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Interview with
Earl L. Moudy
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Place of Interview: Austin, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
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Oral History Collection

Earl Moudy

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas Date of Interview: May 18, 1974

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Earl Moudy for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 18, 1974, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Moudy in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Now Mr. Moudy, to begin this interview, would you very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself? In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your present occupation--things of that nature. Be very brief and general.

Mr. Moudy: Okay. I was born on May 31, 1918, in Yoder, Colorado. I was born and raised on a farm and in town. I finished high school in 1936 and spent time farming, not so much for myself, but worked with neighbors and so forth. Then

in 1939, about six months or so after my mother died, things began to get pretty rough in Europe. Hitler was raising a lot of Cain. So I thought, "Well, right now might be a good time to get in the service." So I joined the Army, the Air Corps, in Fort Logan, Colorado, on November 17, 1939.

Marcello: Why did you decide upon the Army rather than some other branch of the service?

Moudy: To make a long story short, I'd went to the Navy first, and they turned me down because I was color-blind, so they said (chuckle). Well, I guess I am color-blind; however, one doctor told it was color fatigue more than color blindness. So I still wound up in the Army Air Corps.

Marcello: I gather from what you've said that you were motivated primarily by patriotism as much as anything else.

Moudy: You could say that, but like I said, the European situation was becoming more violent all the time. Hitler had already taken Poland. Everything you read in the paper said, "Well, Uncle Sam might be next." So I figured I might as well get in right then. So that's when I made my decision to try the Army Air Corps. I had a choice of going to Field Artillery or Coast Artillery or Air Corps, and I finally decided on the Air Corps.

Marcello: Where did you take your basic training?

Moudy: I didn't get too awfully much here in the States. I was sent to March Field, and I think I was there about two or three weeks. I've forgotten exactly. I spent about two weeks there, and I got started on basic training, and then, of course, everybody had signed up for assignments. Of course, I picked overseas. At that time, there was Hawaii, Panama, and the Philippines. Just about two days before we were to ship out to San Francisco, another fellow and I had decided we were going to trade places. We could get a mutual transfer. I would go to the Philippines, and he'd go to Hawaii.

Marcello: Had you originally signed up for Hawaii?

Moudy: I had signed up for Hawaii.

Marcello: Why did you particularly want to go to Hawaii?

Moudy: It sounded rather romantic-like, you know, being a young fellow about twenty-one years old. But I thought I wanted to go to the Philippines, and we figured up this mutual transfer, but we missed it by two hours. We were just a little too long, so I didn't make the Philippines. Thank goodness for that one because that boy didn't come back. So I wound up at Hickam, and then I finished my basic training there at Hickam.

Marcello: Did you go directly from San Francisco to Hickam Field?

Moudy: I went straight to Hickam Field.

Marcello: When did you arrive at Hickam Field? You might have to estimate this date, of course.

Moudy: Well, it's an estimate because it was in December. I spent Thanksgiving Day on March Field. I'd say it was somewhere around the middle of December. I'll say the 15th, 16th, somewhere along in there because it wasn't too long after that that I had my first Christmas in Hawaii, and I went swimming which was very unusual from where I came from anyway.

Marcello: Now what year are we talking about?

Moudy: 1939.

Marcello: You were there in 1939, approximately two years actually before the attack took place.

Moudy: Before the attack. That's right.

Marcello: And you mentioned that you took your basic training, what remained of it, right there at Hickam Field. This, I don't think, was too unusual during that peacetime service at that time, was it?

Moudy: No, it wasn't unusual because you got a smattering of basic wherever you signed in, and then you completed your basic training at your base, wherever you're assigned

for a permanent station. We had roughly, I'd say, six weeks, maybe eight, of pretty rigorous basic and small arms fire. We had .45 and rifle training. I wasn't good enough for expert. I did make marksman on a Springfield rifle. I just qualified, you might say, with a .45. It was just familiarization more than it was for accuracy on a .45.

Marcello: What was your particular job that you had after you got out of basic training?

Moudy: I went into what they called interior guard duty. I was there for, oh, roughly eighteen months, I believe. Yes, it was about eighteen months. I was there until about the middle of '41. Then I went to work in the base nursery--landscaping, potting flowers, and so forth. That's what I was doing at the time that the stuff hit the fan.

Marcello: Now at that particular time that you got to the Hawaiian Islands, Hickam Field was a relatively new base, was it not?

Moudy: It was a new base. In fact the original air base, I believe, was called Luke Field. It was over more on the north and westerly side of the island if I remember correctly. Of course, I was never there. Hickam was so new that when I first got there we was living in tents. They called them hospital tents. I think you could put

about sixteen men to a tent, and we had two rows of those tents. There must have been a couple hundred of us in the squadron there at that time. The mess hall was right at the head of these two rows of tents. We had a small laundry there--civilian laundry--where a lot of people took their clothing for laundry purposes. They were working on this new barracks. It was about a million-dollar barracks, but it wasn't completed. I think we lived in those tents about six or eight months, possibly a little longer, until they were completed. Then these men were all broken up and sent to different squadrons, and I wound up in this Headquarters, 17th Squadron, and in that interior guard duty position. I worked right out of the guardhouse.

Marcello: I would assume that the living quarters at Hickam after everything was completed were quite pleasant for an enlisted man.

Moudy: They were real nice. They had . . . this barracks . . . my explanation of it would be that it was kind of a extra-large in an elongated H with wings coming out from the center portion which housed the mess hall and the kitchens and all that. It was very centralized. Everything was centralized. It was real handy from any wing

to go to the mess hall. We had nice day rooms, and the squad rooms were all nice and clean. We had plenty of lockers--foot lockers, wall lockers. Those tile floors, we had to keep those things polished till you could pretty near see your face in them. In fact we got so rigid with our cleaning around there that if you come to the door, you take your shoes off and walk in your stocking feet so you wouldn't scratch up that floor.

Marcello: Generally speaking, was the peacetime service in that particular period a spit-and-polish outfit?

Moudy: Pretty much so. We had . . . oh, we'd have inspections, if I remember right, sometimes once a week on Saturday morning. Sometimes they'd skip a Saturday. The nice thing about it was that we always got Wednesday afternoons off, and payday afternoons and Saturday afternoons. Through the week people . . . I mean that worked on aircraft which I didn't do, if they had their airplane in commission and ready to fly and it was shined up and cleaned up, more than likely they were given permission to take off and go to town if they wanted to, but only if everything was ready to go.

Marcello: Would it be safe to say that the personnel at Hickam Field at that time were a highly trained group of individuals?

Moudy: I would say that they were pretty well-trained. We had training. We had to go to the rifle range every so often. About every six months we had gas mask training and so forth. You maintained that even after basic training. One thing that I remember, though, right now, is that I don't recall of having had any what you'd call real extensive aircraft recognition training. That came later. It became a whole lot more extensive after the raid.

Marcello: How would you rate the morale of the personnel at Hickam Field in these pre-Pearl Harbor days? Was the morale high, and if so, what was the reason for it?

Moudy: I wouldn't say that it was exorbitantly high, but it was . . . the morale wasn't low because everybody . . . like I said, we had Wednesday afternoons off, Saturday afternoons, and payday afternoon was always a half-day holiday. I didn't hear much griping too often amongst the men about their jobs. There's, oh, probably just a normal amount of griping here and there on maybe some things they didn't like--KP duty, getting it too often or something like that. But the morale wasn't what you'd call real low, and it wasn't going out of the top of the jug either.

Marcello: I assume that there was plenty to do both on duty and off duty here at Hickam Field to prevent boredom, and, of course, as you know, boredom can be one of the major factors involved in low morale.

Moudy: That's right. There was no boredom as far as I could see in the men there because there was always something to do. In fact, I myself, I used to pretty near every weekend go downtown and watch football games. The University of Hawaii had a nice team, and they had a semi-pro football team. Then we had our baseball team there on the base. They played against the Navy; they played the Schofield Barracks. We had a real good baseball team.

Marcello: I gather that you were constantly training while you were on duty, but, at the same time, would it be safe to say that there was nothing hurried about the training? There was a nice, steady, even pace. In other words, there really was never any sense of urgency in those months prior to Pearl Harbor. You had plenty of time to train and do things properly.

Moudy: Right. We had plenty of time. We spent time . . . like I said, every so often we'd go to the rifle range or

pistol range. We would have gas mask drills at more or less regular intervals. Prior to this situation we was on . . . well, we'd go on maneuvers actually about, oh, you might say every couple or three months. Of course, as far as going anywhere, there was no place to go, but we'd move out into the field, around the perimeter of the base, and set up tents, pull regular guard duty, carry on as if something could happen, and work out small problems and so forth like that.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you were a part of the on-base security during your . . .

Moudy: Interior guard duty.

Marcello: . . . interior guard duty during your stay here at Hickam Field at least in the beginning. What sort of duties did this entail?

Moudy: This interior guard, as far as we were concerned, was . . . it was guards around hangars, around aircraft. Then we had our main gate, and we had our bomb dump. Let's see, what other place did we use? Then we had a motor patrol. They called them MP's there, but it was strictly a motor patrol which was jeeps or carry-all type or a motorcycle. I didn't get on that, but I did

a lot of pulling my share of guard duty around hangars and aircraft and this bomb dump area. That was our guard duty, but we had to be on our toes and follow orders, general orders, which was actually the Bible as far as we were concerned.

Marcello: How difficult was it for civilians to come on this base? I'm referring now to civilians who did not necessarily work on the base. In other words, suppose a civilian came up to the main gate and wanted to get on the base. How difficult was it for him to get on?

Moudy: Well, he had to have a good reason for wanting to get on there to start with. Now I didn't do too much guard duty on that main gate until after this attack came on, but there I was . . . I did quite a bit of gate guard duty. But there were passes that were checked, and the guard . . . if the person didn't have a pass, he didn't get on there unless he had a reason. If he had somebody specifically he wanted to see, that person was called by the guard who said, "So-and-so is down here and would like to see you." Then he would have to fill out a pass and go directly to the building or wherever it was.

But we had a lot of civilians working there on the base in this . . . well, there was the laundry people,

and there was this Hawaiian Air Depot, which is a repair depot for aircraft. They had civilians working in there as well as military. They also had . . . I'm trying to remember whether they had those civilians who worked in the instruments shops and stuff like that after it started or not. I can't remember because they had moved a bunch of shops and stuff up away from the hangar line. I don't know whether they were in there before or after.

Marcello: The point is there were quite a few civilians that did work on the base itself.

Moudy: Right.

Marcello: Could you estimate the number? This would have to be a rough guess, of course.

Moudy: I don't know. I'd really hate to hazard too much of a guess because if it was wrong, and the wrong people hear it, I'd be in trouble (chuckle), but, oh, I'd say a couple of hundred probably. You know, there'd be . . . they'd drive . . . and there's another thing. You'd see these catering-type trucks come in like flowers and, oh, other delivery-type trucks that would come in from downtown. Of course, they always got in.

Another thing that was a little bit bad for us, Fort Kamehameha was off to the left of us there a ways. Their only way in and out of the fort was to come through Hickam Air Base there. Of course, all Fort "Kam" soldiers and personnel and . . . if there were civilians over there . . . I don't really know too much about Fort "Kam." I was only there a couple of times around the base; however, we did have to go over there--it was a matter of three-quarters of a mile--to the rifle range and pistol ranges. That's where they were. That Fort "Kam" was the Coast Artillery base, and it was a good-sized camp there.

Marcello: Now the Hawaiian Islands had, and still have, a relatively large Japanese population.

Moudy: Right.

Marcello: Now, being a part of base security during this period, how much thought did you and your particular unit give to the possibilities of sabotage or fifth-columnist activities on the part of these Japanese civilians?

Moudy: Well, we were always told on our guard duty that we were to challenge anybody and everybody that came around and be plenty sure that we knew who we were talking

to once we stopped them. It used to be kind of rough sometimes because it happened occasionally that when we'd get a rainstorm, the O.D. would have to go out and check the guard. He could get pretty upset if he had to get out of that car and get his nice uniform all wet and advance to be recognized. It happened more than once. They were really upset about it, but that is how strict we had to be. We had to follow those orders.

Marcello: But did you ever talk specifically about the possibility of the Japanese committing any sabotage or anything of that nature in the eventuality or war?

Moudy: Really, no, we didn't really talk about that because there was no indication that anything like that would ever be really necessary to watch that close.

Marcello: Did you have quite a few Japanese who worked as civilians on the base?

Moudy: I'm just trying to put that together and think of how many I might have seen. No, that's funny. I can't exactly place any particular area where they worked Japanese or Chinese, which there is a conglomerate of there, also. No, I really can't say exactly where . . . I couldn't pinpoint them anyway.

Marcello: In your off-hours bull sessions, how much did you ever talk about the possibility of the installations there being the target of some sort of a surprise attack? Did this thought ever cross your mind and the minds of your buddies?

Moudy: I can't think of any time that it did because one particularly good friend of mine . . . of course, we were usually together pretty close on weekends. He was in the bomber squadron. We were always downtown usually on weekends, especially Saturday nights. Sometimes we'd go on Friday nights. But it didn't occur to us too much. Of course, we tried to keep pretty good tabs on the European situation all the time. That was a big concern, but I don't think . . . I can't remember where we actually sat down and talked of the possibility of anything really getting rough in that specific area.

Marcello: Did you feel relatively secure there at Pearl Harbor since you were very far from anything, really?

Moudy: Yes, I believe that we did because . . . well, we're sitting way out there in the ocean. Of course, ships can get to it. We had two mail ships come in every

week from the Coast, and if they could do it, everybody else could. But it wasn't quite an idea that would dawn on you as to being insecure as far as that goes.

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

Moudy: Well, really I didn't think too much about it because you can walk downtown there in Honolulu, and you could see Chinese and Japanese running these little shops. To me they were just another human being making a living. I didn't particularly raise my eyebrows at them. As far as looks is concerned, I knew they were slant-eyed, and most of them were rather short in stature, but to actually identify them as Japs, I couldn't say, "Well, that's a Jap and this is something else." I didn't do that because it wasn't in my mind, that anything likely would happen at that time.

Marcello: I do know that on most occasions at Hickam Field, the planes that were there were usually lined up in nice, neat rows.

Moudy: That is right.

Marcello: What is the purpose or what was the purpose in putting them in those nice, neat rows? Was there some practical reason why that was done?

Moudy: As a guard I couldn't . . . the only thing I could figure or think of right now as to why it would have been done that way was the fact it was . . . one man could guard two airplanes a whole lot easier than he could if they were scattered out and he knew that they were in rows of three's alongside this hangar. What usually happened, if I remember how these posts were set up, one man would walk the entire area of the hangar, and the other man would walk among six airplanes on the ramp side of the hangar. That was his duty to go from one airplane to the next. At each hangar . . . see, there was three complete hangars on one side of the control tower, and there was two uncompleted ones on the other side of it. Those airplanes were lined up, I think, about three in a row, perhaps four. I forgot exactly how wide that ramp was. That was my theory of that--it was that much easier to guard instead of having them scattered out there.

Marcello: Well, this is a very important answer that you've just given here because many people, especially those who like to see a conspiracy involved in this whole Pearl Harbor business, like to think that the planes were lined up in nice, neat rows to make them a good target

for the Japanese. Well, ultimately, of course, they were a good target for the Japanese, but I think you've given a very good answer here in that actually they were set up in those nice, neat rows because they could be easily guarded against those saboteurs who might be present on the island, and they were also easy to refuel and to maintain when they were in nice, neat rows.

Moudy: Right. Well, I'll tell you. On that refueling, there wasn't . . . I wouldn't say it'd be any much more of a convenience there, except there would be a little less driving. But that isn't the problem there because they were serviced with trucks, both oil and gas. But another thing that was there maintenance-wise, it was a lot easier to get tools and equipment out of hangars to work on these things when they needed service and maintenance.

But, also, as far as that security is concerned, that hangar line was lighted by rather large floodlights on the side of the building. I'd say there was about three--one on each corner and one in the middle. That light just about covered the entire ramp. Of course,

there'd be a little out, deeper shadows, out a little farther away, but you could see anybody that come around there either on foot or in an automobile. The O.D. usually traveled in an automobile, and if he didn't, he never walked out amongst those airplanes. He always walked alongside of the hangar where he could be spotted easily.

Marcello: Did the guards who were guarding those airplanes have arms and live ammunition?

Moudy: That's right. We used .45's with full clips. I think we had nine rounds to a clip. Once anyone was challenged out there, if that person didn't halt, that guard automatically jacked a shell into the chamber, and he hollered again. Anyway, if that person didn't halt, that guard fired a shot over his head, and that usually stopped them there until they were recognized and found out.

Marcello: Did this happen on occasions?

Moudy: It happened shortly there before all this happened. I believe it was before that. It might have been later. But, anyway, this Hangar Avenue ran right by this H.A.D. hangar. It was a road that went on over into Fort "Kam."

Marcello: What is the H.A.D. hangar?

Moudu: Hawaiian Air Depot. That's what the . . . well, it's where they performed major maintenance on Air Corps aircraft at that time. No Navy, just Air Corps. But this road ran by this hangar, and it wound around the bay there a little bit. It was the entrance to Fort "Kam," and one night a car came through there--a convertible. We had guards around this hangar, also. He was to walk around this H.A.D. hangar. This car came down there, and there was a stop sign. He stopped and then he made his right turn and went on down toward the dock on this road that goes over to "Kam." The guard halted him. It was about nine or ten o'clock at night. He hollered, "Halt," but the car didn't stop. He hollered again three times as he was required to. After the third time and that car didn't halt, he loaded his .45 and fired one shot. That car burned rubber getting to a halt, I'll tell you! He stopped in a hurry. That particular time, it just happened to be a couple of soldiers from Fort "Kam," but they hadn't heard him hollar halt, but they heard that .45 when it went off.

Marcello: I assume that this type of security continued right up until the attack and obviously continued on after the attack.

Moudy: Right, and really more so afterwards. I believe that we had good security. We didn't have . . . as long as I was on the guard duty there on that force, we never did, that I know of or can remember of, bring anybody in that was not authorized in some way or another--legally.

Marcello: Did you actually participate in the guarding of the airplanes from time to time?

Moudy: I did. That's where you start. You start pounding the beat just like a rookie cop, and after you've worked there so long, you gradually worked up. I became a corporal of the guard and worked at a desk at the guardhouse. Well, actually rank was hard to come by, and I was what they called an acting corporal, or "Hollywood" corporal. Then we had a sergeant of the guard, and then we had the officer of the day. Each shift would change, oh, every four hours.

Marcello: Do you feel that there was sufficient manpower there to guard all of the airplanes sufficiently or adequately?

Moudy: Yes, I believe they were adequately guarded as far as anybody personally getting to them. Now as far as any mechanical means such as that attack we're about to come to . . . because we had a guard force, I think,

of, oh, roughly a hundred men. I'm not certain of the count. But we'd work four on, eight off, four on, eight off, four on, and twenty-four off. Nobody was hurt. Morale was good. Each man got his time off. He'd do what he wanted to in that time off.

Marcello: This more or less leads me into my line of questioning. How often did you have liberty? Now we've talked about this before to some extent, but let's go into it again.

Moudy: Well, in what respect do you refer to liberty here?

Marcello: I'm referring basically to liberty on weekends.

Moudy: On weekends? Well, as long as I was on this guard duty, I only got my weekends whenever I had my time off--regular twenty-four hours off. Sometimes I'd get Sundays. Sometimes I got Saturday. But it was a rotational basis. But up until I got on the guard duty and after I got off of this interior guard duty, after about eighteen . . . pretty near two years, eighteen months to two years. Like I said, we had Wednesday afternoons off, and we had payday afternoons off and Saturday afternoons off. Usually, if they had an inspection, it was on Saturday morning. After the inspection was over, it was "Goodbye, Charlie."

Marcello: How about Sundays?

Mouly: Sunday was always free, unless you had a duty of some kind. While . . . on guard duty, if you had to work, you had to be there. But, I mean, if it was an aircraft mechanic or something like that, they had their Sundays free.

Marcello: Generally speaking, Sunday was a day of leisure.

Mouly: Right.

Marcello: Even the people who were on duty didn't necessarily work that hard. People just had to be there in a great many cases. Isn't this correct?

Mouly: They had to be there, but as far as that guard duty thing was concerned, they were just as conscientious with their job when they were there as they were on any other day of the week, because they knew that they had to put in that four hours there. They didn't go lay down in the shade or go off in a corner someplace. They walked their posts as they were supposed to.

Marcello: Generally speaking, what percentage of the personnel at Hickam Field would be away on a weekend? Now this would vary, and, of course, you would have to estimate this.

Mouly: Right. It will vary, because, like we said before, there's several things people can do. They can go

downtown. They had a real nice skating rink or two down there, and there was usually football games. They had a beautiful YMCA. You could go swim or go . . . whatever you wanted to do. Of course, there's many fellows who had automobiles. You could drive around the island. I think it was ninety miles around the island. A lot of them went fishing. One friend of mine had a sailboat that we could tie up to a little old dock right down there close to the area where they unloaded tankers for Hickam and go out and sail in the bay, go fishing. Anything that a person wanted to do, why, they were free to do it.

Marcello: And, generally speaking, isn't it true that on a Sunday morning you could sleep in as long as you wanted to if you didn't have a duty?

Moudy: Right. If you didn't have duty of any kind, you could stay in the bed all day if you wanted to. Well, I don't know. Being a farmer, I never had the idea that I could stay in bed too long. Usually, when the sun came, well, I got up. That was almost a normal feeling for me.

Marcello: Okay. Now let's talk about Saturday, December 6, 1941. I want you to describe to me as best you can your

routine on that particular day from the time you got up until the time you went to bed, and then from that point we'll go into the Sunday itself.

Moudy: Well, let's see. On Saturday I don't really remember what I did do off-hand. I'm trying to think about that, but it seems to me like that a couple of people that I buddied around with . . . I think we went downtown, and we went out to Waikiki or someplace, and I think we might have gone to a movie. This I don't really remember.

Well, I guess we left about noon on Saturday, which is what's about normal, because . . . I don't remember whether we even had inspection that day or not, because we'd come off maneuvers on Friday and put everything away. I think maybe we had had a locker inspection that didn't amount to too much, and that was it for that Saturday. Everybody scattered off, went to town, went around the island, went up in the mountains, or whatever. I don't know. I believe, if I remember correctly, I think I came in--me and this buddy of mine--we came in back to the base about, oh, I'd say ten-thirty, eleven o'clock at night. We shot a couple of games of pool in the day room and went to bed. That was it for Saturday.

Marcello: Now generally speaking, as the weeks got closer and closer to Pearl Harbor--I mean the actual Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor--how did the routine of the base differ? Did security become more intense? Did there seem to be more of an urgency to everything that was being done? Were there more alerts or maneuvers or things of this nature?

Moudy: We had alerts but in the respect of an alert as we later interpreted them, it wasn't that there was anything going to happen, but we would . . . it was indicated that it could happen. So they called an alert.

I heard this one fellow say it was called in October, but I know that in November before this happened that we'd been on a two-week's alert. We were on maneuvers, what they actually called maneuvers, but as far as maneuvers were concerned, we moved out of our barracks and moved out into the field. We put up tents around the airbase. We lived in tents, and we ate at field kitchens, and everybody at that time would act like guards. Each squadron had a certain area they had to be responsible for. They'd put their guards out in this area, and that was their area to

take care of. This went on for two weeks, just like we were going to go into battle or something. We had live ammo, but we never had to use any of it. It was there if we would have had to. We had it. There were two weeks of this, and then we turned in on, like I said, on Friday evening, if I remember right. That's when we called it off. Then the fleet came in that day, too. You know, they began drifting in that week.

Marcello: Did you ever have blackouts or anything of that nature in the pre-Pearl Harbor days?

Moudy: Negative, negative. We never had a blackout that I can recall.

Marcello: You mentioned that Pacific Fleet just a moment ago. As I recall from what other people have told me, there was only a cyclone fence dividing Hickam Field from Pearl Harbor itself. Did you perchance have any opportunity to observe the Pacific Fleet in action, that is, the comings and goings of the various ships and this sort of thing?

Moudy: Yes, in a way, because we had the channel coming out of the ocean out there. The channel was one boundary edge of Hickam Field. If you happened to be down there along

this sea wall or if you happened to be down in the area where they unloaded those tankers, you could see subs going in or coming out, or you could see the big battlewagons going or coming. It wasn't too hard to see. But it was a common, everyday occurrence to hear those subs or some ship going out. You could always hear that little fog horn effect that they had. We really didn't pay too much attention to it because it was . . . they were supposed to be moving, so they had to go. I mean it wasn't unusual to watch them. But I never watched it much. Oh, maybe if I was down at the docks swimming or something like that, I would see something go in or come out, but I didn't pay any particular attention to it because it was normal for it to be going and coming out of the harbor.

Marcello: Did you perchance get over to Pearl Harbor very much?

Moudy: Yes, I did. I had a friend that I graduated from high school with. I believe he was on the USS California. I visited him a couple of times, and then I got acquainted with a couple or three other sailors who were, I believe, off the carrier Yorktown. Of course,

this was before Pearl Harbor. I was also acquainted with one or two of the submarine base, and I was asked to go over there. Several different times I'd go aboard ship and look at them and I did. I enjoyed it.

Marcello: How difficult was it to get on the base itself?

Moudy: As long as . . . when I went, I always went in uniform, and I had my pass with me, which was . . . you had to show it at the gate. They had Marine guards on the gate. They checked everything the way it was supposed to be. One or two times that I went over there, I went with this friend of mine. He'd come over to see me, and he'd say, "Well, let's go back over to the harbor." So we went back over there. As long as I had my pass, then they . . . the guard would recognize the pass. There was no problem.

Marcello: Okay. So you mentioned that . . . I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Moudy: I didn't go around this Marine gate too often, other than those times, so as to who and what they let in, I wouldn't know. But I'm pretty sure that they were strict on their passes, and they checked them out real well, just like we did.

Marcello: Getting back to your routine on Saturday, December 6, 1941, what time did you turn in that night?

Moudy: I'd say possibly as late as twelve o'clock. I wouldn't know for sure.

Marcello: I would assume that on the weekend, men were drifting in at all hours.

Moudy: Oh, yes. They drifted in and maybe they'd come in and maybe change clothes and go right back out again or something like that. I was just trying to think how many men might have been in the barracks that night. I don't really know off-hand, because . . . well, let's see. Those squad rooms, I think we could put about . . . if I remember right, there's about probably thirty men on each side of that bay. Like I said, some of them hadn't come in all night, or some of them had come in and changed clothes and gone, or some had gotten up early and already gone downtown or gone someplace. But how many, I couldn't actually say.

Marcello: Let's move over into Sunday morning, December 7, and let's describe your routine on that particular day from the time you got up until all hell breaks loose.

Moudy: Okay. I got up about seven o'clock, I would say. Actually, it was just a little farther past daylight than I'd usually waked up because, like I said, I

usually get up fairly early because, being a farmer, you usually awaken pretty early. It's a habit that's kind of stayed with me. But anyway, I got up a little after seven o'clock and went in and showered and shaved. I'm trying to remember again. I think I put on a uniform that morning instead of putting on civilian clothes.

But, anyway, I went over to the base exchange restaurant. I was going to have breakfast there instead of going into the mess hall. I got over to the restaurant a little too early. It didn't open until eight-thirty, so I started ambling back to the barracks. They had a row of temporary barracks, wooden barracks, that they'd put up because they were getting quite a few more personnel in at this time. They were forming those bomber squadrons and all that stuff, so they had these temporary, wooden barracks. Brand new, they were nice barracks.

But I was walking along there down a sidewalk when I heard this big explosion. So I turned around and looked back over in the direction of Pearl Harbor. It wasn't more than--I think from where I was down to that chain-link fence and that gate--probably, oh,

between a quarter and a half-mile. It was right close. I saw this wall of smoke go up. Man, it was a big one! I didn't know what to think of it. I just watched it for a little bit, and then I heard more explosions. The sirens begin to go off. They started pretty early after that explosion. Somebody was on the job over there to get them going.

I had the idea that possibly there was an ammo explosion. I know that those ships were loaded over there. It could have happened easy enough, accidentally or otherwise.

So I turned around, and I walked, oh, probably twenty yards on down the sidewalk, and I heard an airplane. I looked back and here was this one coming from the direction of the harbor. Well, they were painted almost the same color as the Navy aircraft--not exactly--and they looked a little bit like our Navy planes. He come down. He was real low. I saw this meatball on the side, but it didn't dawn on me what it was or why it was there.

Marcello: Up until this time I think you would describe your reactions as one of curiosity?

Moudy: More or less, curiosity. Like I said, we'd come off those maneuvers there on Friday, and my thoughts exactly at that time was, "Why would they start maneuvers again on Sunday morning? What is the Navy doing flying so low like this?" I thought it was the Navy. Like I said, I still saw the meatball on the fuselage, but I didn't know what it was. It didn't dawn on me.

I watched him, He was real low. He come right parallel to our parade ground. He was low enough that if I would have had a broom, I could've brushed him on the belly almost. So he goes on down this street until he came . . . well, he was almost over the control tower. He turned down this Hangar Avenue. That's the name of the street that runs right along with the hangars. There was a barracks beside the hangar because on the opposite side is where the aircraft and everything was parked. He flew down this Hangar Avenue, and I saw something drop from that bird, and there was a cloud of smoke and dust.

Marcello: About how far away were you from the explosion?

Moudy: From the explosion? It was a block, but, I mean, it was open because there was just a wing to the barracks there between me and this explosion. Now where he had dropped that bomb was right in front of our guardhouse and fire station. It was right at an intersection of that Hangar Avenue and this one street there.

That's when I figured it was not maneuvers! I took off running. I went across this parade ground. It was about fifty yards or a little more possibly to the barracks, to the wing where I lived in. I was pretty close. I was almost back to it.

Marcello: You only saw this one plane up to this point?

Moudy: That's the only one I'd seen right up to that point, yes, sir. I went on across that parade ground and went to the supply room.

Marcello: Did the rest of the base seem to take notice of this plane?

Moudy: Here's the whole thing. I can't remember of anybody walking along that same street where I was. I don't remember other people being anywhere right around in

that area. I didn't think of it. I just took off. I didn't think that was the right place to be after I saw that stuff drop.

But when I got to the supply room, there was several men. I wouldn't hazard to guess as to how many, but they were in there and beginning to get guns and helmets and canteens and everything like that and ammunition. I got mine.

Marcello: In other words, there was somebody at the storeroom. Did anybody have to break into the small arms locker or anything of this nature?

Moudy: No. Here's what happened. There was a corporal in there. The supply sergeant was downtown. He'd been downtown Saturday night to the ballgame or something. He hadn't come in yet. If I remember right, I think there was a corporal and this supply sergeant that slept in the supply room. They had bunks in there and their equipment. The corporal had got the pistol rack open, and he didn't have a key to the rifle rack. So everybody got pistols and holsters and belts and ammunition and helmets and a canteen. I don't remember even then whether we got gas masks at that time or not. I think we got those later. But anyway, that corporal

shot the lock off the rifle rack because he didn't have the key for it. It was a good, heavy GI lock, but he still shot it off. So each one of us grabbed a rifle and a bandoleer of ammunition.

Then we went to the orderly room. We went right straight down through the wing of the barracks to the orderly room. It was on the far end away from us where the supply room was. Here's the first sergeant and I . . . here again, I wouldn't hazard to guess as to how many men there were there, but I'd say fifty or sixty probably.

Marcello: Why did you go to the orderly room? Was this just the standard routine to do in such a situation, or were you told to go there?

Moudy: No, I think we all went there because . . . I really don't know why we went there, but it seemed like a logical place to go and gather, you know, to see what was actually coming off. The first sergeant, he didn't know anymore than we did. He says, "We're under attack of some kind from somebody."

Marcello: Now, up until this point, would you describe the reactions of the people there as one of perplexity

as much as anything else, or was it panic and confusion?

Moudy: No, I'll tell you. It wasn't panic or confusion, because, if it had have been, I don't believe that we'd ever have been able to get hold of those guns and stuff as fast as we did. Personally, I felt that we had to get something. I figured if this was an alert, we still had to get our equipment and get ready to go. No, I don't believe that these men would be what you would call panicky. Confused, yes, because right out of the clear blue, you don't really expect it.

Marcello: How much time had elapsed from the time that you had initially spotted that airplane until you had gone through the procedure of getting this equipment and finally ending up in the orderly room?

Moudy: Actually, I don't know whether I could put it in a time perspective or not.

Marcello: Was it less than a half-hour?

Moudy: Yes. It was considerably less than a half-hour, because this has all come out later. That thing actually started at 7:55, five minutes to eight o'clock. So from the time that I heard the first explosion over there at Pearl Harbor till I got to

that supply room after I saw this . . . and then I saw this one bird flying down there and dropped that bomb on our base, I'd say it was less than . . . I'd say it was somewhere between five and ten minutes by the time we got things and had reported to that orderly room. I don't know. It seemed like ages as far as that goes after things began to . . . that wasn't just one plane that dropped that stuff. There were several that come in from many directions.

Marcello: By this time, more planes had arrived over the base.

Moudy: Right. There was more of them that come over the base. How many more, I don't really know, because one came in from one direction and dropped a bomb at a junction. It was in the lawn, but it was the junction of two different wings of the barracks. The concussion and shrapnel . . . we called them "grass cutters" later. They'd broken the glass doors and threw glass all around us, but nobody got cut with it. Then while all these fellows were gathering there around that orderly room and in this barracks lobby, there was one that came in from another direction--I believe it was about the southwest--and he dropped either a bomb or torpedo, or whatever they were using--we never did see it--right

between the second and third floor of that barracks. It isn't hard to understand there because those barracks had no windows in them. We just had screen wire because over there in the tropics you don't need windows. You do have glass doors. Then, also, there was more of them, like I said, that hit that hangar line out there. They tore up many, many airplanes because they were lined up out there.

Marcello: Were you able to see all this?

Moudy: We could only see portions of it through windows or through openings there in our barracks, but you could hear the explosions. They were real close because from where we were in our barracks was just across this Hangar Avenue to a hangar. I would say from the barracks out to that parking ramp was not more than fifty, maybe sixty, yards.

Marcello: Where did you go from the orderly room?

Moudy: The first sergeant got a phone call from base headquarters. Of course, this headquarters squadron that I was in, that's where they usually called to get their details for what they used to call in those days, "police and prison" and fatigue details and so on and so forth and that type of thing.

So this call came in, and the base commander asked the first sergeant, he said, "I want two men." He said, "I need some runners. So, if you can," he said, "send me two men right quick." So he picked another man and myself. He says, "Leave your rifles here in the orderly room." He said, "You're going to be running and you won't need no rifle. Just take your .45."

So we took off up the hill to the . . . well, it wasn't up a hill, but it was up at base headquarters, and we reported to the base commander. He said, "What I want you to do is to go down to this sea wall between us and Pearl Harbor down there by the fence. I want you to keep your eyes open and see if there's any attempts for landings along that sea wall by enemy personnel." I don't recall that he said Japanese or what, but he said enemy personnel.

Marcello: By this time you did know that those planes were Japanese?

Moudy: We did know that they were Japanese then. So that's what he wanted us to do. So this other fellow and myself . . . they had a quarters area there for . . . well, they had NCO quarters and officers' quarters. We went running down toward this sea wall. We dodged in and out of those quarters and under palm trees.

Marcello: Did you come under attack by Japanese planes during this sprint down to the sea wall?

Moudy: Well, I'll tell you what. I'll put it this way. I don't know whether we were actually . . . well, we were under attack all the time there. I figure . . . some people said there was two waves. Some said there were three because there was a kind of a pause in there between what we call raids, I guess, but I believe that it was more or less all one attack. But there was kind of pauses in there where they would, I guess, gain altitude or something and come back in.

The Navy was firing. Ships that had guns and could get ammunition to them, they were firing everything they could. There was shrapnel falling all around us from, I guess, both the enemy action and Navy, because they were shooting everything they had. There was shrapnel of all kinds.

So we dodged around these buildings and under palms and got down to that sea wall. There was quite a few trees along the wall, too, so we kept under those for cover and watched for landings and stuff like that. There was nothing that ever attempted to come into that harbor that we could see.

So while we were standing there under those trees, we watched that harbor. It was on fire. I mean it was literally a lake of fire!

Marcello: I gather that you had a very, very good view of the harbor from this position.

Moudy: Well, a portion of it. The portion where we were, I couldn't see the main portion over there where the Arizona was sunk and all those other ships because that was farther back to our right. But where I was, this channel that comes in out of the ocean into Pearl, it just starts widening out into Pearl Harbor. I could see Ford Island. It was directly across from us. Then this one Japanese aircraft came in pretty low, and he strafed a ship that was tied there at a dock. That ship, of course, he was shooting back at him, and then there was ships farther back to our right. They were shooting at the aircraft. He got over that ship, and he pulled into a climb. I couldn't estimate the distance, but he was close, and his belly was exposed, so I took three shots at him with a .45. If I'd have had that Springfield rifle, it would have been much different, I believe.

Marcello: I assume that you shot because you felt that you had to do something.

Moudy: That's right.

Marcello: I'm sure that you had a sense of futility. There you were. You really couldn't do anything, and you had to fight back with something . . .

Moudy: Yes.

Marcello: . . . and probably if you'd had only some rocks, you would have thrown those.

Moudy: If I'd had rocks, I would have thrown them. The Navy fellows said later that they threw everything they had except their helmets. They even threw the potatoes at those, if they could hit it.

But I don't know. I've heard it said several times since then, that they thought we were kind of unprepared. Well, maybe we were, but we got to our equipment pretty fast. Like I say, such as it was, a .45 is ineffective as far as an airplane is concerned, but at least you try to do something with it. You've got something in your hand that you can use. Since they weren't planned, we might as well get our shots in, too.

Like I said, I fired three. Then . . . well, I don't know. It's too far back to remember, but I don't believe I could have hit him, because he was . . . I couldn't

estimate his speed, but he was broad-bellied, and was kind of pulling up away from me at the time, but I shot in that direction. That was all of the shooting I got to do that day.

Marcello: Did you remain down at the harbor area until after the attack was over?

Moudy: Yes, I did. We stayed down there until those ships stopped coming across there, bombing or strafing. We stayed there undercover and watched until they quit flying. That's when we reported back to our base headquarters and told the base commander that we hadn't seen anything down there other than the harbor being on fire. There was no landing attempts made along that sea wall because there was no ships that come in after . . . now the Navy was getting some out. There were ships underway, but there was nothing trying to come in that we could see.

So the base commander said, "That's all I need you for right here." He said, "Go on back to your orderly room." So we went back down there. The first sergeant was putting crews together, and said, "We got to start digging bomb shelters now." So there was four of us--three other men and myself--he said, "Go back up to the

hospital there." He said, "They're going to need one up there, a pretty good-sized one."

So we went up and just to the north and east of the hospital building, oh, probably twenty yards. There was a bomb crater. They had come that close to the hospital. They said that would be a good place to start, because the hole was already started. They got us a jackhammer, and an air compressor, picks and shovels. We started working on that hole, enlarging it. We had sandbags, and we were filling that with the diggings out of the hole. That coral (chuckle)! Most of that island is coral and lava rock anyway. That's the hardest stuff to dig you ever saw. We dug there all day and got a good-sized hole dug and boarded it up and sand-bagged it for a bomb shelter. We finished it up about nine o'clock that night.

Then they'd set up a command post and a temporary kitchen down by the water tower, which was about a block or so from where we were, so we went down there. They were just about out of everything except a little bit of coffee and some

ham and a slice of bread, so that's what we got for supper that night. That was my breakfast for that Sunday, also.

Marcello: I would assume that by this time the base was one big rumor mill.

Moudy: I'll tell you what. I don't think there were too awfully many rumors going around. There was one thing I want to mention back up there while we were digging that hole. I had to . . . I forgot what it was, but somebody wanted something from the mess hall down at this barracks. So while the other guys was digging, I went down there to look for it--whatever it was. I can't remember who it was, but one of the cooks had wanted something. I wanted to take just a slight break from that jackhammer, so I said, "I'll go." On the way down I run into several--I don't know just how many--different guys. They was saying, "Did you see this or did you see that?" They mentioned lots of things that happened and they had noticed. Right behind this barracks where the mess hall started in there, I saw pieces of two or three bodies laying there on the sidewalk, but it was in amongst the rubble and stuff. They'd knocked that mess hall out completely.

I can't say for sure about this, but I heard from other people that worked there on that clean-up, that they found four men in the walk-in cooler inside the mess hall where they had closed that door, and then when that bomb hit that mess hall, the concussion killed them. I didn't see them. I didn't want to.

Marcello: What did the base look like in the aftermath of the attack? I would assume that you didn't see a whole lot of what was going on there during the attack itself, since you were down by the harbor.

Moudy: No. I'll tell you. There was bomb craters in practically every area of that base. They was out on the ramp where they'd blasted those ships. There were several craters out there. Of course, they burned and shattered some of those B-17's, and then right there by our barracks there was a huge bomb crater. Then around the hospital there was two, including that one that we dug out to make that shelter.

And then there was one where our baseball diamond was. We had a real nice baseball diamond there, but that thing looked like somebody with the smallpox. There was bomb craters all over that area. What we were told later by people that found . . . there was one plane that

crashed into this H.A.D. hangar. It didn't burn, so they got the guy out of it, and they found maps on him. It indicated that that baseball diamond was where that aqua system was supposed to be, but in reality the aqua system, which was out gas storage area, was about thirty yards from the edge of this baseball diamond. In other words, it was outside of that baseball diamond area. But they never touched that. They missed it completely. If they hadn't have bombed that baseball diamond and had have hit that aqua system, we'd have been out of gasoline. That's all there would have been to it. There would have been an awful good fire right there. Our main and only fires that I can remember--and, of course, a lot of this happened after I'd left our orderly room--was up in the hangars. There were burned-out areas in the hangars and all around those ships up there.

Marcello: What damage did you see done to the planes themselves?

Moudy: This I didn't see until after . . . I believe it was the next day before I saw torn-up aircraft, because, like I said, I worked well into the night on the bomb shelter. I can't even remember the number of them, but there was a lot of them that were burned and melted

down out there from the fires. That one hangar was hit real bad, and it burned out, and there was several aircraft in the hangar. Of course, they were in there for maintenance purposes and so forth.

Now there was people that told me, that worked on the hangar line and on aircraft, that even during that raid, they went out there with tugs and started spreading those aircraft out just as far and as fast as they could. Some of them were shot at. Some of them were hit, but they did get some of them out away from the buildings and away from other burning aircraft. They did get some of them out of there.

Marcello: I would assume that night, while you were digging that bomb shelter, you must have heard sporadic gunfire coming from here, there, and yonder.

Moudy: No, sir. That happened after we completed this thing. Like I said, we got done about nine o'clock that night and went down to that command post, that temporary kitchen. Now while we were there, there was some airplanes that came in. Of course, I didn't know it-- and I don't believe anybody else knew it at the time-- but they were our own. But everybody was trigger-happy,

and they didn't make any bones about it. They shot. That sky looked like the Fourth of July with tracers of red, yellow, and green. It literally looked like they was coming from all directions, too, so . . . I don't remember what other people did, but I found me a place under a GI truck, and I watched it from there. But there was a lot of shooting, and it lasted, I'd say, roughly five or ten minutes, maybe. It might have been less than that, because those planes didn't tarry long in the area. They came in. They were fairly low, but they didn't stay long. Whether there was any of them hit or not, I couldn't tell you because I couldn't see it. All I could see was tracers.

Marcello: When you finally had a chance to survey the extent of the damage that was done at Hickam Field, what sort of thoughts went through your mind?

Moudy: Why? That was the big question--why?

Marcello: What were your feelings toward the Japanese as a result of what happened?

Moudy: I'll tell you. They were rather bitter by then. I think it was about two or three days, possibly two days--I don't know for sure--I went back on guard duty.

Like I said before, I'd been working in the nursery. I went back on guard duty, and I was working at the main gate. Of course, we hadn't gone back to permanent quarters yet. We still lived in these squad tents. We had two of them set up just inside the main gate, and that's where the guards stayed. They even brought our chow out to us in trucks. So we'd be on four and off four, on four and off four. It wasn't the old system of on four and off eight.

Of course, traffic was rather thick. We had traffic coming out of Honolulu. It was almost as much coming into Hickam as there was going into Pearl Harbor. There was about . . . if I remember right, I think there was three lanes. Part of it would peel off and come in the Hickam gate, and the rest of it would go on down the road to the Pearl Harbor gate. It was our duty to get out there and keep that traffic moving, so it wouldn't jam up too much. Of course, the Marines checked real close, and traffic could only move so far, and they let them through just as they could, you know.

Our biggest problem, and this is a belief of mine-- I don't know whether it could be true or not--but I was

out in the middle of that street moving traffic there one morning. I don't know why, but for some reason or another, traffic had slowed to almost a snail's pace and then stopped. There was a Japanese-looking fellow in a car. I don't know that he was. I won't say that he wasn't, but to me he looked like a Japanese. The car behind him accidentally bumped his bumper. Of course, I was standing there. I heard it. It wasn't hard, but he hit it. That guy in the car put his car in reverse, and he gently bumped the car behind him, and he did that about two or three times. Like I say, I don't know whether I should've or not, because I wasn't sure what the man really was, but he looked Japanese to me. Of course, by that time we'd cut the flaps off the holsters on our .45's, so we didn't have to open that flap to get them out. I walked over to the car. I told him, I said, "Mister, one more time, and I'm going to pull this thing out and shoot you right where you're standing, right where you're sitting." But I never did. But that was my thought, because I do believe he was creating a situation.

Marcello: I guess it would be safe to say that probably most of the people there at Hickam and at other places on

the island had a certain degree of anger toward any Japanese from that point on.

Moudy: That's right. I'm pretty sure that they did. Anybody that looked like they might be Japanese or related to them or even . . . we had a lot of mixed blood there, too. There was Hawaiian and Portugese and Japanese and Chinese. You couldn't always tell exactly just who was exactly what because a lot of them looked quite a bit alike. The only person that I believe that I could definitely tell wasn't Japanese was the Hawaiians themselves, because there was quite a bit of difference in the facial makeup of the Hawaiian and Japanese.