters.

Marcello: Okay. I think this leads into my next question. During that pre-Pearl Harbor period, how much thought did you give to the possibility of the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor?

Newbauer: Oh, we gave no possibility to it at all. I'm a little bit of an odd-ball on this because everybody says that they think that the Japanese, if they had followed through, could have landed at Pearl Harbor, at Honolulu. I do not believe it (chuckle). I don't believe it was possible for them to land at Pearl Harbor. Not because of the hand-to-hand combat that would have come up there, but knowing about the ring of steel that was surrounding that island. . . and those ships would have had to come in mighty close to put those landing craft in, and they'd have had a lot of lead thrown at them out there. But I don't think the Japanese could have ever landed a man at Pearl Harbor. If they had landed parachutists, they would have been . . . there was enough of us there to take care of that.

Marcello: Why did you feel rather safe and secure there at Pearl Harbor?

Newbauer: Because of the training we had had and because of the . . . as I say, I didn't . . . our sincere belief and trust in our leaders, our Naval leaders, our admirals and generals and our intelligence.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old salts aboard the Maryland ever talk about the fighting capabilities of the Japanese Navy whenever you had occasion to be in on a bull session with any of these people? I'm referring now to maybe some of the people that had served in the Asiatic Fleet or something of this nature.

Newbauer: Well, the Asiatic Fleet. . . we always regarded anybody that came off of the Asiatic Fleet, we kind of sort of figured them as gung-ho and half-nuts anyhow, so we didn't sit around and have very many bull sessions with them. Everytime somebody acted a little bit crazy, we used to ask him if he was a member of the Asiatic Fleet.

But, yes, I recall one instance there about one of the chiefs there, which was one of the old salts there. He was talking about the . . . he had been stationed in China there aboard the Houston, and he said that the Japanese, above everything else, were fearless. And above all things, they feared the United States Marines. He said an American would walk down the street, and he said the Japs would be very rude to them, shove them off of the walks, and everything else. Maybe this was hearsay, but they said there would be one Marine walking on the street, and these Jap sailors would split and get off of it. They had a healthy respect because

they had seen . . . the Japanese had seen the Marines fighting. I guess that's the only thing they. . . but they had a healthy respect for them. I guess they had the same respect for any American fighting men. Unfortunately, we didn't have that same respect for their ability.

Marcello: This is a little bit off of the subject, but evidently those Asiatic sailors were something else again.

Newbauer: Yes. I think (chuckle). . . I think I could tell you many a story on them. They'd go over there, and when you go over there with the Asiatic Fleet, one of the big problems was your drinking water supply. The married men that had their families over there used to take a . . . when they'd come aboard ship, they'd take a gallon jug of water ashore for drinking purposes. So the non-married men, which was by far the majority of them . . . there was very few married men over there. . . the orders were to take drinking water. So most of the Asiatic Fleet had a one-ounce bottle that they'd take their water ashore with. They weren't worried about the contamination of the liquor supply (chuckle). So they always carried about one ounce of drinking water ashore with them. That was just one of the things. They were. . . oh, I don't know how to explain them. They were a special breed, I guess. They'd been out there and had too many drums go off in their head or something. they weren't crazy, but they just acted that way.

Marcello: Okay, when you personally thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you conjure up in your own mind during those pre-Pearl Harbor days?

Newbauer: We had been around enough at Pearl Harbor there that we saw the Japanese people not as a fighting man, but the Japanese as merchants and as people living in the island. They were very much amongst themselves. We were not welcome, nor did we want, to go into their homes. Their girls . . . when we had the dances over there, their women didn't . . . their girls were not going to our dances. They stayed to themselves very much. They were a small people. There was no . . . if I myself were to ever form an opinion of them, I guess I would have thought, "Well, who's afraid of that little runt?" Maybe that's the attitude that was prevalent there, that we certainly weren't afraid of them. We certainly weren't afraid of them. We had more respect, I'll say, for the British or the French fighting men than we did for them.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine. How did it work here at Pearl when the Maryland would come in off of maneuvers?

Newbauer: They would sound liberty call. I don't know what time it started. I think it started fairly early in the morning-- I'd say ten o'clock--and it expired aboard ship at midnight.

It was a "Cinderella liberty." And I don't know whether it was midnight or ten o'clock in the evening, but you had to have special permission, unless you were a chief or an officer, to stay overnight.

Marcello: Why was it that liberty was usually up at midnight?

Newbauer: There was no facilities around for them. If you wanted a woman, the only thing that was around there was the whorehouses that were open there. And then the Army was . . . I think the Army had overnight liberty there. There was a lot of married men in the Army over there. And there just was not enough facilities for the sailors to stay ashore there. He'd get over there, and he'd be back from a week or two weeks at sea, and he'd go on out--the ones that drank, and most of them did, I guess--they'd go on out and have their good time. They'd go on out and partake of the spirits and then come back, and they'd be very happy to sleep it off and go on out the next time. And another thing, as I talked about earlier, the money wasn't so plentiful that you could afford to be paying three or four bucks for a motel room or a hotel room. And they didn't have any . . . oh, they had a few flophouses around there, but most of the hotels there were pretty good ones. And there was just no need for letting them sleep or stay ashore there.

There would have been too many. At that time, there was less than 2,000 men, but there were three or four battleships, so if you put 6,000 men ashore, or, let's say, 3,000 men. . . if you let them ashore at Honolulu, there just wasn't the facilities to take care of them.

Marcello: Normally, what percentage of the crew would have liberty when you would come in?

Newbauer: I believe that at that time it was divided up into. . . the fleet was divided up into four-section liberty. There was one-fourth of them that had to stay aboard, and three-fourths of them got liberty. But there had to be enough men aboard at anytime in case of an emergency to get that ship underway and get out of there.

Marcello: Now normally, when you went ashore, what would you as a young sailor usually do?

Newbauer: Well, I'm glad you didn't say as a typical sailor because I (chuckle) wasn't typical because when I went ashore, as I said, I was pretty much in the athletics. I'd go ashore and I'd go to the gym and work out. I was a fairly good fighter back in my day, and I was a fairly good golfer back in my day. And my friend that I had mentioned earlier, this Robert Matheny, this "Tubby," as I had known him all of his life, he was stationed there at the submarine base.

And I had another good friend, Dick Folker. We were boyhood chums, too. He was stationed at one of the repair bases there. We'd go ashore and drink a few beers. We didn't drink a whole lot of hard liquor then, but we'd drink a few beers and just generally mess around the island. We liked to sight-see and we'd go around there. And this Dick, he liked his automobiles, and we always managed to get ourselves an automobile and mess around there.

Later, my brother came over there, and he was a civilian. He worked for the Navy Department in the repair facility, and he came over there.

But my liberty. . . when I would go ashore there. . . I also had a cousin, Raymond Avery, that was stationed at Fort Shafter. I've lost track of him since. I think he's still alive. I don't know where. But I would go over to his house quite a bit. He later got married and I'd go over there to their house for dinner. As a matter of fact, I was at his house the Saturday before the attack, and I was supposed to be over there that Sunday. I think we can get that later.

But I'd go ashore, and right inside where the Navy gate is now, they used to have the Navy YMCA there. And right behind that, right back of that, there was a nine-hole golf course. And this friend of mine, this Matheny, was a very

avid golfer. Now he plays professional-type golf. He plays par golf constantly. And we'd go ashore there, and we'd spend most of our time playing golf. When we'd get through, we'd go on over and drink a few beers. I'll tell you one thing. I drank enough doggone pineapple juice over there that I can't look a pineapple in the face anymore (chuckle).

Marcello: Now many people assume that if some enemy were going to attack the United States, the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. These people assume that Saturday nights in Pearl Harbor were periods of drunken debaucheries and hell-raising and this sort of thing. Consequently, the fleet personnel would be in no condition to fight the next day. How would you answer this type of assertion?

Newbauer: I wouldn't say that Sunday morning would be any less or more typical than any other day. I think when the crew went up for liberty, they didn't have any particular reason to want to wait until a Saturday to go ashore on liberty because there was the same thing to do on a Saturday that there was a Sunday, a Tuesday, a Thursday, or any other day. So they just went ashore, and I would say, if I would class it as any time period as to which would be the best time, I would say it would be one or two days after the pay period.

The fleet would go over there, which we used to call amateur night. The fleet would get paid. And they had their payday twice a month. I think it was the first and the fifteenth of the month. And the fleet would get paid, and everybody would rush ashore. And they only had a few bucks to spend, so they'd throw one great big wing-ding and come back, and they'd wait until the next pay period. I think if there would ever be a weak period as far as defenses would be concerned, it would be probably one or two days after payday, when the old salts and the pros. . . they'd let the amateurs get out of the way, and then they'd go on over and take over. That's the way it worked.

Marcello: Now would that have meant that the crew aboard the Maryland would not have had very much money on the weekend of December 7th? Of course, it would depend when the Maryland came in that weekend.

Newbauer: Yes. At that particular time, we was in there. I know what you're leading up to there, but we had been in port for a few days before this attack. And we had our liberty there. But there was no way. . . with that task force steaming out of Japan heading for us, there was no way of them to know it at that particular time. I mean, I don't think their attack was dependant upon payday or anything else.

You asked me what I thought about it, so that's what I would say. If I was going to plan the attack, that's how I would have done it--would be a couple of days after payday over there when . . . right around payday, when the crew would have been ashore over there. But I don't think that would have anything to do with the timing of the attack on there. I don't think the defenses were down anymore, nor do I think the defenses were down any more or less on a Sunday morning than they would be at any other time.

Marcello: But it is true, is it not, that Sundays were more or less a day of leisure if one didn't have the duty?

Newbauer: Yes. The Navy has always encouraged church services, and it was a day of rest. But being a day of rest, I would think there would be more men aboard that they didn't have to escape the daily routine and things. I would think they would be aboard to relax and scrub their clothes. We didn't have any laundry back there, and I think that would be the day that would be used to relax, scrub their clothes, and just generally lounge around.

Marcello: And as I recall, there was no set time when one had to get out of bed on a Sunday morning, if one didn't have the duty.

Newbauer: No, there was no set time as far as the . . . they didn't say. . . yes, they had reveille, so then they were expected

to climb out of the sack sometime, but it wasn't at the same time it had been during the other six days. I think you could stay up there, and then when they ate breakfast, . . . their hammocks were swung. When they were sleeping there, they were swung right above where we had to put our mess tables. So they had to get them out of the way before breakfast. And back then, there was no such thing. . . nobody ever heard of brunch. You came to breakfast, and if you wanted to eat breakfast, fine; if you didn't, they wasn't going to make you. But there was that, and then there was dinner. So they had a time schedule. They had to get them out of there. But I think it was a little bit more lenient, an hour or so later, than during the ordinary times.

I was a little bit different on that thing. At that time, I was stationed in the print shop. We were below decks, so we slept in cots at that time. So we were down there, and we got up when we wanted to.

Marcello: Now generally speaking, what would be the condition of the crew when they came back aboard the Maryland on a Saturday night after having been ashore with liberty?

Newbauer: Oh, there would be a few of them that would have to be helped aboard ship. Most of them were jovial and good-spirited.

We were a pretty close family. There was no . . . there might be a fight that would break out between us. If we're talking about the inter-ship rivalry and stuff like that, well, there was also inter-division rivalry. There might be a seaman over here figuring a seaman over in this division was a little bit out of line. So for the glory and honor of First Division, he was going to tromp the guy in the Second Division. He might wait until he gets a few beers and gets a little courage. But generally, I think the crew would have been instantaneously ready for a fight.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us up to those days immediately prior to the attack, Mr. Newbauer. What I want you to do at this point is to describe to me in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was beginning with that time when the Maryland docked on the weekend of December 7th. And I believe the Maryland came in on a Friday night, did it not, or a Friday morning.

Newbauer: I don't recall. I know we came in here on this . . . and I know there were several of us. . . I think we came in quicker than that because we had an inspection on that Saturday. We not only had a personnel inspection, but we had a material inspection. And I believe we had been in there quite a few days before that. And for the first time, see,

at four o'clock, we set watertight integrity below the main decks, that is, that the crew lived above the ship. And when we were down there, we closed our watertight doors. And we kept that thing buttoned up so that if we would have had an attack or if anything had happened, then we would. . . and this was established a long time before the imminent danger of war. That has always been the routine. And at four o'clock, they set watertight integrity on the second deck and below where you closed that ship up. If there had been an explosion on that thing, they wouldn't have got it. For instance, if they had had watertight integrity set aboard the Oklahoma, the Oklahoma would not have set down. If they had the same thing on the ship aft of the Oklahoma, the West Virginia, they wouldn't have had to set the West Virginia down on the bottom of that thing. But it was opened up. And for the first time in any of our recollections, all of the battleships were in the harbor.

Marcello: Why was it that the Maryland was still maintaining watertight integrity below the waterline?

Newbauer: The Maryland wasn't.

Marcello: It was not?

Newbauer: No, it was not. In other words, we were prepared there for an inspection, as I say, personnel and material.

Marcello: Which would have meant that all of the watertight doors were open.

Newbauer: Right. The blisters were open and all of that. . . I don't believe there was any watertight integrity set at all aboard there. The blisters were open. And everything was ready for the material inspection for the inspection team, engineering, officers, and everything to go through everything and see that we were set up for battle efficiency. And we were opened up. We were just sitting ducks, is all we were.

Marcello: Now you're probably right on the time when the Maryland came in. Upon looking at my own notes, I think the Oklahoma came in on a Friday.

Newbauer: I believe so.

Marcello: And as I recall, there was a lot of griping coming from the Maryland crew members because they cut off the fresh breezes and the fresh air and so on when it docked alongside you more or less. You couldn't catch the breezes.

Newbauer: I don't know about any particular gripe or any reason to gripe about that because the. . . I don't know that there was any breeze there because our starboard side was against Ford Island, and we had a better breeze coming off of Ford Island than we had coming across that old oily harbor there. So I don't know that that would be. . . of course, I wasn't

on deck, so I didn't know. I was down below decks, and we had no air conditioning then. But we would usually bring a mattress up and throw it on the decks up there. But I never noticed the breezes.

I think the Oklahoma did come in on that Friday, though. The Maryland had been there before. As I say, we had our inspection on that Saturday, and we were getting prepared. I believe we were supposed to have our material inspection on that Sunday, if I'm not mistaken.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about your routine, then, on Saturday, December 6, 1941, from the time you got up until the time you got back aboard ship that night. Let's describe your routine.

Newbauer: Well, on this particular Saturday, I think that whenever reveille was, at 5:30, six o'clock, whenever it was, I got up and I did my personal toilet, and I took my shower and shaved and prepared. I didn't go to breakfast because the Navy at that time always had cold beans for Saturday morning breakfast. I still like baked beans, but I didn't like them at the time. But I went to the personnel inspection, secured from the personnel inspection, went down and changed into my liberty clothes and went ashore.

Marcello: What time would this be?

Newbauer: I think it was around. . . I don't know whether I ate dinner or not. I probably ate dinner because I just couldn't afford to eat it over on the beach. But as I told you earlier my cousin, Raymond Avery, was a mess sergeant over at the Fort Shafter, and he was married to one of those white Portuguese girls over there. I had gone over to his house and met his wife several times. But at this particular Saturday, his wife had her cousin coming over from one of the other islands, and I had gone out with her. He fixed me up with a date with her, and we went out. And I don't think we went anyplace in particular. I think we stayed around the house that night, and I stayed there. And I came back aboard ship whenever the last liberty boat got back there because I stayed with her as long as I could. Then I came back and I was going to go to have a date with her the following morning, which was Sunday morning.

Marcello: Were you in pretty good shape when you came back aboard the ship that night?

Newbauer: Oh, yes, because while I was there, I never did do a whole excessive amount of drinking at that time because of my fighting. He was an old Army wrestling champ, too, and we used to vie for honors and things like that. So I was in pretty good physical shape. The average man was in pretty

good physical shape coming back because they had such a doggone long way to come back from Honolulu. They either came back by the narrow guage railroad, or ten or twelve of them would hire a taxicab and come back there, and the long ride would usually sober them up pretty much. There was no gin mills or no place to get drinks in the immediate vicinity. There was no way of sneaking any alcohol aboard. I would say they were maybe not 100 per cent efficient, but I would say 75 per cent, anyhow.

Marcello: Did you notice anything out of the ordinary on that particular Saturday evening of December 6th when you came back aboard the Maryland?

Newbauer: Any activities, you mean, aboard ship?

Marcello: Yes, anything out of the ordinary. It was, in other words, a routine Saturday liberty.

Newbauer: Just a routine thing. I remember one thing. At that time, we had a second class printer. He was in charge of the . . . the chief was still in charge, but we had a second class printer there that was the next man in charge. John Hamilton McClure was his name, and he came back that night. He was quite a comedian, anyhow. And as we came back aboard ship, he came back at the same time I did. And as we came aboard, he passed by the public address system there coming

in the quarter-deck, and he pressed on that handle. The officer of the deck was out seeing that the liberty party all came aboard in the proper shape. McClure came back and he pressed the public address down, and he says, "Now here this. All hands playing leap frog must complete each jump." (Chuckle) And that went throughout the ship, and I remember this real clear because I got real tickled at that. And we went down there, and we spread our bunks down there, and we went up to see if we could get some coffee someplace. Now there was three of us, which I just think are typical, and we were. . . the other two, John McClure and the other fellow, they had had a few drinks, but they were just jovial. They weren't drunk or anything else; they were just jovial. Myself, coming back, I don't think I'd had a drink that day.

Marcello: Okay, so where did you sleep that night? Did you sleep in your regular quarters, or did you sleep out on deck?

Newbauer: No, I slept in my regular quarters down there in the shop. We had folding cots down there, and the ones that had duty in the shops like that could sleep down there. We just had folding canvas cots, and our bedding was kept in a bedding locker, and we slept there in the shop, and that's where I slept that night.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. And once more, I want you to describe your routine from the time you got up in the morning until all hell broke loose, and then we'll talk about the events that happened thereafter.

Newbauer: Well, the attack happened so close after my getting up that I don't think there's any routine about it. As I said, being down in the shops like that, there was nobody checking up on us to make sure we did get up. It was more or less up to the man in charge of the shop to see that we were up and bedding stowed away and ready to get to quarters in the morning. And there was going to be no quarters on this Sunday morning. It was just the petty officer in charge who would call and say that the print shop was all present and accounted for. And that would be the routine. One of the men in the shop would do that.

And so I got up that particular morning, and we had a coffee pot, "Joe" pot there, we'd called it in the shop there. So I fixed coffee and was sitting in my shorts. And I was sitting on the press, a little hand-fed C. & P. press there. And I was sitting there because, as I say, I had a date with this girl that was my cousin's wife's cousin. And I was going to go over there. And I don't know what

in fact we were supposed to do. They were supposed to go someplace. He had a car, and we were going to go over there around the Pali or someplace around there. But we were going to make more or less a picnic out of the thing. And so I was just sitting there, drinking a cup of coffee, when I heard firing, and then a few minutes after that, we heard this general quarters. We thought it was another drill because we had been constantly at drill--constantly.

Marcello: How was the general quarter sounded? Do you recall a bugler sounding general quarters over the PA system with this being followed by the gong or the klaxon?

Newbauer: Yes, the "clang, clang, clang, and then general quarters, and then the boatswain or the coxswain that was on duty, the boatswain's mate of the watch, said, "General quarters! General quarters! This is no drill! This is no drill! General quarters! All hands man your battle station!" I'll remember that forever.

Marcello: Now at that particular time, had you been able to feel any of the blows that had been dealt to the Oklahoma, which was outboard of the Maryland?

Newbauer: No, we didn't. Sitting there, we heard that. And about the time that we heard this, I guess I must have turned as white as that tablecloth there. I must have turned that

white because I know I dropped my cup of coffee, and I said, "My God!" And I jumped off of the feed-press, which was about as high as this table, waist high, and I jumped down and was reaching for my clothes. And there was a yeoman that was the chaplain's yeoman. He came down there, and his face was as white as I imagine mine was, and he cowered behind those linotype machines. And I said, "What's the matter, Mac?"

Marcello: He was towering where?

Newbauer: Behind the linotype machine. And I don't recall what his name is. I just called him "Mac." I said, "What's the matter, Mac?" And he just sat there and cringed. I said, "What the hell's the matter with you, Mac?" And then they said, "General quarters! General quarters! This is no drill! This is no drill! Japanese are attacking Pearl Harbor!" And I thought, "Oh, my God!"

So I slammed down the. . . I set the watertight integrity, so I dogged down the door of the print shop and started what I'd been in training for--to secure everything for battle. And I finished my dressing, and I got back there, and I said, "Mac, you get the hell out of here! Go to your battle station!" And I couldn't move him, and I was going to hit him and drag him out of there. Then I slapped him

across the mouth a couple of times, and he got up. That kind of got him up.

In the meanwhile, that's when we started hearing the guns cutting loose, and we went ahead and joined our battle stations.

Marcello: Well, now ultimately could you feel the jolts that hit the Oklahoma while you were down at your battle station?

Newbauer: To the best of my recollection. . .

Marcello: Because it took three torpedoes right away, did it not?

Newbauer: Well, yes. I don't know that they ever had an accurate account just exactly how many. It took some torpedo damage to sink any battleship, yes. And I don't recall right now whether I felt any of the damage on there. I could hear the guns going off. And if there was any terrific bone-jarring, I think I would have remembered it, but I don't recall it.

Marcello: Now what thoughts were going through your mind as you were below decks at your battle station, and the guns and so on were in action outside?

Newbauer: I don't know. I really don't know what actual thoughts went through my mind. Looking back on that thing, I would imagine I was scared. Being human, I think I was scared. And I was standing there, and I figured, "Where in the heck did they come from?" It was inconceivable. Although we'd

been operating with the Enterprise and the other carriers there, anything of . . . they were play things. They weren't weapons of war as far as we were concerned. The battleships were the instruments of war. And I figured, "How in the world did they get over here?" We knew it had to be by air. As a matter of fact, they announced that the Japanese planes were attacking Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: Generally speaking, how would you describe the initial reaction of the crew aboard the Maryland? In other words, was it one of panic? Confusion? Professionalism? How would you describe it?

Newbauer: Professionalism is the word. I would say professionalism. The crew, outside of three or four instances that we heard of there. . . and with 2,000 men aboard, there was bound to be some. . . but I think they were every bit of them professionalism soldiers. There was never any outside of the one fellow that came down there, and he snapped out of it when he got slapped across the face a couple of times. But outside of that, I witnessed nothing except professional soldierism going through there. And they manned their battle stations. History proved they done it very effectively.

I was talking earlier about the 1.1 pom-pom. And they cut loose and kept up that stream of fire. After that first wave got in there, we kept those planes away from us. It was the first wave that done the damage to those ships.

Marcello: How long after general quarters had sounded did the pom-poms get into action? You would probably have to estimate this, of course.

Newbauer: I would say less than two minutes. I would say less than two minutes. It was very. . . no regrets as far as. . . if it had taken an unnecessary amount of time, I know I would have had some resentment towards it, and I can recall having no resentment. I thought I was very proud of that. . . I knew I was very proud of the ship and the men that went into there, as I was a member of that fighting team.

Marcello: Now you mention that you were a radio talker of sorts. What sort of traffic did you hear going back at. . .

Newbauer: Confusion. There was nothing in there. . . you'd get a report and then. . . we were down below decks, and all other talkers were below decks, too. The phones I was on had nothing in there. We'd come back and say, "Battle station one, manned and ready. Battle station two. . ." And then we'd report into them, and then they'd report us. There was no traffic as to the damage coming in because the Maryland had received no damage up to this time. The first time there was any damage at all is when a bomb came down through the peak tanks, and later we found out it killed this machinist's mate second class by the name of Berry.

Marcello: Now what deck did that bomb come down through?

Newbauer: It came down through the. . . well, there wasn't any armor plate. It came down through peak tanks, which was on the forward part of the ship, which was storage and fresh water tanks up there.

Marcello: And they're called peak?

Newbauer: Yes. I don't know why they're called peak. Maybe it's a peak overflow of water. I don't know. But I know that we got a report of damage, and we got damage of bombs ricocheting off of . . . we had a couple of them that bounced off of those turrets, which had sixteen inches of steel on them, nickel-plated steel on them. And there was reports of bombs ricocheting off of there. And there was reports of some strafing.

Marcello: Now were you able to hear all of this over the phone system?

Newbauer: Yes, as it was coming through.

Marcello: In other words, you could hear what was actually happening on topside.

Newbauer: No, not from topside, but from battle stations, a particular battle station. Just to give you an idea, they'd say, "This is a battle station three reporting explosion in peak tank," or "battle station one reporting strafing," and things like that. But there was no . . . the men were well enough trained that there was no idle gibberish going back and forth, no questioning as saying, "What happened?"

What happened? What happened?" They were well enough trained that they came through on that. So we didn't know. We didn't have any idea how severe the damage was. We thought we were warding them off. We thought we were going to keep them away from us. We had no idea about the damage that was done until we went topside.

Marcello: What sort of feelings or thoughts did you have since you were below decks and all of this activity is taking place topside? Do you have a feeling of apprehension. . .

Newbauer: Not apprehension.

Marcello: Helplessness or something?

Newbauer: I would say it would probably be . . . not helplessness. I think it would be just to bring to the fore what I had been trained for. I wanted to get up there and get my licks in there. I don't like to have somebody hit me without me hitting back. And that was, I imagine, the thought: that I wanted to get up there and do something.

Marcello: Frustration might be a good way to describe it.

Newbauer: Frustration would be the word, then, yes. I wouldn't say it would be utter frustration; it was just anxiety. Anxiety or frustration, I don't know which would be the word to describe it.

Marcello: Now can you recall when that first bomb hit the Maryland? Now it caught two bombs. I think the first was a 15-inch

armor-piercing shell which was fitted with fins. I think it hit off of the port bow, I believe, a little way below the waterline. Do you recall either of the bombs that hit the Maryland?

Newbauer: No, I didn't.

Marcello: In other words, was the ship jolted or shook in any way?

Newbauer: Not as far as I can recall because I was down in the . . . I was down just about. . . well, I was midships, halfway fore and aft and halfway athwartships. I was at just about the center of the ship.

Marcello: How long were you below decks at your battle station before you came topside and were able to see what actually was going on out there.

Newbauer: They asked for volunteers to go on up and help fight fires on the topside. As I say, mine was a frustration there, so I immediately volunteered, and they decided they didn't need a phone talker there at that particular battle station because the Oklahoma was alongside. There wasn't going to be a whole lot of damage. So I immediately volunteered to go topside.

And I went topside and there was still some planes strafing there. And I got . . . I didn't know it. I got hurt. And there was a great big colored boy, where I fell

on deck there. And this big colored boy came along and picked me up and threw me like I'd been a golf ball, threw me underneath that turret there when they were strafing. I came out and I wasn't hurt bad enough. It got me through this knee here.

Marcello: Were you actually hit by a bullet?

Newbauer: I don't know what hit me. A piece of shrapnel, I guess. I don't know what hit me. I never did find out. I never even turned into sickbay with it. Well, the other men that was in my division, they came up with RBA's, rescue breathing apparatus. And they came up, which is what they had been trained for, and they came up to fight. This John McClure, he came up with his RBA, and I remember I grabbed him by the hand and said, "Good luck, fellow!" He was just as scared as I was. We were all scared.

And I went up there and grabbed onto a nozzle of a firehose. I had gone to firefighting school as well and every other man aboard the ship had gone to firefighting school. We knew how to handle the firehoses. And so I went ahead and directed the stream of water on the fire that was coming off of the Tennessee and the West Virginia, mostly the West Virginia. And we trained our firehose not to put out the fire. We didn't have foam or chemicals at the time. It was unknown at the time. All we had was our

stream of water, and we were using that to keep the fire, the blazing oil fire, away from the ships as much as we could.

Marcello: I see. In other words, you obviously weren't close enough to the West Virginia or the Tennessee to help with their fires, but you were simply trying to keep that oil that was on fire from coming over to the Maryland.

Newbauer: Right. We were actually close enough because we were moored bow-to-stern, and we were real close there. But they were. . . I think it was the Tennessee that was directing all their water toward the West Virginia because it was hurt. The West Virginia was down flat; it set down straight. It didn't turn over; they set it down flat. I think it was the crew off of the Tennessee and the Maryland that was pushing the fire away and doing any damage control that could be done to the West Virginia.

Marcello: I would assume that by the time you got topside, the Oklahoma had already turned over?

Newbauer: The Oklahoma was over, and the Arizona was a blazing hulk. The whole harbor was a blazing mess.

Marcello: You just might talk a little bit about the scene that you saw when you came above deck. Now obviously, given the circumstances, you didn't have a lot of time to observe the "big picture."

Newbauer: I did have time to observe the "big picture" because I can remember that more than anything else.

Marcello: Well, describe it, then.

Newbauer: I came off and I got. . . I never in my life had anything hit me as hard, and it was just as if I had been hit in the solar plexus by one of the pro fighters I fought. It was just like that because it just knocked the wind out of me and I know I cried. And I said, "My God!" And I didn't know whether it was anger or what it was, but I was sitting there and could see these planes coming up. Men up on the bridge was firing at them with machine guns, of course, and small arms or small weapons trying to get them. And just sitting there I saw the Arizona down and the ships burning in the harbor and saw that destruction. It was just sickening. I was sick. I didn't get nauseated; I didn't throw up there.

But I remember grabbing onto the hose and helping because other men were needing help. The planes came over and strafed, but we were able to keep the fires off of there. So my feeling was one of sickness. I guess if there was ever a person who had utter dejection, it was me. Now not only me. I think I was no different than the rest of them. But we was just dejected at the thought of the

mightiest fleet that ever had been assembled in the world laying. . . we didn't know which one of those ships were going to be operating. We didn't give it a thought or anything. There wasn't a battleship there that was able to fight!

Marcello: What did the surface of the water look like?

Newbauer: Blazing! The place was . . . of course, around where we were, my main concern was looking at the Arizona and the Oklahoma alongside of us, completely turned over. That was the main thing that was our concern. We still couldn't be sitting there lolly-gagging and just looking around. We had to fight that fire and still watch out for approaching planes.

Marcello: I assume that burning oil was putting off a lot of black smoke and so forth.

Newbauer: Oh, yes. It was putting off. . .yes, burning oil always puts off. . . it was black. The skies were black with it, yes.

Marcello: Now were you on deck when the second wave came over?

Newbauer: No, I wasn't. I think that's when I came up--after the second wave had hit.

Marcello: How long did you fight the fires on deck?

Newbauer: Well, we relieved each other back and forth there until we fell from . . .just had to stop from sheer. . . after the

planes stopped coming over. Just about. . . they got as many men as they could, and everybody fought and pushed those fires off. But I would say we fought those fires for a couple of hours, anyhow.

And then I walked up through the. . . I don't know why, but there was a ship's laundry inside there. And I went up there, and I grabbed a handful of face towels that were there. I guess they were from the "officer's country." And I grabbed those and I went walking up through the ship there for some reason.

And there were several of the officers sitting there sweaty and bloody but unbowed, I guess, would be the expression. And I just tossed them a towel as I went up through there.

Then anybody else that was sitting in there. . . I saw there was one ensign laid out there. He was dead. I can't remember his name. I'd know it if I heard it. But he was stretched out there dead. I know there was very few casualties that I could see. I was thinking, "My God! I hope this is all there is!" Because I knew a lot of . . . I knew those people. Heck, I'd been on that ship since March of 1940 until the attack, and I knew those people on there. We knew each other aboard there.

Marcello: Now by this time, I would assume that the Maryland had taken on quite a few of the survivors from the Oklahoma, also.

Newbauer: Yes. There was. . . the ones that came by there. We could come over there, and we could hear tapping coming from over there.

Marcello: Could you actually hear it yourself?

Newbauer: You betcha I could hear it myself! We could hear it, and they sent rescue parties over there. They couldn't take cutting torches and cut through there because they'd asphyxiate the men below there. So they had to drill to get airlines and everything through there.

And I could think that one of the most vivid. . . I think the greatest thing that I'll remember of any part of my part at Pearl Harbor--the thing I remember more--is. . . I think it was the day after the attack when they finally cut through there. We had this tapping, and they knew they were still alive. We cut this hole open, and these survivors of the Oklahoma came out.

Marcello: Now were you actually over on the Oklahoma?

Newbauer: No, I was on the Maryland, right there on the deck, and we knew it was coming through there. And there was two things that happened that stand out at Pearl Harbor very great in my mind. When those men came out of there. . . and the

survivors, when they came out, they fell on their deck, praying to God. And the men on the Maryland that were sitting around and the other ships around there gave them a big cheer, and they joined them in their prayer. I think that was a great. . . and the second greatest thing was when we finally . . . well, a long time afterwards, when we got underway there, when the Maryland and the other ships that steamed out with us. We went steaming out past the grounded Nevada when she was up there. We went around there, and the crew members of the Nevada sat there and cheered us. They thought we were going to battle when we went to the Navy yard for new armament. But they thought we were going out to meet the enemy.

Marcello: Now this is just a slight aside, and I'll ask it anyhow. According to my research, the band aboard the Maryland was actually playing during the lull between the two attacks. Do you remember this, or do you have any knowledge of this?

Newbauer: No, I don't remember it. But it wouldn't surprise me a heck of a lot because we had some. . . those band members, they had their own battle stations, too. But it wouldn't surprise me a bit because we had a wonderful band there and a wonderful bandleader. The chief there, he was wonderful . . . and he was quite a morale leader. Usually, they played the long-hair music. And this particular bandmaster

we had, he was very, very good at . . .they would come out with the pops music at that time. So it's not surprising. Although I don't remember it, it wouldn't be a bit surprising to me if he'd brought that band out and tried to add to the morale in any way.

Marcello: What did you do that evening, that is, after the attack was finished?

Newbauer: Well, I don't know. I know I didn't sleep much, and I didn't eat much. But we had a coxswain there that was on the watch, and he had a very shrill voice. I'll remember this, and I think any other survivor you talk to off of the Maryland would tell you the same thing. He'd pipe that thing down and he would say, "Now hear this! Now hear this!" It was so shrill that everytime he'd get through, we'd jump all of the way because we was expecting another attack.

Marcello: In other words, everybody was rather jumpy aboard the Maryland?

Newbauer: Right! You bet your life! They were real jumpy! We had reports that we might have an infiltration by somebody who sneaked aboard and got down there, and we went through there with .45's, which is very dangerous because if my own mother had stepped out in front of me, I would have blasted her. And so we were very nervous, very jumpy. And it took us several, several, several days before we were over it.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors that you heard during that post-attack period?

Newbauer: We heard rumors that the destroyers had got underway and went out, and they met this task force head-on. And the skipper on this one destroyer came steaming in there and slapped a couple of torpedoes. He survived a terrific onslaught of weaponry. He slammed two torpedos into this carrier then raced around to the other side and slapped a couple more in there, and the thing went down with all hands. As far as I can recall, I never did hear any rumors about an invasion on the island because, as I say, I don't think there's anything secret about this anymore. On those mountains. . . with rock and stone and granite and coral surrounding Pearl Harbor. . . up in those mountains, there was many and many and many and many a hundred of long-range guns mounted up there, and they'd have blasted anything that would have come up there.

Marcello: Do you remember the planes off of the Enterprise coming in that night?

Newbauer: Yes, I do. I remember them coming in, and they went general quarters, and they shot those poor devils out of that sky, and they never had a chance. That was also a test to the accuracy of the Maryland gunners.

Marcello: Here again, when you went to general quarters, I would assume you really didn't see the action above decks because your station was below decks.

Newbauer: No, my station was below decks. I didn't see anything. I just know we went down there. It was a long time before we found they were Enterprise planes.

Marcello: Now during the attack itself, or in the immediate aftermath of the attack, do you remember any humorous things taking place? Even as serious as this whole situation was, do you remember any humorous things that took place?

Newbauer: No. . . let me think. There's one. . . no, I can't recall anything. A few years ago, I was interviewed by a reporter, and he asked me something about some part of the humor there, and I recalled one story, and I don't recall it now. There was one thing that was pretty humorous, and I believe . . . well, I think it was that night, after the attack. There was supposed to have been. . . now this is hearsay. There was supposed to have been a Marine captain aboard that ship. Have you interviewed any Maryland survivors before?

Marcello: I have interviewed several Maryland survivors before.

Newbauer: You might have heard this story, then, before about the Marine captain who was aboard ship and who was afraid to go into his quarters. He slept up on the deck with the Marines, and everytime the Marines would go by there, they'd kick

him in the face or kick him in some posterior appendages or some part of his body. Have you heard that before?

Marcello: No, I sure haven't.

Newbauer: Well, that was one of the stories we heard, that he was plain yellow. The Marines around there hated him because they called him "yellow son-of-a-bitch" and everything like that. But as far as any humor is concerned, I don't recall any particularly humorous. . . if you're talking about the. . . of course, I was limited to my perimeter there in my battle station and that, but I don't recall anything humorous.

Marcello: What did you talk about that evening? I'm referring now to . . .

Newbauer: But there was not a whole lot of talking between us shipmates because of the fact that we were on patrol. We had one little kid from Jonesboro, Georgia. I know there's a Jonesboro, Arkansas, but I think he was from Jonesboro, Georgia. His name was Ware. I know he had hurt himself. He had scraped his leg, and he had got a pretty bad burn on his leg there, and he had to go to sickbay for attention when they could get a corpsman to look at him. And we were just kidding him and telling him, "Well, you've earned a Purple Heart." And son-of-a-gun, if he didn't (chuckle)!

But that's about the only thing. We were sitting around there talking about. . . we weren't living in fear. We didn't know, but we thought that the worst of it was through. We had faith in our leaders. We didn't know at the time that Hickam and everything else had been destroyed. We thought we had protection there on that island.

Marcello: Did you have much of an appetite that day?

Newbauer: No, I didn't. I don't think I had an appetite for three or four days.

Marcello: When did the Maryland finally get out of Pearl?

Newbauer: I don't remember just when it was. It was several days after the attack because we were blocked in, and they had to send dredging equipment in to get us out of there--work us out of there. When we got underway, I think it was the Pennsylvania that went with us, and I think it was the Tennessee, also, that went with us. And the three of us got out. That's when we passed the Nevada that was beached there, and they gave us a mighty cheer because they thought we were going out to avenge the wrongful attack on Pearl Harbor. And we were going out and they thought we were the white knight in shining armor that was going out and avenge it after the attack.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Newbauer, I can't think of any other questions relative to the attack at Pearl Harbor. Is there anything

that you would like to get into the record that we have neglected to talk about at this point?

Newbauer: There's one thing here that comes back, and it's always going to be on my conscience. I'm not a vindictive person. I'm not a person that's going to sit and put blame or anything else. But as long as I live, I will think that we were "sold down the river" by the then President of the United States and his cohorts. I'll never believe otherwise. My brother is the strictest man in the world for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He thinks he brought this thing up because the worse thing that ever happened to him was the depression. The worse thing that ever happened to me was seeing my friends die. I do believe that we were "sold down the river," and nothing will ever make me believe otherwise. This is the libelous thing to say, but that's what I believe.

Marcello: Well, you can't libel a dead person, so this is probably a good place to end this interview.

Newbauer: That's the matter of a personal opinion.

Marcello: Well, I want to thank you very much for taking time to talk to me. You've said some very interesting and, I think, very important things. Historians are going to find this most valuable when they write about Pearl Harbor.

Newbauer: Thank you.