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HOWARD POLLAN
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Oral History Collection

Howard Pollan

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello Date: October 22, 1983

Place of Interview: Rusk, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Howard Pollan for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 22, 1983, in Rusk, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Pollan in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the battleship USS West Virginia during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Pollan, 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. Pollan: I was born in Webster County, Mississippi, about seven miles west of Eupora. I grew up in Sunflower County. My school years were spent at Drew, Mississippi. I was born on October 28, 1915, and I graduated from high school in 1935. Of course, that was right in the middle of the deep Depression.

Dr. Marcello: That was not a great time to graduate from high school.

Mr. Pollan: No, it certainly wasn't. I fooled around, worked on odd

jobs there until 1937, and then I joined the Navy.

Marcello: What was it that prompted you to join the service in 1937?

Pollan: I was in the National Guard, and a friend of mine and I were at drill one night. And the friend of mine said, "I'll back you out joining the Navy." I said, "You won't back me out" So the next day, we went and applied for the Navy. About three months later, we were accepted.

Marcello: How difficult or easy was it to get into the Navy in 1937?

Pollan: It was pretty difficult because they were rather strict on who they took.

Marcello: Do you think this was because they had a lot of volunteers because of the Depression?

Pollan: That was one of the reasons, and then they didn't need all that many men by the other token. They almost turned me down. I went in at a sub-station at Grenada, Mississippi, and was interviewed there, and they filled out the papers on me. Then I had to go to New Orleans, Louisiana, for my final examination, and then they sent me on from there. Because I was kind of small in stature, they almost turned me down; but they didn't find anything else at all wrong with me, so they finally agreed to let me go on.

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

Pollan: I had seen this James Cagney and somebody in that Navy picture, (chuckle) and I just liked the Navy. I wanted

to be in it.

Marcello: You mentioned that prior to going into the Navy, you had been in the National Guard. Why had you joined the National Guard?

Pollan: Well, that was just the thing to do when you were in high school, after you attained the age of eighteen. You got to go away for a couple of weeks in the summer and stay in military camp. Once a week, then, you had to make a drill. You had to spend an hour-and-a-half drilling. You got paid for it. It was a little extra cash.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Pollan: In San Diego, California.

Marcello: How long did it last at that time?

Pollan: We got to stay a little longer than most of them did because the company ahead of us had had a case of scarlet fever, and they had quarantined the whole place for about two weeks. That threw us two weeks late. I went in the tenth of September, and it was about the middle of December when we finished out boot camp and went home on boot leave.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record, or was it the normal Navy boot camp?

Pollan: There's nothing extraordinary or out of the way that happened. I think it was just a routine boot training camp.

Marcello: After you get out of boot camp and had had your boot leave,

where did you report from there?

Pollan: I came back to the training center, and when I reported in there, they put a group of us aboard an oil tanker, a Navy oil tanker, for transportation up to Long Beach where our ship was anchored. I believe it was the Neosho that I rode. That was my first sea-going vessel. We rode it up to Long Beach. Of course, my ship, the West Virginia, was out at sea on training duty at that time. They put us on the Argonne. It was a supply ship or something on that order. I stayed on it for two or three days until the West Virginia came back in, and I went aboard the West Virginia.

Marcello: Now had you volunteered for duty aboard battleships, or were you simply placed there?

Pollan: I didn't volunteer for anything. I wanted to go home on boot leave, and I didn't volunteer for anything. I could have gotten a school of some sort. I should have done that. I had a girlfriend back home that I had to see real bad, and I had to go back and see her. I didn't apply for any schools.

Marcello: What was your reaction upon learning that you were going to be assigned to a battleship?

Pollan: I was real pleased because I wasn't all that eager to go aboard a small ship.

Marcello: Why was that?

Pollan: They're too rough (chuckle).

Marcello: Describe the reception you got when you initially went aboard the West Virginia? After all, you were still a "boot," so to speak, so far as the "old salts" aboard the West Virginia were concerned.

Pollan: Right. Well, they didn't seem to pay us any attention to speak of. I did have a good friend aboard that had been in the Navy for about a year or two. I had gone to school with him back home, and he had enlisted before I did. He quit school and enlisted about a year or two before I did. Of course, this fellow--this friend back home--he and I would had stayed right together. We were in the same squad in boot caomp, and we have been assigned the same ship. We both went aboard the West Virginia, and got into the radio division. We were right together all that time.

Marcello: So when you went aboard the West Virginia you were not put in the deck division as is the usual case?

Pollan: Yes, I was (chuckle).

Marcello: How long did you remain in the deck division?

Pollan: Oh, I stayed in there about a week, and they needed radiomen, so I applied for to be transferred to the radio division, and they sent me to it.

Marcello: I gather from your response that you weren't too eager or happy to stay in the deck division?

Pollan: No. They had to get up too early and get up there and scrub

that deck in cold weather. Of course, it was in January. It was in January when I went aboard the West Virginia, and it was cold to get up there barefooted and wash that deck down and all the other stuff. I didn't like the kind of work they did in the deck division. I'd rather have been in radio.

Marcello: Okay, so you go into the radio division. Describe the kind of on-the-job training that you received in the radio division.

Pollan: The first thing they did was to try to teach us code. At that time that was the method of sending and receiving messages--by international code on radio. Of course, we got to do all the menial tasks that everybody gets to do when they're a "boot."

One of the nice things about when I went in...just about a week after I got aboard the West Virginia, we went to Bremerton, Washington, to the Navy yard for a three-month overhaul. So by the time we finished our overhaul and got out of the Navy yard, I could send and receive code well enough to man a circuit. I started standing watches right away. Actually, by the time we got back to sea, I was almost an "old salt."

Marcello: Now did you find that there was a willingness on the part of the petty officers in the radio division to train you thoroughly?

Pollan: Oh, yes. Of course, they had a certain person assigned to hold school for us. He would send to us, and then we'd send to him and stuff like that until he thought we were trained well enough to stand a watch on the circuit.

Marcello: Approximately how many people were there in the radio division?

Pollan: There must have been at least thirty or forty of us. It's hard to remember now. Then, too, when you were in your compartment, the radio gang, the signal gang, and a lot of the yeomen were in the same division, which made quite a crowd, and even some of the band members were right there in close proximity. It made it difficult to realize how many were in the radio division.

Marcello: You mentioned that you would stand watch at a circuit. Can you explain exactly what is meant by that? In other words, what would your tasks entail?

Pollan: When I first started out, they had what they called the "Fox Schedule." There was a radio station in San Diego that...no, they transferred that to San Francisco. The name of the station was NPM. They would get messages from all over the United States--all of the fleet--and they would put them on this one circuit, and it ran constantly about eighteen words a minute. All I did was sit and receive those messages--one right after the other. After I had done that for a few months, I graduated to a regular circuit,

where I would send and receive with another person on the other end of the circuit. But the first part was with what they called the "Fox Schedule," where you just sit and copy all that.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, I assume that you were trying to eventually advance in rank to the point where you become a petty officer.

Pollan: Right. That's right.

Marcello: How slow or rapid was advancement in that rating in the pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Pollan: Well, advancement was real slow. At that time I was seaman second class--that's what I came out of boot camp as--and I remained a seaman second class until I was promoted to petty officer third class--radioman third class. It was twenty-five months from the time I went in the Navy until I got promoted to petty officer third class.

Marcello: Even that was fairly rapid, wasn't it, considering how slow promotions were in that period?

Pollan: It was because after I'd been in there...I went in in 1937. In 1939 they started taking in more men. They started calling up reserves and things like that. They opened the rates up fleet-wide, and it ceased to be fleet-wide competition, too. That's why I made it as soon as I did.

Marcello: When you say there ceased to be fleet-wide competition, can you explain what you mean by that?

Pollan: Yes. Before that, they would have so many ratings for third class petty officers throughout the fleet--the Pacific Fleet. When they held examinations for those ratings, you had to go...like, the Pennsylvania was the flagship of the commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, and that's where you would have to go for that examination. You'd go to the Pennsylvania, and everybody that was up for that rate throughout the fleet would have to come over there to the Pennsylvania, and they gave the examinations there. After they stopped that, each ship would hold its own examinations for those ratings.

Marcello: And then at that point, there still had to be an opening aboard the West Virginia for that particular rating. Is that correct?

Pollan: That's correct.

Marcello: So in other words, if you did pass the test, and there was no opening aboard the West Virginia, your choice would be either to stay at the rating you were or transfer to another ship that had an opening. Is that correct?

Pollan: They wouldn't transfer you for you to be promoted. If they didn't have openings, you didn't get to take the test. See, they had openings for each person that was eligible to take the test or that they permitted to take the test.

Marcello: This is something that's always fascinated me, especially in further reading about the Pearl Harbor attack, and actually

this question doesn't have anything to do with Pearl Harbor in a sense. But is it not true that an experienced radioman, that is, one who is tapping out code, after a while almost falls into a certain pattern or rhythm by which they tap out codes and that somebody who's listening or taking that code can almost tell which radioman is on duty and this sort of thing?

Pollan: That's true. In many cases people develop little idiosyncrasies in their sending that people get to recognize. I remember reading about a court-martial that was held on a man, and because this man on another ship knew his method of sending, he could testify to what he was up for and clear him for the court-martial.

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like aboard the West Virginia.

Pollan: It was just an open room. Mine was on the second deck. It was just an open room, and we did our eating and sleeping and resting right there in that one compartment. The mess tables...they'd hang them from...they were folding tables about seven or eight feet long and about thirty inches wide, and the legs would fold up under them, and they'd hang them on racks in the ceiling.

The petty officers had Army cots to sleep in, but the other people had hammocks, and they'd string their hammocks from one beam to another and crawl up in that thing and sleep

at night. In the morning, when you awakened, you had to take your bedding and fold it up and put it in a bag and fold your cot up. You had a bin alongside the outer wall where that was stored.

Marcello: Approximately how high off the deck would those hammocks be?

Pollan: They'd be at least five feet--five or five or six feet--because the ceiling was only about seven feet high. In order to get it straight to where you could sleep in it comfortably, you'd have to pull it tight right up against the ceiling. They were comfortable, though. I loved to sleep in them.

Marcello: Why was that?

Pollan: I don't know. If you were underway and the ship was moving and it got to rocking and going, you'd just swing back and forth. You were up near the ceiling, and it was warm up there.

Marcello: How would you climb up into that hammock that far off the deck?

Pollan: You'd just catch on to the beam up there and swing yourself up into it.

Marcello: In general, were those quarters rather cramped, or was there adequate room?

Pollan: Well, they were pretty full when everybody got their beds out. You were assigned a little spot there to put your bed up at night.

Marcello: Where did you put your personal gear?

Pollan: You had lockers for that. Lockers lined the walls, and you had lockers to keep your gear in--your clothing and personal items.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: The West Virginia was usually a pretty good feeder. We usually has good food, except on Friday. On Friday at noon, they had liver and onions. I never did learn to like Navy-cooked liver, I got kind of hungry on Fridays. Otherwise, it was good food usually.

Marcello: Did you ever take a shot at mess cooking duty?

Pollan: Well, I had to do a week of it in boot camp, but when I got aboard ship, I would have had to, had I not gotten out of that deck division. In the radio division, they weren't required...because they stood watches, they weren't required to do mess duty.

Marcello: Were you still being served family-style aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: Yes. We had mess cooks, and they would bring the food from the galley up to the table. They'd bring it in little pots and set it on the table, and you'd dish it out of them.

Marcello: What role did the band play in life aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: They just made music. They'd play for raising and lowering colors--the flag. Of course, the bugler was one of them. They'd play for dances for the officers, and if the crew

had a dance, they'd play for the dances and things like that.

Marcello: Were most ships proud of their bands?

Pollan: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, they loved the band.

Marcello: What role did sports and athletics competition play in life aboard the West Virginia during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Pollan: We were a pretty athletic group on the West Virginia. I never did go in for athletics because it was difficult to stand a rotating watch and take part in sports events. We had a good football team. We had a baseball team. We had a rowing team. I even got a medal for being in a sailboat racing crew (chuckle). Throughout the fleet, they'd hold competition in these sports events. We'd play different ships when we were in port. If you won the overall athletic sporting events throughout the fleet, you'd get what they called the "E"--"E" for excellent. You'd win...they called it the Iron Man Trophy. For instance, the team that won all the football sporting events came out on top, they got the Iron Man Trophy. On the West Virginia, we got that about...oh, we got it quite a number of times.

I had been in the Navy a little over four years when Pearl Harbor was bombed. I'd got to see a lot of...we had boxing--a lot of boxing. That was a big game. They'd have what they called smokers, and we'd all go to one ship if we weren't in where we could get...well, at that time they didn't have places over on the beach where we could play,

and we'd go to various ships where they'd hold the sporting events.

Marcello: I understand those boxing smokers were very, very well-attended.

Pollan: Very well, yes. A lot of interest in that.

Marcello: I do know it was true at Schofield Barracks that the officers and so on actually went out and recruited athletes. Do you recall any of that sort of thing happening aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: No, I don't remember them doing any recruiting on...well, they might have recruited, but it had to be among the crew. They didn't go anywhere else to get anybody to come in there.

Marcello: What sort of relationship existed aboard the West Virginia between the run-of-the-mill seamen and the petty officers?

Pollan: It was good. It was a good relationship. Of course, it depended on the petty officer's personality. If he was real strict, he wasn't liked very well, and he didn't rate too well with the seamen.

Marcello: Was there much fraternization among the petty officers and the rest of the enlisted personnel?

Pollan: Yes. Petty officers, yes.

Marcello: How about ashore?

Pollan: Yes. Of course, you developed friendships with...actually, there wasn't that much separation between the seaman rates and the petty officer rates. It usually didn't make any

difference what a man's rate was. If you got to be good friends with him, you'd go ashore with him.

Marcello: What kind of a relationship was there between the officers and the enlisted personnel?

Pollan: That was usually strictly business. There was no fraternization. You didn't go ashore with them. Their places of recreation on shore was usually always different from the enlisted men, and there wasn't hardly any contact on shore.

Marcello: In general, as you look back upon life aboard the West Virginia in those pre-war years, how would you describe the morale?

Pollan: It was good--always good. Now and then you'd get a disgruntled guy that didn't like the Navy. For instance, I remember one guy in our outfit...I don't know...he didn't like the United States, and he didn't like the Navy, and about that particular time--I expect that was about six months or a year before the war started--they were holding meetings...the Bund had some units up there in Los Angeles, and the FBI learned that he had been going and attending some of those. They let him out of the Navy at least six or eight months before the war started, and I never heard of him any after that. I don't know what he did, whether he went to Germany and joined up over there or not (chuckle).

Marcello: What do you think was responsible for this high state of morale aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: It was a good ship for duty. There was a period of time when it got kind of low about...oh, I forgot when Captain Bennion came on there and took command, but it must have been close to a year before the war started. The guy that was commanding officer before him was Captain Markham. He got in sort of a fuss battle with the executive officer. The executive officer was Commander Alexander, and he was hard to get along with anybody. The captain got mad at him and told him, "You're gonna live 'by the book,' or I'm going to crucify you!" He got just as "GI" as he could be, and he remained that way, and it made life kind of miserable for all of us on there.

Marcello: What was the nickname that the men affectionately had for the ship?

Pollan: "Weevee." Our nickname was the "Mountaineers."

Marcello: When was it that the Pacific Fleet was moved from its normal base in San Diego out to Pearl Harbor? Do you remember when that occurred?

Pollan: Yes. See, the battleships and cruisers anchored in San Pedro Harbor at Long Beach. It was in April, 1940, when we first went out to Hawaii, and for a time we anchored in a place called Lahaina Roads, and that was over there between Maui, Lahaina, and Molokai. After we had been over there for a time...I expect we'd been anchoring over there for nearly a year before they moved us into Pearl

Harbor, and we started going in and tying up in Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of being stationed out in the Hawaiian Islands on a more or less permanent basis?

Pollan: I didn't care for it too much. I liked Hawaii, but you couldn't go home. You didn't get a chance to go home very often. I would have rather been in the United States.

Marcello: I understand that after being in the Hawaiian Islands for a while, they become rather confining. It doesn't take too long until you've seen everything.

Pollan: I never did see everything on there. Of course, back in those days, usually, when you went ashore, you could go out on the beach. I used to spend a lot of time on Waikiki Beach swimming. A lot of times you'd go ashore with a group of one or two, and the first thing you'd do when you got in town...we'd always go into Honolulu, and usually the first thing you'd do was stop in at a barroom and have a drink. You'd buy a drink, and then the other guy would buy a drink, and after a while you got so drunk up until you didn't go anywhere else. You just sat there until it was time to go back to the base or to the ship.

Marcello: After the West Virginia got out to Pearl Harbor on a permanent basis, describe what a typical training exercise would be like for the West Virginia. In other words, take me through a typical exercise. Let's start with the time that the West Virginia would pull out.

Pollan: Okay. Of course, after we started tying up in Pearl Harbor, they had formed us into task forces, and they had two task forces with the battleships. Of course, they had cruisers and destroyers and aircraft carriers that operated with us. We didn't operate with the carriers. We were too slow. When we went to sea, we'd have about three battleships, about four or maybe six cruisers, and then maybe a dozen destroyers in that one task force.

We would go out and just go through...we'd have gunnery exercises, and we'd have maneuvering exercises. They did a lot of maneuvering. I remember one time we were out at sea on one of those training exercises, and they had divided these two task forces and were going to have a battle with each other. Well, about two o'clock in the morning, the thing came to a head, and we were making contact with this other task force, and we were supposed to make a turn and go into a battle line and shoot these other ships. Well, when we sent out this signal on radio, only one ship besides ours received it. The other two and most of the other cruisers and destroyers didn't receive the signal, and, oh, God, we messed up that whole maneuver because they didn't make that turn when they were supposed to. Some did and some didn't, and it's a wonder they didn't have a bunch of collisions there. But they didn't have any; none of them ran together.

They had a big investigation over that. They never did know just exactly what happened, but I know (chuckle). I know what happened on our ship. Back in the transmitter room, they had a thing there where they could disconnect the antenna--from the transmitter to the antenna up on topside. This guy would go...and when he'd hear that... see, we were supposed to be in radio silence there for over two weeks before this thing came to a head. They would disconnect that antenna so there wouldn't be any radio signals sent out accidentally. Then when they turned on that transmitter, he heard that generator cut on back there, and he'd run and close it. Well, that night he must have dozed off or something, and he was a little late getting there closing it, and we had that signal almost out before he got that antenna closed. That's why those other ships didn't get the signal.

Marcello: Normally, what day of the week would you go out on one of your training exercises?

Pollan: Usually, on a Monday.

Marcello: And when would you normally come back in?

Pollan: On a Friday. See, we were divided into these two task forces, and one task force would stay in port while we were gone, and they'd get their recreation and shore leave and all during that week. Then they'd go out...I guess it was ...we'd go out on a...no, we had to go out and come back

in on a...we'd come back in on a Friday, so this other task force would go out the day we came back in.

Marcello: As opposed to going out on Monday?

Pollan: Yes.

Marcello: They would not wait over for the weekend.

Pollan: I'm pretty sure that's the way it was. See, we'd get to make the weekend.

Marcello: Yes, I know you would, but I was thinking of the task force that was in the harbor.

Pollan: No, they'd already had their weekend. Until the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, they never did put both task forces in port at the same time.

Marcello: What other exercises and activities would take place when you were out at sea? In other words, what kind of exercises took place?

Pollan: Well, for instance, when they fired the big guns--the 16-inchers--one of the battleships would usually tow the targets. They'd have about a...I remember getting in on this cable. It was about a three-inch metal cable that they towed this barge with that carried the target. When they'd bring that cable aboard our ship for us to tow it, they'd have to get everybody out there to pull that thing on board. You'd pull on that metal cable, and it was made up of small wires--many small wires--and they would break and stick in your hands. You'd pull on that thing and just get little pieces of

metal in your hand. Then, gosh, they must have had about a three-mile cable because the thing was almost out of sight behind us. That's why it was so hard to pull that cable aboard ship--it was so long and so heavy. Then those ships would fire sometimes from twenty miles away, and you had to have a good distance because they weren't all that accurate a lot of times.

Marcello: I would assume that those large 16-inch guns weren't fired too often because of the expense involved among other things.

Pollan: No, they weren't fired too often, but I got to see a lot of them fire. Those shells--just the bullet part of the shell...see, they put that bullet into the gun, and then they'd pack...if you were firing short-range, they'd put 300-pound bags of powder in back of it, and that's what propelled the bullet. If you were firing long-range, they'd put 500-pound bags of powder in it. If you were standing outside where you could see them when they fired those things, they'd...one shell would be just an instant later than the other one, and they wouldn't go side by side. One would follow right...and you could actually see them going through the air. They weighed 2,100 pounds, that bullet did.

Marcello: How much emphasis was given to antiaircraft practice?

Pollan: Quite a bit. We had twenty 5-inch antiaircraft. We had some .50-calibers, but we didn't have anything else until after the war.

Marcello: You didn't get your 20- and your 40-millimeters until after

Pearl Harbor?

Pollan: No, that's right.

Marcello: Now as one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, could you detect any changes in the exercises or the routines aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: Well, practice got a little more serious. They wouldn't let civilians come aboard ship unless they were the guest of an officer or something like that. Sometimes when we were in port, they would permit guided tours through the ship, but they didn't have that too much anymore. Actually, they stopped free coming and going of civilians before we ever left Long Beach Harbor.

Marcello: How about up in the radio section? Could you detect any changes up there? For instance, were you maneuvering more under radio silence or anything of that nature?

Pollan: Not really. Just for special practices like this maneuver I was telling you about. That's about the only time we'd have radio silence. Otherwise, we sent and received messages freely.

Marcello: Now as the situation between the two countries did continue to worsen, did the subject of a possible attack at Pearl Harbor ever come up at any of the bull sessions that you and your buddies had?

Pollan: No. No way. We felt that those Japs wouldn't dare attack

Pearl Harbor--with all those ships and all those soldiers and everything we had over on the beach there and their guns and stuff, you know, the coastal artillery that we had stationed around there. We never entertained the thought for a minute that Japs would attack us.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what kind of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind--at that time, prior to the war?

Pollan: (Chuckle) A little guy with big buck-teeth and horn-rimmed glasses and short stature. Small size. Bad eye-sight. We thought they all had bad eye-sight (chuckle).

Marcello: Suppose it did come to war between the two countries. Did you have any doubts about the outcome?

Pollan: Oh, heavens, no. We figured in two or three months we could have...even after the attack, we thought, "Why, we can just clean those people up in a short time," even with all those damaged ships we had there. We didn't think they could do anything.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit about the liberty routine aboard the West Virginia. How were the liberty sections organized aboard the West Virginia?

Pollan: Well, you were divided up into two sections--one duty section and one liberty section. Then we'd have to have two groups to stand watch on the days they had duty. You'd stand four on and four off.

Marcello: That's four hours on and four hours off.

Pollan: Yes, four hours on and four hours off. And then the days that we were in port, usually at one o'clock they'd give liberty. You could stay until eleven o'clock there. You had to be back aboard ship by eleven o'clock that night.

Marcello: At anytime when you were in port, what percentage of the crew would still be aboard?

Pollan: About 50 percent.

Marcello: Let's say you had liberty on Saturday. Would the other 50 percent get liberty on Sunday?

Pollan: Yes.

Marcello: Is that the way it operated?

Pollan: Yes.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had to be back at eleven o'clock. Why was that?

Pollan: I don't know why they had that. That was just one of the rules. If you had your family...for instance, if you had your wife and some kids out there, you could stay over all night and be back at eight o'clock the next morning. But it was just so many people, so many servicemen, out there that they couldn't let them spend the night because there was just no place to stay.

Marcello: And I guess they didn't want those people staying on beaches or in parks or wherever.

Pollan: That's right. That was one of the reasons. If you had a

friend that you could spend the night with over on the beach, you could get a pass to stay over all night. Otherwise, if you didn't have anybody to stay with over there, you had to be back by eleven o'clock.

Marcello: Describe what your liberty routine would be? What would you do when you went ashore?

Pollan: A lot of times, I didn't do anything. First, when we'd go into town,..it was seven miles from the Navy base into Honolulu. You always could take a bus or you could get a cab if you wanted to spend the money.

Marcello: I guess you had to take a liberty launch from the West Virginia to the fleet landing.

Pollan: Right. We'd go over, and they'd let us off at what they called Ten-Ten (1010) dock. Then we'd walk up to the gate of the Navy yard. You could either get on a bus or get in a cab. Usually, we rode buses because it was so much more economical. The buses would unload you at the YMCA up in Honolulu. Whatever you could figure out to do from there, you'd go do it.

Marcello: Where was the Black Cat Cafe relative to the YMCA?

Pollan: (Chuckle) Right across the street. Good ol' Black Cat--I spent a lot of time there.

Marcello: What was the attraction of the Black Cat Cafe?

Pollan: Nothing really, except drinks. You could dance over there. They'd let you dance over there. You'd sit there and drink.

Marcello: Was its prominence simply that it was the first watering hole after you got out of the taxi or whatever?

Pollan: I think that really was the first watering hole. Usually, if I was going to do any heavy drinking, I'd go down to Tony Goro's. He was on either Hotel Street or King Street. I've forgotten now. I believe it was Hotel Street.

Marcello: Why was that your favorite place?

Pollan: It was just strictly a barroom. You'd just go in there and sit and drink.

Marcello: What were the attractions on Hotel Street? Evidently, servicemen spent a lot of time on Hotel and Canal Street-- that area.

Pollan: They had some bawdyhouses down there. Other than that-- shops. If you wanted to buy something, there was shops along the street, and there were restaurants you could go to.

Marcello: I understand there were tattoo parlors there, too.

Pollan: Yes, lots of tattoo parlors.

Marcello: Did you get any tattoos?

Pollan: Never! I never did get drunk enough to get a tattoo (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you ever frequent the bawdyhouses?

Pollan: Now and then. You had to dump dirty ballast somewhere.

Marcello: (Laughter) How much did a trick cost at that time?

Pollan: It was a dollar. I think it was a dollar until after the war started. Then after the war started, it went to three dollars.

Marcello: Inflation caught up with the girls, huh?

Pollan: (Chuckle) Right.

Marcello: I guess Hotel Street was basically a place where a sailor could be lifted of a great deal of his money?

Pollan: Yes, you could get rid of quite a bit there on Hotel Street.

Marcello: Generally speaking, when people came back off liberty, let's say, on a Saturday night, what kind of condition would they be in? What kind of shape would they be in?

Pollan: Well, the general run of them wouldn't be all that drunk. Most of them drank. There were very few of them that were teetotalers, that never took a drink. They didn't, on the general run, get "stinko," you might say.

I remember one time there...well, it was the Thanksgiving before the war started. Our ship was supposed to come back to the States for Navy yard overhaul. On Thanksgiving we went over and had a big party at Lai Chai's. That was a famous restuarant out near Waikiki Beach. We went over there and reserved the dining hall for the whole radio division. Of course, when you have a meeting like that and a get together like that, you always have a lot of extra people from different parts of the ship because good friends of different ones would come. We all chipped in and paid the bill. We had turkey dinner with champagne and all that good stuff. Well, the next morning we came back aboard ship--got back aboard ship all right--but the

next morning you woke up and looked around, and there were guys just laying on deck all around. They had had a little too much. They made it back all right, but they were a little too far gone to get their beds out and put them up (chuckle).

Marcello: I would assume that a lack of money plus the fact that you had to be back at eleven o'clock would have somewhat curtailed the amount of drinking and so on that could have taken place.

Pollan: Right. It did. It curtailed it quite a bit. That's probably another reason they had an eleven o'clock liberty time.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941, and, of course, we want to go into as much detail as we can here. When did the West Virginia come in that weekend? Did it come in on Friday?

Pollan: We came in about noon on Friday.

Marcello: Where did you tie up?

Pollan: We tied up at a quay over by Ford Island. I never did know another designation, like a number, for it or anything like that. I might as well say right now that we were right where they could come down that slot and drop their torpedoes. It wasn't difficult for them to get enough run on the torpedoes for them to explode when they hit.

Marcello: What battleship were you tied up next to?

Pollan: We were tied up next to the Tennessee.

Marcello: Was this always the routine? In other words, did you always tie up at the same place with the same ship?

Pollan: Not necessarily. You see, usually, we didn't tie up with anybody because both task forces came in that weekend. Usually, we didn't have to tie up with anybody. They may bring an oil tanker or a destroyer...well, no, they didn't bring the destroyers over there. They tied up over around the corner. Usually, they didn't have anybody tied up with us.

Marcello: What did you do that Saturday of December 6, 1941?

Pollan: Went ashore. Went on liberty. I didn't get drunk that night. I felt real good the next day.

Marcello: What did you do that evening you went ashore?

Pollan: You know, I can't remember. I can remember always...that might have been the day I went to Tony Goro's, and there was a bunch of us sitting in there drinking. It was my time to buy drinks. I expect there was five or six of us sitting around that table, and it was my time to buy drinks, and I paid for them with a twenty-dollar bill. The waitress brought the money back and put it down on the table, and I just let the change sit there by my drink. One of the guys got into a fight with somebody across the way, and I jumped up to run see about that, and when I came back, all my change was gone.

Marcello: Did you get back aboard ship at the last possible moment

that night, or did you get back early?

Pollan: Not necessarily. I'd usually try to get back a little earlier than the last minute. I'm not very much at waiting to the last minute for things.

Marcello: Okay, when you get back aboard ship, did anything out of the ordinary happen?

Pollan: No, nothing.

Marcello: What time do you figure you turned in?

Pollan: I probably was in bed by ten o'clock. I don't remember what time I came back, but the lights went out at nine o'clock. Unless I'd go down to the radio room and sit around and read or something like that where I could have a light, I would have gone to bed.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, and, of course, what we need to do is to have you go into as much detail concerning that day as possible. I'll let you pick up the story at this point and describe your routine from the time you got up until all hell broke loose on Sunday morning.

Pollan: Okay. Of course, we had a reveille at a regular time-- six o'clock. I got up and put away my bedding. I went and took a shower and shaved and dressed. By that time breakfast was usually ready, or I may have had to wait a few minutes for breakfast. I had sat down at the table to eat and had just completed eating and got up. At that

time--on December 1--I had been promoted to radioman first class--petty officer first class. They had made me what they called division police petty officer. One of my duties in that capacity was to make up a liberty list and draw the liberty cards for the men who were to go ashore that day. So I had just finished eating and got up from the table and was at my locker--had my locker door open. I was getting whatever it was I might need to make up that liberty list.

Before I got through there, one of the men in the compartment--he was one of the men who kept the place clean--had been up on topside on what they call the boat deck where the incinerator was to dump trash. He came back bounding down this ladder and says, "They're just bombing the hell out a place over yonder!" Of course, we didn't know what he was talking about. One little guy ran over and stuck his head out of a porthole to see what was going on out there, and just about that time the first torpedo hit. God, you wouldn't believe how it would jar you when one of those things hit!

Marcello: Describe that moment.

Pollan: Of course, the torpedo hit down under the water, and it just jarred the tar out of you. It almost jarred you off your feet. It was quite a muffled explosion. When this kid turned around...and I didn't see him, but another fellow

told me later that when he turned around, blood was starting to come out of his nose. He died in that attack. I don't know what happened to him because I didn't see him after that.

What happened was that the officer-of-the-deck had seen a bomb or something explode over on the dock, and he thought something had blown up over there--one of the ships had blown up or something--and he called away the fire and rescue party--the ship's fire and rescue party--to send them over there to give aid and assistance. Well, he had gotten that call out just about the time this torpedo hit. Well, when the torpedo struck, they knew right away Japs were attacking. They saw planes and all. You see, when they called away the fire and rescue party, my duty station for that particular event was way back on the fantail--up on topside on the fantail. I had grabbed my hat and slammed my locker door and locked it and headed out. Just about the time I got halfway there, they changed it, and they passed the call to man battle stations.

Marcello: And where was your battle station?

Pollan: My battle station was in the main radio room, which was way down below the third deck, just about opposite and kind of north of the number two barbette. That's what that 16-inch gun rotated on--big round concern. It was down below the third deck about that particular spot, and it was out next to the wall.

Marcello: Describe your trip from where you were down to your battle station.

Pollan: Well, I had just been run over. I started up the ladder to get up on the quarter-deck, and this big guy came running down the ladder hollering, "Man your battle stations! The Japs are attacking!" I was about halfway up that ladder, and he hit me and he knocked me about ten feet out into the floor out there, and by the time I got myself together, and got up I struck out to get down there. They were starting to close hatches, and I had to get the man at that hatch to open it so I could get through and go down.

Well, by the time I went down to the third deck, water was gushing in from the side of the ship there. I got wet up about halfway of my thigh from that water gushing through. I went on, and I went around under that ladder and down to the radio room, which was down on the next deck, and that place was a shambles. Our receiving antennas were on standoff insulators--little white porcelain insulators about three inches long. They were all around the room. Those things had just shattered, and the antennas were all falling down. We had those big ol' frosted globes over the lights in the ceiling, and those things had shattered. Glass was all...and, of course, by that time, we were starting to take on a pretty good list.

Marcello: Was water filling the radio compartment?

Pollan: No, water hadn't started to come down there yet. It was up on the third deck.

Marcello: That's interesting. It was on the third deck, and you're down where?

Pollan: Down on the fourth deck, actually.

Marcello: And the water hadn't...

Pollan: The water hadn't started to pour down there through that hatch yet. I'm sure I couldn't have been in that radio room over five minutes before they passed the word down to abandon ship--to get out of there.

Marcello: Well, in the meantime, have any other bombs or torpedoes hit the West Virginia?

Pollan: At least four. I know four had hit.

Marcello: And could you feel all of them?

Pollan: Oh, yes! Oh, yes, easily! You couldn't mistake that. When I went down that ladder on the third deck and turned, right there was an open door, and that was what they called the IC Room, and that was internal communications. They repaired all the telephone system throughout the ship. Ever after that, there was something that bothered me. It was years of thinking about that and studying about that before I finally realized what I had seen. When I went down that ladder and turned, I looked into that door, and that water was just swirling just like a huge whirlpool. I had got a glimpse of a man being washed around that

whirlpool as I went by. That's what had bothered me about that so long.

There was about seven or eight men in the radio room on watch when that happened. The typewriters...you know, we had wells for the typewriters to sit in the desks, and when it started listing so, there were typewriters starting to fall out on the floor. In the communication office, there where they decoded the messages, there were two men in there on watch, and they had a safe up on the inside wall that they kept their codes locked in. That thing started sliding across the floor, and they were trying to get that back in place.

Marcello: Had the radio room taken any casualties?

Pollan: No, nobody had been hurt.

Marcello: Just a lot of physical damage.

Pollan: Just a lot of glass fell on them, but it didn't hurt them. It didn't cut them or anything like that.

Marcello: Well, it's quite clear that you can't do anything in there.

Pollan: Nothing.

Marcello: So what do you do at that point then?

Pollan: Well, they said abandon ship so we just...the purpose then was to get out of there. So we went back up to the third deck. I saw that everybody was out, and we went back up to third deck, and we had to cross over...see, we were on what they called the port side, and we had to cross over

to the starboard side to get up because they still had that hatch locked down right above us there. And, anyway, it was filling up with water pretty fast all down along this wall. This outside wall there had filled with water. I was standing there...there was a line, of course, of men moving on across, and it was kind of slow. You had to wait until they could get out of the way.

And when you came around, you had to walk in that water, and by that time, it had oil on the water. The floor had that battleship linoleum on it, and it was real slick. Man, it was just like glass. You had to kind of pull your way up.

I was standing there waiting for them to move on, and I heard this little voice, "Help me! Somebody help me!" I looked around, and one of my radio strikers was out in the middle of a huge room here bear-hugged to a stanchion, which is a post that holds up the ceiling. He was just bear-hugged against that thing, and he couldn't come back up the thing because he'd got in that water with oil on it, and he got oil on his shoes, and he couldn't walk up the thing. I couldn't reach him. There was no way I could reach him. If I had turned loose, of course, there would have just been two of us out there. I told him to turn loose of that stanchion and go on down to the wall--wade on down to the wall--and come around the wall

where he could pull himself up, and he got out all right.

I learned later that he got out.

Marcello: So everybody is abandoning ship, however, in more or less an orderly manner?

Pollan: Yes. I got back up to the second deck, and, boy, you could hear it! It was really going to town out there outside then. There was an officer standing there on the ladder, and he said that the attack was in full fury at that particular time, and we would just wait there until the attack subsided, and then we'd go out. Of course, we were listing further and further all the time. It was so hard to stand up without holding on to something.

I worked my way up to the upper side of the room, and there was a shelf along there to sit on--a bench. I got up there and sat down and was just hanging on to that bedding--the bin where we stored our bedding. I was just hanging on to that. There was a boy who sat down beside of me. He was one of the strikers in the radio gang. His name was George S. Dunn. I never saw him again because all of us guys in that compartment were rendered unconscious from the explosion of a torpedo that came in on that same deck we were on and one compartment aft of us. It knocked us all out. That's the last I remember. When I came to, they had me out of that thing, and I was on a motorboat when I started coming to and realized what was going on.

Marcello: What was the extent of your injuries?

Pollan: None. I wasn't hurt. I didn't have a scratch or a bruised place on me.

Marcello: Was this concussion or...

Pollan: Just the concussion had knocked me out.

Marcello: You have no idea how you got out of that ship or anything?

Pollan: I learned who got me out, but I haven't seen him since then. He was transferred to another ship after that. I don't know what happened to him. I haven't had contact with him since then.

Marcello: Okay, so you're suddenly outside in a motor launch. What happens at that point?

Pollan: Well, I was lying flat on my back on top of this...it was an officers' motorboat, and I was lying on the top deck flat on my back. I started hearing...well, the first thing, when I started coming to, I was cursing--just one curse, one "GD" right after the other. I don't know why I would be doing that, but it felt like I was down in a deep, dark hole. It seemed that I had something around my neck choking me. As I pulled my way back out of that hole, then I started hearing voices, and these guys in the boat crew were talking, and I heard one of them say, "There goes the ol' Solace getting underway!" That was a hospital ship. They were trying to go to sea and get out where they'd have room to run. Then one of them says, "Here they come again!" Then

All of a sudden, you could hear all these guns exploding and bombs exploding and machine guns firing, stuff like that. I didn't really come to until they started lifting me off of that boat over at the dock. They lifted me off and put me up on the dock. By that time I could stand up and see and tell what was going on around me. A group of people had gathered there. They put me in a truck.

Marcello: Where was this dock?

Pollan: It was Ten-Ten Dock. They put me in a truck and carried me up to the Marine dispensary--this group that they brought in off of that particular motorboat. They carried us to the Marine dispensary. By the time I got up there, I was acting pretty well by then--could handle myself. I could walk and get around all right. I got in the dispensary there, and I got a look at myself in the mirror, and I was covered in fuel oil--that ol' black fuel oil--all over me. I had lost my undershirt. I'm sure they tore that off when they were trying to lift me out of there. Our dress for the day was a T-shirt, shorts, shoes and socks, and a hat. Of course, I lost my hat down on the third deck. I had even floated in that oil and saltwater long enough to have swallowed some, and in between my teeth I could see little specks of oil that had gathered in there--that ol' black crude oil. What a taste! I swallowed some saltwater to go along with it. Other than being kind of sick

from that, I didn't have anything wrong with me.

Marcello: So what do you do then the rest of the day?

Pollan: They put me to bed on a cot there. They had these people from town...women from town, especially, had flocked out there to help. They were doing kind of nurse's work, you might say.

Marcello: I've heard it said that a lot of the prostitutes from town came out and did some of this nurses work. Is that truth or fiction?

Pollan: I don't know. I couldn't comment on that either way because I didn't have any knowledge of it. Now that's the first time I've ever heard it.

Marcello: It makes a good story if that is the case, but I have no substantiation for it.

Pollan: I kind of doubt that they did because they wouldn't let the prostitutes come to the servicemen's dances and stuff like that. This one lady, I remember her in particular. She was a nice-looking, tall blond. She looked like she would have been in her thirties, and she was going around and giving you aid and comfort. I had oil in my eyes, and it was uncomfortable. I asked her if there was something she could do to get that oil out of my eyes. She went and got some solution and washed my eyes with it.

Marcello: Had they put you in that bed still covered with oil, or had they tried to wash you off?

Pollan: No, they didn't do anything to me. They just had me lay down in that bed, and after I lay there awhile, I looked at that pillow, and it was just soaked with oil out of my hair.

Marcello: But in the meantime, you're really not hurting at all?

Pollan: No. After I got my eyes washed, I was all right. It hurt me to see all these guys that were really injured. For instance, I saw one man, a Marine. They brought him in, and he had been shot right across that muscle part of his leg, and it was just laid open. Then there was another guy I remember in particular. They brought him in, and he was burned severely. One of them told me that they put them in kind of a tent-like thing over them, and they'd keep a light bulb burning in there to keep warm. He said you didn't worry about them as long as they complained about being hot, but when they started complaining about being cold, they weren't going to last long. One of those guys that I saw them bring in was one that...he died pretty soon after.

Marcello: How long did you remain there in the hospital?

Pollan: You know, I never have been able to learn how long I was out. As best I can figure, it must have been at least an hour because the second attack started just about the time they got me off of that boat. They kept me up there at the hospital...about one o'clock or one-thirty that afternoon,

they came through, and they said, "All you guys that can walk, get in this truck out here." Of course, I was all right. All I had was a blanket. I had taken my greasy, oily shorts off and threw them away, and my shoes. They gave me a suit of hospital pajamas. I put those things on, and I draped my blanket around me, and I went and got in that truck. They hauled us up to...they had a mobile hospital that they were constructing up in the hills behind Aiea Landing overlooking the Navy yard. They carried us up there, and we spent the night up there that night.

Marcello: Again, you were basically in this hospital. You weren't actively doing anything?

Pollan: Oh, no, I wasn't doing anything. I went to bed up there and stayed in that bed. I would like to add here that that night...it was way in the night. I don't know what time, but from reports that I've heard since, it must have been before daylight in the morning--just awhile before daylight in the morning. Guns started going off down there in the Navy yard. Boy, it sounded like the war was really on in full. I raised up and looked out the window toward the Navy yard, and that sky was just red down there from gun flashes. I learned later that one of the aircraft carriers that had been out and missed all that attack...I believe it was the Enterprise. Planes from the Enterprise came in to land, and that was a dumb thing to do because they

shot them down--every one of them.

Marcello: What rumors were floating around up there in that mobile hospital that night?

Pollan: None up in the hospital. The next day and for days afterwards was when the rumors started. Well, I take that back. I expect they were going in that hospital, too, but I don't remember any in particular because everything was pretty subdued and quiet up there. Another thing, too, there was a guy walking around up over my head there putting that hospital together, and I kept my eyes on him. I was afraid he might drop something on me. They had all kinds of rumors going. There was one rumor about Schofield Barracks that night in particular. This guy heard a noise, and he challenged them to halt, and they didn't halt, and he shot them. It was one of their mules--one of the Army mules. I'm sure you've heard that.

Marcello: I'm sure you could hear sporadic gunfire all night, could you not?

Pollan: No. They weren't doing any firing that I could hear. Of course, other places on the island could have been having such things going on, but we didn't hear. After I went to sleep, it didn't bother me until those guns down in the Navy yard--the big ones--cut loose down there.

Marcello: What did you do during those days following the attack?

Pollan: Well, the next morning they put us back in that truck and

carried us back to the Navy yard. We went over to one of the receiving barracks where transients would stay when they were going and coming from one place to another. I went in there, and I got a suit of clothes. I got a pair of shoes, a pair of socks, a suit of underwear, a shirt, a pair of dungarees, a hat, a razor, a bar of soap, and a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste.

Marcello: Had you ever cleaned off yet?

Pollan: No. But when I got all that, I went and got a shower and got cleaned up. It took some doing to wash that oil off.

Marcello: Were you assigned to some particular ship or station at that time?

Pollan: No, I wasn't. Not then. Not at that time. After I got cleaned up...they had a place up there called Bloch Arena. I'm sure you've heard of that. Have you ever been out there?

Marcello: No, I sure haven't.

Pollan: Well, I wish you could go. Well, this Bloch Arena was where we had smokers--sporting events and competition for boxing mainly. It was a big place, kind of like a stadium, with seats, and it would hold a pretty good crowd. They had us gather there. After I had gone and eaten, I went back over there. Of course, by the time I got over there, they were trying to get people to come and volunteer to go to different ships--the ones that hadn't been damaged. I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't volunteer for anything. I

spent the night there in that Bloch Arena.

The next morning it started all over again after breakfast. I don't know. I went somewhere, and I don't remember where I went, but I was "out of pocket" when one of the chief petty officers from the ship came over there, and he got all the guys from the radio gang that he could round up and carried them over to the commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet--to the radio station over there. He got them assigned to duty there. Well, I missed that.

Then that evening, because everybody just about that I know was gone, they kept calling for a radioman first class. They needed a radioman first class on a destroyer. I knew I didn't want a destroyer, and I don't know why in the name of God I ever volunteered to go aboard that thing, but I finally gave in and volunteered. By the time I got down to the dock where I caught a boat out to that destroyer, it was almost dark. I got aboard the destroyer MacDonough. I went to that first. But I had to go aboard the Dixie, which was a tender. I went aboard that and then on across that and on down to the MacDonough. By the time I got over there, it was dark.

I went aboard that thing in the dark, and we got underway the next morning before daylight. I was just as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. I'm telling you, man, I was a bundle of nerves. We went to sea,

and we stayed out at sea for a week and came back in. Then we went out again, then, and stayed another week and came back.

Then I was transferred from the MacDonough to the Hull at that time. Then we went to sea again. I never had gotten paid. I couldn't buy anything. I didn't write home and tell my folks that I was all right or anything like that. I didn't have a stamp or anything to mail a letter with. But we got underway, then, and went to sea.

We went out and stayed a few days, and that's the time when one of the destroyers contacted...as a matter of fact, it was mine, the one I was on, the MacDonough, which contacted this submarine. It got a sub contact on the sonar gear and dropped depth charges, and you could see the nose of that thing come up and shoot back under. We were sure we had... and then after it went back down, we waited around awhile. I don't remember whether I was on the MacDonough still or whether I had been transferred to the Hull. I believe I had gone to the Hull by then because I didn't stay but about two weeks on the MacDonough. After that thing went back under the water, after a few minutes there, you could see things floating around. Debris was floating around on the water--light bulbs and stuff like that. Of course, they had tricks to pull. We didn't know whether they had thrown a bunch of stuff out of the submarine to make us

think they had been sunk or what. But we got credit for sinking one there.

Then we went back in port, and they put what they called Y-guns on the ship. That was to throw off these 300-pound...they put two on each side. See, the way we'd do, we'd drop a pattern of seven 600-pound depth charges off the fantail, and they were set for various depths from fifty to 300 feet. Then they'd shoot these four off the side, and that gave us pretty good coverage for anything we might have been over--if we were over a submarine.

We got those Y-guns installed, and when we went back to sea again, we joined a task force that was composed of the aircraft carrier, the Lexington, four cruisers, and six destroyers. We headed for the South Pacific, and we were gone fifty-five days that we didn't touch land. We traveled 19,243 miles in those fifty-five days.

Marcello: I have one last question, Mr. Pollan. Had you gone back to take a look at the West Virginia before you finally got aboard those destroyers and so on?

Pollan: As a matter of fact, I went back aboard two weeks after the attack had happened, and I couldn't believe my eyes. I just couldn't believe that they could do that...of course, it was sitting on the bottom, and it was flooded up to the main deck, and I couldn't go anywhere except

just on the main deck. Inside all of the paint had burned off the walls, all the linoleum had burned off the floor, all of the wood on the decks had in most of the places been burned off. It just made that seem like a running board. It wrinkled that iron, that metal, so. But I was transferred back to the West Virginia in April, 1942, and I did salvage work. I helped salvage it. I stayed on it and helped work on it and get it cleaned up and back in where we could sail it under its own power back to the United States. We left there the seventh of May, 1923, for Bremerton Navy Yard and sailed it back under its own power.

Marcello: What emotions did you experience when you went back and saw the destruction that had been done to the West Virginia later on? After all, it had been your home for...

Pollan: ...over four years...about four-and-a-half years.

Marcello: Over four years.

Pollan: Well, as I said, I was just dismayed. I couldn't believe it. My main concern was I had \$142 in my wallet down in my locker, and I wanted to get to that before somebody broke in there and got it, but, of course, I couldn't go down there because it was flooded. I eventually got it back.

Marcello: I had actually heard that there were people on the Tennessee that had come across and had done some looting on the West

Virginia. Do you know anything about that? Had you ever heard that?

Pollan: No, I hadn't heard that. I would be surprised. I don't put much faith in that because they wouldn't have been permitted to leave one ship for another without a pass. If the officer-of-the-day had caught them, he would have stopped them. I don't put much faith in that. It could have happened, I guess. They would have had to climb across those lines, and I imagine, though, that line had been chopped.

When the attack was underway, a friend of mine was trying to get from the West Virginia over to the Tennessee, and he was trying to scoot across these lines that had us tied together. Just about when he got about halfway between the two ships, the Arizona exploded and it blew him plumb off of that line into the water, and then he had to swim around to the shore.

Marcello: So you were actually one of the people who got the West Virginia shipshape again, or at least got it out of Pearl on its own power, and back to the States?

Pollan: Yes. I was on it when they got it up out of the water and moved it into dry dock. I went back aboard in April, and we didn't get it in drydock until the sixth day of June. That thing had a hole on that port side where those torpedoes had hit that was ninety feet high and 140 feet long. They

just had to build a wooden caisson to pump that water out to get it into dry dock. Then they prefabricated the whole section for all that damaged area. They just cut it out, lifted it out, set another one in, and welded it in.

Marcello: That's probably a good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much for having participated in this project. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure scholars are going to find your comments quite valuable when they get to use them.

Pollan: I hope so.