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Interview with  
JAMES W. GOODWIN, JR.  
October 23, 1982

Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

James W. Goodwin

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas

Date: October 23, 1982

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing James W. Goodwin for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 23, 1982, in Arlington, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Goodwin in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Goodwin, 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. Goodwin: I was born in Fort Lawn, South Carolina, on March 5, 1917.

Dr. Marcello: Tell me a little bit about your educational background.

Mr. Goodwin: As far as entering the Army, I graduated from high school, and that was the extent of my formal education at that time. I enlisted in the Army for West Point Preparatory School in Atlanta, Georgia,

Dr. Marcello: When did this take place?

Goodwin: In 1936, I enlisted directly for the prep school. In those days the Army had a program that would let you do that. You enlisted for one year. Then you had to take the competitive examination to see if you could make the school or not. I was fortunate in that I did. My father was in the service, and I had wanted the Army as a career for a long time.

I finished the prep school in 1937 and did not pass the test for West Point. I was still young enough, and I applied again. The second year I passed the examination to West Point, but I never did get an appointment, however. The regular Army ran a program in those days where regular Army enlisted men could compete. If you ended up in the top eight or nine in the school, they allowed you to take the examinations. But after that, you still had to get an appointment. In those days, I think congressmen had two appointments each. In May of 1938, I was notified that I was qualified to go to the Point. I went to Washington and talked to every congressman I could for about thirty days but never got the appointment.

At that point, I decided to stay in the Army, anyway, and try through various programs to receive the reserve commission and go on from there, which is eventually what happened.

Marcello: Where did you take your basic training and so on? Or did you not have it since you went to this preparatory school?

Goodwin: We were given about two months of basic training, and it was probably some of the most formal basic training that existed in

the Army in those days--to my knowledge, anyway. We enlisted on July 1, and I think school started in September. From July 1 until September, we were exposed to a real tough infantry basic training.

Marcello: Where did this take place?

Goodwin: Fort McPherson, Georgia.

Marcello: Describe the process by which you eventually got to the Hawaiian Islands,

Goodwin: After the second year of schooling in Atlanta, West Point Preparatory School, I was returned to my organization at Fort Bragg, North Carolina--the artillery. I stayed in the artillery until the later part of 1939. Promotions just were hard to get in those days.

The finance officer at the post, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, called me one day and asked me to come over to his office. He wanted to talk to me. He had looked over the records of the people at the post, and I guess the education that I had at the time was a little more than most of the fellows. He talked to me about it, and I had never considered Finance, but he explained to me that you could go to school and take the examination and be promoted on that basis.

In about a week, I accepted his invitation and went over and transferred to Finance. In those days, they didn't just transfer you in. They looked you over pretty good for two or three months. They don't do this today. It was a very small organization in those days--five hundred people probably,

Army-wide.

Marcello: In the whole Finance Corps, there were about five hundred people.

Goodwin: Right. That's the number I recall. To actually transfer into the Finance Corps was somewhat of an honor. You got out of KP and guard duty. You were given a desk and all these happy things that made you feel pretty good. So I transferred. Within a few weeks, I was sent to school at Fort Holabird.

Marcello: Fort Holabird?

Goodwin: Fort Holabird, Maryland--in Baltimore. That was the center of Finance training in those days. That school lasted about six months, and I was returned to Fort Bragg after graduation.

Two of us, a friend of mine and I, who had enlisted in the Army at the same time and went to the prep school together, were selected for this training. We both returned to Bragg and were called into the office. The finance officer told us that one of us had to go to Hawaii and one to Florida. He had gotten us into this, trained us a little bit, sent us to school, and he never got any value out of that at all. Anyway, we matched...there were two coins. I lost. The fellow that won chose Florida, so that sent me to Hawaii.

Marcello: What had been your own preference?

Goodwin: At that time, I was kind of happy with the idea of going to Hawaii. I also was involved with a young lady, whom I married. It didn't seem like Hawaii would be the right place for me to

choose if I had the choice, but I went to Hawaii, anyway.

Marcello: You were not, however, married at that time. Is that correct?

Goodwin: I was married at that time.

Marcello: Was that unusual for enlisted personnel to be married?

Goodwin: It was against the rules and regulations if you didn't have a certain rank.

Marcello: I didn't know that. Explain that.

Goodwin: Well, in those days, you were supposed to reach the grade of staff sergeant, which was a grade that entitled you to quarters. Army regulations stated that unless you were a staff sergeant, you could not get married.

But, of course, I got married, anyway. I didn't put it on my record at the time. Another reason,,my wife came over to Hawaii in December of that year. I had been promoted to staff sergeant then, so we were just remarried again in Hawaii. That's the one that's on my official record today.

Marcello: When you were back in the States, that is, before you left to go to Hawaii then, you were basically living in separate locations. You were living on base, perhaps, and she was near by.

Goodwin: Well, she was the niece of an Army sergeant right on the base. She lived on the base, too. I guess my barracks were about a block from their house.

Marcello: Up until this time, that is, until you left to go to Hawaii, how were you viewing your Army career at this point? In other

words, were you satisfied? Were you frustrated? I mean, after all, you had not gotten to go to West Point, which had been your number one objective. How were things looking for you at this point?

Goodwin: I was definitely frustrated because I had worked awfully hard. I went through high school like most kids did in those days. If I had a "C," I was awfully happy with it. You remember, it was the end of the Depression, and I was in high school from 1931 to 1934.

But I never really gave up hope for an Army career because there were all types of programs to become commissioned in those days. One was called the Ten Series--correspondence course--and then you took exams, and you could get a second lieutenant's commission in those days that way. Then you would be possibly ordered to active duty for a couple of weeks or a year under the Thompson Act, or you could be integrated in the regular Army. At that time, this wasn't a very big program because, through the Thompson Act, some of them were integrated into the regular Army.

But I knew, as well as I know anything, that there was going to be a war. We have never stayed out of one yet; we hadn't at that time. So I was doing everything I could to put myself in position to where I could get a commission. I knew whichever route that it took--by that, I mean, branch of service--it didn't really make a lot of difference because you could always transfer.



The Finance Corps seemed to me to offer the best route to a commission. Later on, in Hawaii, I applied for the Ten Series--as soon as I got over there, and the application was disapproved on the basis of education. That happened to a lot of people in those days because there were a lot of people in the Army who really wanted an Army career. It was disapproved by a fellow that, on hindsight, I feel the same way about it not as I did then. He was a little behind the times because it was obvious that the Army had begun to expand. As you know, it was a tough time producing enough commissioned officers to run the show.

Marcello: You mentioned the Ten Series. What was the Ten Series?

Goodwin: It was the title given to a series of courses--basic courses--that you could take in preparation to become a commissioned officer. I think in those days it usually took about two or three years. You had so much time to finish each series of instruction material.

Marcello: You were at Hickam Field, which was a bomber base for the Army Air Corps, but you were still essentially in the Finance Corps. You were not a part of the Air Corps as such, is that correct?

Goodwin: I was not in the Air Corps. I was Army all the way. In those days, there was no Air Force. There was an Air Corps, which was an arm of the service like Artillery, Infantry, Engineers. The Finance Department was a separate branch completely. We didn't think in terms of the Air Force. We thought in terms of the Air Corps being an arm like Artillery and Infantry. Most of the

service functions in the Army in those days were all performed by Army units--all the logistics side and the administrative side-- and that question didn't really come up. Later on, in 1947, when the Air Force became an independent branch of the service, then that made a difference.

Marcello: Describe the nature of the job that you had here at Hickam as a member of the Finance Corps.

Goodwin: I was originally ordered to Hickam as an auditor for the Hawaiian Air Depot. In that job, I was on my own; I didn't even have a boss on the base. It was a pretty dull job. I can remember plowing through reams and reams of requisitions and checking inventories, and it didn't appeal to me at all.

I immediately tried to get a transfer to the Finance Office. That actually happened on the 27th of November, 1941. So I was transferred to the Finance Office at Hickam just two weeks before the Japs hit the place.

Marcello: Approximately how many men were working in the Finance Office at that time?

Goodwin: I believe that there were around twenty-five American soldiers there. We had a lot of civilian employees.

Marcello: Was its principal function that of preparing the payroll and things of that nature?

Goodwin: Almost entirely. We had a little commercial accounts section, but most of the commercial accounts in Hawaii were paid in the office downtown--Finance Office, U.S. Army, in Honolulu, which

is where I had been assigned prior to going out to Hickam Field.

Marcello: When did payday occur at Hickam during that period prior to the war? Do you recall?

Goodwin: Payday at Hickam was usually the last day of the month, unless it came on Sunday. Then they would pay the following Monday.

Marcello: Which would have meant that probably during that weekend of December 7, personnel may have still had a little bit of money left yet.

Goodwin: That's a moot question. Usually, the troops would be broke by the end of the first week. Of course, at that time, I had been promoted to the grade of tech sergeant, and I was married, my wife having come over in December of 1940. We were married on New Year's Eve, 1940. So my wife was there, and she was working. We were rich compared to most of the troops at Hickam Field. I was a staff sergeant, entitled to quarters, and she was working. We thought we had a lot of money.

Marcello: Describe what your quarters were like there at Hickam.

Goodwin: Gorgeous! Brand new. We were the first people to have occupied those quarters. It was a duplex--two bedrooms, bath in between, living room, dining room, kitchen, back porch, and a nice lawn which we developed. Of course, when we moved in, they had just leveled it, and that was all. They were very nice quarters.

Marcello: You mentioned that your wife was working. Where was she working?

Goodwin: She was working for the quartermaster, right on the flight line.

Marcello: Where were your quarters located with relation to the Finance Office?

Goodwin: Within easy walking distance--three blocks. We lived right on... I guess you know that Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field were continuous reservations with just a fence between the two. We lived right on the fence next to the Marine Barracks. The quarters ran right along the fence.

Marcello: So in general, then, this was a pretty idyllic life living there in the Hawaiian Islands at that time,

Goodwin: We enjoyed it tremendously.

Marcello: What kind of a social life would a couple such as you and your wife have there in the islands prior to the coming of war? Describe what the social life was like.

Goodwin: The best. We had an apartment down on Waikiki Beach for a year or so.

Marcello: Was this before your quarters on base were ready?

Goodwin: This was in 1940, before I was transferred to Hickam. I was assigned to the U.S. Army Office in Honolulu then--right in downtown Honolulu. We had a beautiful little studio. We met a lot of people there--a fellow who was the Singer sewing machine agent for the area, a Life photographer, several other couples who lived in this complex. They were basically studios--real nice. They were right on the Alewa Canal and right next to a golf course.

I liked golf, but my wife didn't. She didn't dislike it, but she wasn't the ardent golfer that I am. I played golf since I was seven years old. We met other people in the commercial world.

We would frequently go across the island to Mid-Pacific and play golf, go for the weekend or whatever.

My wife was working for Sears at that time, so, again, we were drawing extra money for rations and quarters because we hadn't been provided any. We were, again, economically, very well off. We never had any...I don't remember any financial problems like that. We didn't have a car. We didn't really need one, and they were too expensive, anyway, over there.

Marcello: I'm sure there was a pretty good system of public transportation, was there not?

Goodwin: Oh, certainly. No problem at all. We had a lot of friends who had cars. When we would spend the weekend on the other side of the island, the windward side, we always had transportation over there without any problem.

We would go out to dinner a couple or three nights a week or whatever. We had a maid. It wasn't a bad life at all. We both liked to swim, and we were only two blocks from swimming.

Marcello: How would you compare or contrast the cost of living there in Honolulu at that time with what it would have been stateside?

Goodwin: I would have to compare it with Fayetteville, North Carolina, and it was probably a little higher. I don't have too many memories in that respect. I remember that to go out and have dinner, it would cost a little more than it would in Fayetteville, but then we would go to better places than we had in Fayetteville at that time.

Marcello: We were talking about the social life awhile ago, and I think this is something that I need to bring up and get your views for the record. There is a popular impression that there was a great deal of carousing and drinking and so on among the service personnel in the Hawaiian Islands, especially on a weekend. What would be your response to an observation of that nature--just on the basis of your experience.

Goodwin: I would have to agree with it 100 percent. The first six months I was in the islands, I lived by myself. My wife joined me, as I told you, in December. I had a room in the YMCA. That is right next to Hotel Street, which was the street made famous by From Here to Eternity. And that existed; there's no question about it.

Marcello: The YMCA is very close to the Black Cat Cafe and all those places.

Goodwin: That's exactly right--right across the street (chuckle). I did not personally get involved in the nightlife. As I told you, I had just been married, and I had a little job in the YMCA. They gave me a room for a while. I would issue games and things for the troops when they came in. But the Black Cat was the congregating place for the sailors to catch transportation back to Pearl Harbor. There was always.., it didn't have to be the weekend. It was almost any day of the week that it was a rather boistrous thing. I don't believe that there has been a more factual movie ever made than From Here to Eternity. I couldn't criticize that movie.

It's just like I remembered it, really.

Marcello: And would you also say that this was true for the book itself?

Goodwin: I read the book twice, and I could not task the book. In my opinion, it was the way Hawaii was in those days.

Marcello: As you look back upon life in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army, how would you describe the overall morale of the people in the service at that time?

Goodwin: As I mentioned before, the Finance Department in those days was a rather--I'll say--elite group. We were hand-selected. Our records were kept in Washington. We were assigned on a name basis and not like unassigned troops who go into a pool. When I was ordered to Hawaii, I knew exactly who I was going to replace by name. Our promotions were made by the Chief of Finance. So for me to answer that question, it would be probably not...I'm probably not the best person to answer that question.

For instance, when I first went to Hawaii, we didn't live on the Army base. We were given additional money to live downtown. So I didn't really...I had a job like a civilian. I would go to work at the office, and I would go home. As I told you, I lived in the YMCA for a while, and then after Mildred came over, we had a nice apartment on Waikiki Beach.

Marcello: Well, let me be just a little bit more specific then.

Goodwin: All right.

Marcello: How would you describe the morale of the people within the Finance Office itself?

Goodwin: It was great--absolutely great--because, if I can recall correctly, the AGCT level in the office was about 136, and 110 is required for OCS. So it wasn't a group that was indicative of the rest of the Army.

Marcello: This brings us more or less up to that weekend of December 7, 1941. I think we need to go into this in a certain amount of detail. When you and your buddies were socializing, I'm sure that from time to time you couldn't help but "talk shop." Did the subject of a Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor ever come up in your conversations that you can recall?

Goodwin: I recall one conversation. I think it was Friday night--the 5th. We were at the club--the First Three Grade Club at Hickam. They distinguished in those days between noncommissioned officers and other troops. If you were a staff sergeant, tech, or master, you could belong to the First Three Grade Club.

Marcello: The First Three Grade Club?

Goodwin: Right, the First Three Grade Club. That's the way they referred to it in those days. I was a tech sergeant at the time, so I was a member of the First Three Grade Club, and we went to the club.

I believe it was the 5th of December. It wasn't the 6th because I know where I was on the 6th. That night we went to a dance. We had dinner and danced at the club that night. There were a couple of fellows who were due to rotate on Monday morning, the 8th. I made the...and it was a kind of off-hand



comment that, "You guys will never get out of here on Monday."  
They remembered that the following Monday morning (chuckle),  
"What did you know?"

I didn't know anything. The news reports were bad in Europe. The Japs had the capability...we didn't think it was that way, really. We thought we were going to get involved in the war, but we thought it would come from Europe, I really didn't think that Pearl Harbor would be hit at that time. I thought the progression of the war in the Pacific would be through the islands.

But, anyway, I did make that statement, so we must have been conscious of it. The guy's name...one of them was Bunch, and I think the other was Wingrove,

Marcello: I've interviewed Wingrove, and I remember that same story.

Goodwin: Really?

Marcello: Yes.

Goodwin: I didn't know that "Windy" remember it.

Marcello: In fact, Jim Gross set me up with an interview with Wingrove several years ago when the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association met in Las Vegas. He was living out there at the time; that is, Wingrove was living out there.

Goodwin: Well, I remember I made the statement to two of them, and I knew Bunch was one, and I thought that Wingrove was the other one. That confirms it. They believe to this day that I knew something, but, of course, I didn't.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs at that time?

Goodwin: Well, we read the papers. I did not have access to any top secret information or any intelligence there. Our job was to pay the troops, and we were doing that.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that pre-Pearl Harbor period, what kind of an individual did you usually conjure up in your own mind. You must have seen all kinds of them on the islands.

Goodwin: I can answer that question definitively. When I was first ordered to Hawaii, I was the Chief of Commercial Accounts in the F.O., U.S.A., office. In that job, I met and talked to all the businessmen in Honolulu who did business with the Army because we were the section responsible for paying those commercial bills. They were substantial. A lot of them within excess of a million dollars apiece. So that's how I met the civilian community in Honolulu.

We did business with a lot of Japanese, Chinese, and whatever. My impression of the Japanese and the Chinese--all Orientals--changed dramatically in a year. When you do business with those people, you realize that they're not just little, small foreigners--they're astute business people. I have the greatest respect for the Chinese and the Japanese. I spent some time in Japan as well as Korea. And the Koreans, too. I don't have any illusions about them being stupid. When I first

went to Hawaii, I probably had the opinion that they were imitators, as most Americans did in those days, but working with them a year, you soon lose that opinion.

Marcello: Let's keep going into that weekend of December 7. You said that you remember quite vividly what you were doing on that Saturday, December 6, 1941. Once more, I'll let you pick up the story and have you describe your routine during that day of the 6th.

Goodwin: Well, on that Saturday, I don't think I had to go to the office that day at all. Jim Gross was a frequent weekend visitor in our home--guest. We both share a fondness for music. We still do. Jim was with us that weekend. We went downtown to Honolulu. My wife was doing some shopping, and we'd usually end up in the record store, which we did that day, too. I had wanted to play the piano all my life. I went down to the Thayer Music Company and made arrangements to buy a piano, and with it I was going to get a certain number of lessons. They were to deliver the piano the next week. Well, on Monday, I called and told them not to deliver the piano (chuckle). We finished our shopping--I think Mildred was making bedspreads or cushion covers or something--and we came back, and Jim Gross and I listened to music.,,I know it must have been three o'clock on the morning, maybe four o'clock. I had a new Packard-Bell record player. It had a public address system, and it could cut records. It was a party instrument. It was a good one at that time.

Marcello: And it's brand name was Packard-Bell?

Goodwin: Packard-Bell, It was a big expenditure in those days for me. I don't remember what I paid for it, probably around \$200, but that was a lot of money. But we certainly enjoyed it, Mildred finally went to bed, and I think Jim and I followed very shortly. I'm sure I went right to sleep.

Marcello: Let me break in a moment here. As conditions between the two countries got worse, . . . I should have asked this question earlier . . . could you detect any change in your routine there in the Finance Office? Or was it business as usual right up until December 7,

Goodwin: No, we had more activity. Transient plane crews were coming through. We were paying more travel vouchers. I can remember this because I had problems with the guy in travel. The planes would come through, and we would have to get these fellows paid their per diem because they had been living on their paycheck until they got there. There was a lot more club activity. These crews would all get their money and go straight to the club and have crap games and this sort of thing. I do remember that type of activity.

There was a maneuver that was scheduled to start on December 6. Some of the anti-aircraft units had moved on the post when we got back from downtown. I saw a couple of the gun emplacements near our quarters. We were building up strength. We had more people in the Finance activity.

Marcello: Would you be involved in any of the base of alerts or anything of that nature?

Goodwin: No, No, as I told you, we were exempt from most of that, We were there as highly trained specialists in the pay of the Army. That's what we did.

Marcello: Okay, let's get back to that Saturday evening...or actually Sunday morning, by this time, of December 7, 1941. You mentioned that you and Gross stayed up to three or four o'clock in the morning listening to records, and then you retired. Pick up the story at that point.

Goodwin: Okay, The next thing I knew, my wife was at the window. She had gotten out of bed and went over to the window and was looking at the air activity. There was some noise. Small bombs were being dropped, and there were some machine gun sounds, and I attributed it to the maneuvers. I said, "Don't wake me up! There's nothing out there but the maneuvers going on. They'll drop sacks of flour and see if they can hit the flagpole." I think that was one of my remarks,

Suddenly she said, "There's a plane flying over the house with a big red circle on it!" Well, that got my attention. I did something that morning I could not do later. I was out of bed just like this (gesture), a hollywood-type bed, and I was flat on my back and I took my arms and threw myself over the end of the bed, rushed to the window, and looked out; and another plane with a big red circle on it was right outside the window. They were close enough to see the expression on the pilots' faces.

Marcello: Describe what you saw.

Goodwin: Well, I saw this plane banking over the house. The insignia was very definitely Japanese. They were using,,.I'll not say they were using our house, but they flew right over our house and hit the Arizona. We could see that from our back porch. They were flying right over our house and going right on into the harbor. That's when I woke up Gross about that time, I'm sure,

Marcello: Where was Gross sleeping?

Goodwin: Well, Gross was,,.the bathroom was between the two bedrooms in our quarters. He was in the bedroom on the other side. At that time, there was no question in my mind that it wasn't part of the maneuvers.

Marcello: What kind of a view did you have of a flight line at Hickam and Pearl Harbor itself?

Goodwin: I could not see the flight line from our quarters, but I could see part of the harbor. I could see part of the harbor right from my back porch.

Marcello: What were you seeing over there in that short instance when you looked over there?

Goodwin: Well, I looked over there and saw a bunch of smoke--heavy smoke. I knew it was here. There was no question in my mind about it at that time. I told Gross we would have to get up and go check in and see what they wanted us to do.

Marcello: Unlike the Navy, you obviously have no battle station. You simply are going back to where you work.

Goodwin: And there was no S,O,P (Standard Operating Procedure), There was no S,O,P, for the evacuation of dependents from Hickam Field. I took it on myself to start evacuating dependents. I had a neighbor who had a car, and I took him down to the flight line. He was an armorer, I got in his car and took him down there, and I told him that I would come back and pick his wife up and take her off the post with mine. That was the beginning of this thing--the evacuation effort from my viewpoint. At that time, I hadn't even checked in with the boss.

Marcello: So your first activity, then, is to take that armorer down to the flight line, come back...

Goodwin: He got out of the car--and this was right on the flight line--and he had no more gotten out of the car and joined a group of about ten people about fifty feet away from that car, and a bomb landed right in the group and killed about half of them.

Marcello: Including him?

Goodwin: You know, I don't know whether he got hit, whether he was killed or died later--I don't know. I really never did know. But the car that I was driving was hit about fifty times, and not one of them touched me.

Marcello: Describe the drive from your quarters down to the flight line.

Goodwin: There was nothing particularly unusual. The planes were flying around; I mean, they were machine-gunning, bombing--whatever--any target of opportunity. He knew his job. He had to go to try to arm airplanes if there were any left. So I took him down

there. We saw the activity. I got him there, let him out, and I started to turn the car around. It was a big area. It was no problem. But that was when I saw the bomb drop right in this group of people. I can't even remember his name. It was a third-door neighbor.

Marcello: You mentioned that the car was hit about fifty times. This was from shrapnel?

Goodwin: Shrapnel. It didn't break a piece of glass in the car, and not a one of them touched me, and it didn't stop the car. It continued to run. I used that car to take his wife and my wife and someone else we picked up off the post. It was a one-seat car.

Marcello: So in other words, when the bomb hit, you simply...you still continued to go back to the barracks.

Goodwin: I went right back to my quarters. I had quarters.

Marcello: I'm sorry. When the bomb hit, you went back to your quarters where you lived, or did you go to...

Goodwin: I went right back to my quarters where I lived.

Marcello: Okay.

Goodwin: I got my wife and this sergeant's wife--the armorer who had been hit--and I didn't tell her that at the time. We picked up some other gal, and I immediately took them off the post. I had a friend, Howard Martin, who was a Singer sewing machine agent in Hawaii, who had moved into the hills back of Honolulu. I figured that would be the best place to take them. So I



took them up there and told him, "This will probably be the first of a lot of carloads of people, so what you need to do is find places for them to live up here." He said, "Don't worry about it,"

Marcello: What kind of a trip did you have in going from your quarters up into the hills?

Goodwin: It was hectic. Everybody was driving seventy miles an hour between Hickam Field and Honolulu--as I was, as fast as it would go. It took about twenty or twenty-five minutes to get there.

Marcello: How long would it normally have taken?

Goodwin: Maybe fifteen or twenty. But there was a lot of activity. I got back to the post, and that's when I went over to the Finance barracks.

Marcello: About how much time had elapsed now from the time you saw the initial bombing until you got over to the Finance Office?

Goodwin: I guess an hour...

Marcello: In the meantime...

Goodwin: ...maybe a little more than an hour.

Marcello: In the meantime, had Gross gone from your quarters directly over to the Finance Office?

Goodwin: He went to the barracks. I met him somewhere...now this part of my recollection here is a little bit hazy on this point.

Marcello: I would assume that by the time you get over there, the bombing activity and so on is over. Is that correct?

Goodwin: Oh, no. The bombing activity continued until twelve o'clock.

How many waves, I don't know. But I know when I came back... let me... I went up to the Finance barracks and saw that it had been shot up. It had been hit with any number of machine gun bullets. At that time, I didn't know whether anybody had been hurt in the office or not because the barracks were empty. Somehow, Gross and I got back together, and we were going to the headquarters from the barracks, and in between the barracks was the Base Exchange--PX in those days. We call it Base Exchange now. But that's where Gross got hit, and Wingrove--right in this Post Exchange area. Again, I was missed, I was within five feet of Gross. But these machine gun bullets started ricocheting around in this place, and I just didn't get hit.

Marcello: How badly were they hit?

Goodwin: Gross had... it was a flesh wound in his shoulder. His arm wasn't broken. I think Wingrove was hit in the leg.

We got over to the headquarters, and we had a chief clerk named Valentine Aloysious Rutherford. He had a big car. I told him that the thing that I thought would be best for me to do was to try to get some of these dependents off the post because there was obviously no plan to get them off. Some of them were in various stages of complete depression.

Marcello: What was happening over at the Finance Office?

Goodwin: Well, at the Finance Office... this was where I was. That's where I was talking to the chief clerk and Charlie Miles.

Marcello: But, again, what kind of activity is taking place there?

Goodwin: Well, the activity was,,we were administrative people. We didn't have any combat assignments,

Marcello: They are waiting for further orders, I assume.

Goodwin: I got Rutherford's permission to use his car, which is a big four-door Buick. I still had this car of the sergeant's. So I said, "Gross, you drive the little car, and I'm going to take the big car and get everybody I can into it."

Marcello: So Gross is not hurt to the point where he is incapacitated?

Goodwin: No.

Marcello: He is still able to function?

Goodwin: At this point, he was able to function. And we took a group,, another group,,all the people we could get,,all of the dependents,,in these two cars and took them up to the hills again--to Howard Martin's place.

Marcello: Did you still have all the delays and so on getting up there?

Goodwin: Well, yes, yes. I don't remember any great delay, but there was a lot more traffic than usual.

Marcello: Were you ever stopped by any of the Military Police or anything of that nature?

Goodwin: No, no, not once. We got this second load up there. Gross's shoulder was beginning to hurt, I'm sure. We hadn't had it treated or anything, as I recall. I don't believe we had had it treated at that point. Gross was,,at first he didn't want to go back on the post, but I told him we didn't have any choice.

So I think we left one of the cars--the small car--up at

Howard's at that time. We went back on the post, and we had no more gotten back this time,,I don't remember the time--ten-thirty or eleven o'clock. We got back, As we went through the gate, another wave was coming in--whatever time that was.

Marcello: You mention you go through the gate. Again, I assume...

Goodwin: The main gate,

Marcello: ...nobody's stopping you. They are waving everybody in.

Goodwin: I went through the gate at fifty miles an hour. I didn't see any more dependents that needed help. I don't know how the rest of them got off, but there was, again, no plan whatsoever to evacuate the dependents.

Then that's when we reported back to the office. We got Gross to the hospital and had his arm patched up.

Marcello: You mentioned that when you came back on the base this time, the bombing was still going on.

Goodwin: Well, on another wave or whatever, But it was activity.

Marcello: What effect did this have upon you and Gross getting from the gate to wherever you were going?

Goodwin: It didn't stop us. There was no particular problem with traffic because the Japs machine-gunned everything that was moving. That was our impression..,my impression, anyway.

Marcello: But most of the activity was till taking place over around the flight line and that area?

Goodwin: Basically the flight line, which was on our left. The roads from the gate--the Military Police gate--to the headquarters was

a fairly wide road--good road. The flight line was on the left, and Pearl Harbor was on the right,

Of course, you are not really looking; I mean, I was trying to get back to the headquarters. I know that anything moving would probably not be the best situation. So we got back to the headquarters, and then is when we were together as a unit for the first time. Charlie Miles was, of course, my boss.

Marcello: Have any orders been issued yet? We're talking about a span of about two hours at least, are we not, two-and-a-half hours, from the time the attack started?

Goodwin: We had a little kid who was trained in antiaircraft. They gave us one gun, and then we dug an emplacement out in front of the headquarters and set that up. Then we got to firing at a few of them that morning. It was about that time--somewhere around noon--that they had picked up one of the planes that the Japs were using that morning--dive-bomber--on a big flatbed and brought it up in front of the headquarters. I remember that. They had it there about the time we got his antiaircraft weapon in place. It was a very small caliber--37-millimeter. I think. I'm not sure. But we did get that in operation.

Marcello: Did you actually participate in some of the firing?

Goodwin: No. The kid,,.I can't think of his name,,.he was a Finance Corps man. He was the expert on that. I had been in a 75-millimeter outfit, an artillery unit, and I wasn't familiar with

that piece of equipment. But we had one kid that was, and it was some help.

The next thing that I had to do was go over, and we started putting ammunition in belts. There was an ammunition dump across the airfield from our headquarters. I remember we took a truckful of the guys over there to load the ammunition in the belts.

I went back to the headquarters, and then there was a problem about salvaging food. I ended up with four or five people to salvage what food we could from the mess hall. I remember walking into an icebox there, and it had received a direct hit. There was meat splattered over the wall and everything else. I went back to the headquarters.

Marcello: In one of those mess halls--I'm not sure if it was at Schofield or at Hickam Field--there were some men trapped in one of those freezers and were killed in there. I think it was basically from concussion. I don't think it took a direct hit or something.

Goodwin: Oh, yes. It was the consolidated mess.

Marcello: Is this where that incident took place?

Goodwin: Yes, right at Hickam Field. And they hit and hit the mess hall that morning. It must have happened in one of the first waves. This was a couple hours or so later than that when I saw it for the first time. A lot of troops were killed right in that consolidated mess at Hickam Field that morning.

Marcello: What time would you say the bombing finally ceased?

Goodwin: To the best that I can remember, I seem to think it was about twelve o'clock or twelve-thirty. I don't know whether the facts will bear that out, but to me it was around then. You kind of lose the feeling for time.

Marcello: Could you detect any changes in the tactics being used by the Japanese? In other words, during that first wave, or when the attack initially started, you mentioned that the planes were flying extremely low, and they were doing a lot of strafing and bombing from that altitude. Later on, could you detect that the planes were coming in at a higher level perhaps?

Goodwin: I didn't really notice that. I first went outside my quarters after I saw the plane through the window. There was a series of planes that flew right over my house and right down to the harbor. A couple of those I could actually...they were close enough to the ground at that point that I could see the pilot.

Marcello: What did the pilots look like? Could you describe them? Other than the fact that they were Orientals, of course (chuckle).

Goodwin: I don't have any particular...

Marcello: How were they dressed?

Goodwin: They had helmets on. But I saw the face of a couple of those people that morning. They would bank a little bit, and those planes that they were using had the canopies. You could actually see them.

Marcello: In other words, the canopies were open?

Goodwin: No, no, no, they were closed, But they were glass--plexiglass or some material,

Marcello: I know that some of the people in the Finance Office were assigned to a command post that was set up. Were you among these people or not?

Goodwin: Well, we set up in a colonel's quarters--Colonel Slaughter, the Quartermaster Corps. My wife worked for him. We took over his house, We were all over there. I remember we wanted some coffee, and this is one of the funny things you remember, We used this very nice silver service to make coffee for the Finance Detachment.

Marcello: Is this, then, where you would be assigned to these various jobs that you had been doing that afternoon? You mentioned, for example, that you took these people over to belt ammunition.

Goodwin: Well, now that was from headquarters. That was before. We didn't move over into Colonel Slaughter's quarters until later that night...or sometime that afternoon.

But after the last wave of bombers came through, there was no commotion. Suddenly, it was silent, relatively silent. That's when we had to figure out what to do. The Finance Office had been hit. The vault had been hit, among other things. So we moved into this set of quarters--very nice set of quarters.

One of the things I remember...my boss prior to my transfer to the Finance Corps was a guy named Don Forney. He was the... Ora Musgrove was really my boss at the time. Then he was



stationed at Schofield. I reported to him from Hickam Field in the audit job. Then Don Forney was in the property business some way. He was a neighbor of mine, about three or four houses away. I went over to see what happened to him. When I got there, his family was all...they were all unconscious. A bomb had landed just outside the house, and I guess it was concussion that had got them. The windows were broken. But I walked in, and they were all on the floor. I thought they were dead, but they weren't. They were just temporarily stunned.

There was another house right up the street that was blown completely away. The family was eating breakfast, and not a one of them got hurt. The house was leveled, absolutely, to the ground. One of those freak...they were both freaky. I raked up a pile of shrapnel in my yard a foot high or more sometime during the next week.

Marcello: Was a lot of this probably from antiaircraft shells and things of that nature?

Goodwin: I could never distinguish that. I kept a large piece of it for a long time. One piece came right through the house and right into the kitchen--right through the roof. That's in our quarters.

Marcello: Shrapnel is pretty nasty-looking stuff, isn't it?

Goodwin: Oh, it's horrible! It's jagged. I didn't think I would ever lose that piece, but I lost it, too.

Marcello: What did you do that evening? What kind of activities were taking place that evening?

Goodwin: Well, we went over and took over Colonel Slaughter's quarters. The dependents had all been moved off the post by this time.

Marcello: Are most of the people from the Finance Office there?

Goodwin: I think every one of us were there. I don't know of anybody missing.

Marcello: Did Gross return?

Goodwin: Oh, yes. Gross helped take the people off the post. The wounds he got were superficial. Anyway, we ended up over there, and we didn't,,,at that time, I remember we were all expecting some kind of landing. We didn't know, and the intelligence was nil, We didn't have any.

Marcello: You had no reason to suspect otherwise, really.

Goodwin: No! We were ready to...I mean, we felt sure that they were going to land. Why would they make this big an effort and not follow it up? In my honest opinion, they could have taken it with a battalion at that point,,maybe a little more than a battalion. But it was a very frustrating feeling because what could we do? I had a .45-caliber. That was the biggest weapon I had during this whole period.

Marcello: When were these weapons issued to you, or had you always had them?

Goodwin: I kept a .45 with me all my life just about. I always had a .45-caliber.

Marcello: But I guess what I'm saying is, on that particular day, had you previously been issued weapons, or did you have to draw them

from somewhere?

Goodwin: I had a weapon, I always kept a weapon, I still have two or three. And I had several rounds of ammunition.

Marcello: So, basically, that night you were talking and thinking about the possibility of an invasion.

Goodwin: That's exactly right.

Marcello: Did you hear any other rumors?

Goodwin: The only thing that I can remember, that we really heard that morning, was that the sergeant at Fort Shafter and picked them up on radar and hadn't been able to get anybody's attention. Apparently, he had them on radar twenty or thirty minutes before they hit. Now how you could spread that word in that period of time, I thought later, would practically be impossible even with the equipment we have today. But I always kind of concluded that nobody paid any attention to him. This fellow later became a commissioned officer. But radar was in its infancy then, and they had a lot of blips on them that nobody understood. But this guy really picked them up, reported it, and nothing happened.

Marcello: By this time, that is, by that evening, had blackout conditions been put into effect?

Goodwin: Oh, yes, immediately. There were a lot of stray shots. The people who were pulling guard duty that night would shoot at anything--cats, dogs, shadows,

Marcello: So the best thing you could do would be to stay put if it all possible?

Goodwin: That's exactly right. And that's what we did.

Marcello: Did you get much sleep that night?

Goodwin: I slept that night, sure.

Marcello: Had you had any contact with your wife since you had evacuated?

Goodwin: No, I had no idea, . . . no, I didn't see her for two or three more days. They eventually let the dependents come back on the post. The time frame, I don't remember—three days, a week, two weeks, whatever. But they did let them come back. Then they set up an evacuation schedule with priorities, and my wife, having a job on the post, was one of the last priorities. She didn't really want to go at all. She wanted to stay there. But I didn't know where I was going to be sent or what, so I insisted she come back. That was about March by the time they got down to her. The first priorities were women with children and pregnant women and women who weren't working, and then it finally got down to women without children, dependents without children, who worked. So she was in the last priority.

Marcello: And she left by Army transport?

Goodwin: Army transport. And there was a period of about ten or twelve days that we didn't hear from that. We didn't know. We knew there were subs out there, but I finally did hear that she was back in the States.

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

Goodwin: Basically, well, the first thing we did was get the Finance Detachment a separate barracks—one of the old quarters buildings.

It was an apartment-type building. We got them all in one place where we could,,the barracks had been shot up, We got them into this one area, and then they gave the first three graders individual quarters. You might be in a set of quarters with two other people, but we had that. Then it was business as usual--back to paying the troops.

Marcello: You did mention earlier, did you not, that the original Finance Office had been hit?

Goodwin: The original Finance Office was in the Headquarters Building, the main headquarters, and it was hit. The headquarters was hit.

Marcello: Did you mention that groups of documents and so on and so forth had been destroyed, also?

Goodwin: I don't think there was anything destroyed, and I don't think we were a dollar short. It was all eventually accounted for. I don't think we lost any records. They were all over the place, but I think Charlie Miles could substantiate the fact that we didn't show up short of any cash.

Marcello: When was it that you finally left the Hawaiian Islands?

Goodwin: I left the Hawaiian Islands in July, 1943. I was immediately,, I was promoted to master sergeant on the first day of January, then warrant officer in April, and chief warrant in September.

Marcello: Promotion was coming a lot faster after Pearl Harbor, was it not?

Goodwin: It certainly was, and at that time I had applied for OCS and was number one on the list to come back. But the boss I had at

the time said, "Look, we'll give you your own office, and you stay here, and we will recommend you for a direct commission out in the Finance Office at Kahuku." I think it was in September or October of that year--1942, I had three men. It was a Class B agent office out of Wheeler Field. The paperwork went forward and came back disapproved.

The theater of operations had moved on,,,due to my age,,, there was a requirement of thirty years of age to get a direct commission in those days. I was twenty-four or twenty-five, Again, my lack of formal education at that time was another reason for saying "no,"

Andy Muhlenberg was the base commander, and he said, "Look, I know that you were told that you would get a direct commission, so we'll just send you back to OCS under a general appointment." I did go back to OCS on an appointment by General Willis Hale. At that time, that was the only way the quotas had been decreased. At Duke the class had dropped from 200 to 50. I attended the last class at Duke, I think it was Class Number 21. I got in only through a general's appointment. I graduated in December of 1943.

Marcello: You mentioned something earlier that struck an interesting note with me. You mentioned that basically after the attack, in essence, it was business as usual, that is, the work of the Finance Office had to continue. Just because a war was going on, everybody wasn't on a battle footing and out in the field

and this sort of thing.

Goodwin: That's been the fate of the Finance Corps all its life. You still have to pay the troops, and that's exactly what we did. We were back in operation...I was assigned to Fort Shafter shortly after, I didn't stay at Hickam Field. They promoted me and sent me to Headquarters, Hawaiian Department. Because I had this property thing on my record, they assigned me to closing out property accounts. We had to issue certificates on every property account in the island, and for about three months that's what I did. I was promoted to warrant officer--to the grade of warrant officer--and then Hickam,..the Air Section again,..it was the Hickam people that said, "We need you back out here to open our office at Kahuku." That suited me fine, so I went back and was transferred to Wheeler Field; that is, the main office was in Wheeler, but the Agent Office was at a place called Kahuku, which is on the northern tip of the island. I stayed there until I came back to OCS.

Marcello: So during that time between the bombing and when you get back to the States to attend OCS, you were moving around all over that island in various functions.

Goodwin: Yes. I was assigned to Hickam, then Fort Shafter, then back to Wheeler as a base but was stationed at Kauku.

Marcello: I'm sure that that post-Pearl Harbor Army was certainly a different scene from that pre-Pearl Harbor Army, was it not?

Goodwin: Well, I think the whole Army became more businesslike at that

point. Basically, it was kind of a holiday in Hawaii prior to the beginning of the war--beautiful place. I still like it, I have been there any number of times, I was there last just three years ago. We are planning to go back next year. It's still a gorgeous place.

Marcello: Well, maybe that's a good place to end this interview, Mr. Goodwin, I want to thank you very much for having participated. You've gone into a great deal of detail, and, of course, that's the sort of thing we are looking for, I'm sure that historians and students are going to find your comments most valuable when they get to read them and listen to them,

Goodwin: Well, Ron, I enjoyed meeting you, It's not something that's hard to talk about.