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**THE ADMIRAL NIMITZ HISTORIC SITE -  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Center for Pacific War Studies  
Fredericksburg, Texas**

**Interview with**

*ROLAND*  
**Ronald W. Eberheart**

**U.S. Navy, USS Arizona & USS San Francisco**

**September 23, 2001**

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**Interview with  
R. W. Eberheart**

**Mr. Nichols:** This is Chuck Nichols for the National Museum of the Pacific War at 3:30 PM on December 6, 2001, and I'm sitting here with Roland Eberheart, and we're going to talk with him about his experiences at Pearl Harbor. And before we get into Pearl Harbor, Mr. Eberheart, I have a few questions to ask you. When and where were you born?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I was born in Melville, Wisconsin, August 6, 1919.

**Mr. Nichols:** And your parents were from Wisconsin?

**Mr. Eberheart:** My parents were born in Wisconsin.

**Mr. Nichols:** What did they do?

**Mr. Eberheart:** My parents were farmers. Dairy farmers in Melville, Wisconsin.

**Mr. Nichols:** Dairy farmers in Wisconsin. Now that's unusual. You don't find many dairy farmers in Wisconsin. That's the land of milk and cheese.

**Mr.. Eberheart:** Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you have any brothers and sisters?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I had three brothers and two sisters.

**Mr. Nichols:** And did any of them serve in the military also?

**Mr. Eberheart:** My younger brother served in the European war and he was drafted sometime during the war, I think the first campaign he was in was when they landed in Italy.

**Mr. Nichols:** And you went to grammar school and high school right there?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I went to eighth grade in grammar school and four years in high school. Graduated in 1937.

**Mr. Nichols:** And what did you do after graduation? Did you go on to college or did you find work in the community, or was that when you enlisted?

**Mr. Eberheart:** That is the time I enlisted. After looking around for possible jobs and stuff, and at that time there wasn't too much available, so I enlisted in the United States Navy.

**Mr. Nichols:** And where did you go to boot camp?

**Mr. Eberheart:** At Great Lakes, Waukegan, Illinois.

**Mr. Nichols:** And was there any particular reason you chose the Navy over the Army or the Marines?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Actually, I had enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard back in 1936 when I was a junior in high school. They needed people to go to camp, their summer camps and stuff, and they wanted people there that were available if they had a funeral for a veteran of World War I and they wanted a military funeral. The farmers in Wisconsin that made up most of the National Guard, they were busy haying, they had their chores to do, they didn't really care to leave, and they tried to have a squad of people, of students from the high school, that they could call up. They'd call the principal and tell him that they had a funeral at two o'clock in the afternoon, and you'd go down, put your uniform on, and march out in front of the hearse, and shoot three shells in the air, and it made it easy. But then two weeks in the summer you had to go to camp. And after going to camp for a couple of years I decided at that time, I don't think the Army is for me, not when they have something like the Navy.

- Mr. Nichols:** And after boot training, did you go to any special school, or did you go straight to ship and ??? on the ship, or . . .
- Mr. Eberheart:** I was assigned to the USS Nevada, which was stationed at, I guess you'd call it, Long Beach, California, Los Angeles Harbor.
- Mr. Nichols:** And what kind of specialty did you train into?
- Mr. Eberheart:** I was Apprentice Seaman in boot camp and Apprentice Seaman Second Class on board ship. I was assigned to the Second Division, which was a deck force. Battle Station Number Two, turret ?.
- Mr. Nichols:** And when did the Nevada sail for Pearl Harbor? Did you go to other places before you went to Pearl, or did you . . .
- Mr. Eberheart:** For about two years we were stationed on the West Coast at Long Beach, it was our home port. We'd go up to Bremerton about once every year and have the bottom cleaned and painted, and we'd go to Bellingham one year when they observed Navy Day, and we'd go to San Francisco if we needed repairs. Hunter's Point(??) I think it was, they had the dry dock. And we'd go up and down the coast. In 1938 we took the ROTC students from the university, UCLA, and the University of California, and I guess the University of Washington, and we went up the coast and picked some up and took them on the summer cruise to Hawaii, which was kind of interesting. The first time I'd ever got to Hawaii. We'd go through the drills and stuff that the Navy goes through, the gun firing and fire drills, and go to sea and practice. In 1940 they had their fleet maneuvers which were designed to cross the National Date Line, and we got a little guff from Japan about getting too close. Anyway it ended up that Roosevelt decided to keep the fleet at Pearl Harbor. And from then on, the latter part of 1940, we were stationed at Pearl Harbor. We did maneuvers out of Pearl Harbor and in 1941 we had an admiral, if I remember correctly Admiral Richardson, he was in charge of the fleet there at that time, and we didn't go into Pearl Harbor

anchoring over the weekends. If you went for repairs. We'd anchor at Maui, off Lahaina Roads??, deep sea anchorage. From what I understand he was in a little conflict with our President Roosevelt about keeping the fleet out of Pearl Harbor. He didn't think it should be out of Pearl Harbor, he thought it should be on the West Coast. That's the West coast of the United States. Anyhow, he got relieved of his command and that is when Admiral Kimmel took over in the summer or fall of 1941. I understand that Kimmel was jumped over about 18 or 19 people that were eligible for the job, for what reason I don't know, but for some reason he was picked over, at the time it was routine to take the next senior person who was qualified for the job.

**Mr. Nichols:** And that's why Nimitz was reluctant to take command, because he had to be promoted over 26 or 28 other admirals.

**Mr. Eberheart:** That's the way I understand it.

**Mr. Nichols:** That's what I heard. So your ship, the Nevada, was at Pearl then the morning of December 7th? Had you been there before that and it was tied up and . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** As I remember it, the battleships were in two divisions there. In our division we had the Nevada, Oklahoma, Arizona, and who else—there were four of them in each division. And we would go to sea for two weeks for our drills, gunnery practice, and stuff, and then we'd come into port for two weeks for maintenance and R&R. Usually when we'd come in Friday afternoon or early evening, you could just see the other division leaving, they had left the port, Pearl Harbor, a couple of hours sooner. You could see them going over the horizon. And for some reason or other, this weekend, December 5, I guess it was when we came in, all of them were still in port. Of course, the only thing we could do was tie up alongside of them and wonder, the average person didn't know what was going on. But they were there, so we just tied up, and we just sat on December 7th

and when the Japanese attacked, all the battleships were in port.

**Mr. Nichols:** Were you tied up alongside of a battleship?

**Mr. Eberheart:** No, we had our anchorage right behind the Arizona. We were tied up by ourselves. And that was one of the reasons why the Nevada was able to get under weigh when some of the battleships could not.

**Mr. Nichols:** And where were you at 7:55 in the morning when the Japanese . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** I had the duty that weekend. I had the watch down in the fire room, the number two fire room, the four to eight watch in the morning. I had just made Second Class Petty Officer in November of '41, which made me—Second Class had charge of the auxiliary watch when he was in port. But we had problems down in the number two fire room with water in the fuel line and trying to get that straightened out, and they said “Just hang in there, we’re going to light number three off” because we wanted to take the launch over at eight o’clock. This is one of reasons why the Nevada was able to get under weigh where some of the other battleships couldn’t because it’s normal to only have one boiler lit off while you’re in port. Anyway I believe that at eight o’clock—we got relieved earlier, but at eight o’clock I went out and had breakfast and of course that’s when the attack came.

**Mr. Nichols:** Were you down in the galley then?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I’d just got through breakfast, I was down in the living compartment, and the first I knew about it was on the Nevada there was the communication department just below our living quarters, below the armored deck there, and one of the fellows came charging up the ladder there and he said, “The Japs are attacking, we’re being attacked.” It didn’t mean anything, it just didn’t seem feasible, but about fifteen seconds later the general alarm went off and “Man your battle stations,” which we did. Number six was my

battle station so we all ran down there and went through the routine of reporting in, manned and ready, to the engine room. It was about that time, probably five minutes after the alarm sounded, that the ship shuddered and we knew we'd been hit. We took one torpedo on the bow on the port side, and in a few minutes the ship started listing to the port, and then another ten minutes later it went back on an even keel when they compensated on the starboard side so we were all right then. But right after general quarters sounded, after the attack started, they ran the flags up on the, I forget which ship, the signal for all ships to sortie. Get up, get under weigh, get out and meet the enemy. Then the question arose, can we get under weigh? Because we didn't really have any officers on board ship. Of the fifteen officers aboard the Nevada that morning that were above the rank of ensign, we only had two aboard, and one of them had left the ship to go over to the Solaris?? for Catholic services for church, so we had one officer aboard and he was a reservist down in supply. We had warrant officers aboard, and they decided that we could get out, which we could, but it was just a matter of waiting for the routine we'd been used to where you get the command from the senior officer to get under weigh. So we got under weigh but by the time we cut the line - we had steam enough within ten minutes where they could get under weigh - but by the time they got to cutting the lines and our chief quartermaster was up on the bridge and he was taking it out, which he had done before, a lot of times, and about 8:30 they pulled out into the channel, no tugs, usually it was normal to have two tugs there to pull you out to the middle of the channel so you can just go right straight ahead and hit the channel you want to the ocean. But the chief quartermaster, he backed it up and forward, and he got it swung out there, and away we went. That was about the time when the first wave was through. We'd been torpedoed once and we'd been hit with bombs, I think we took about three hits with bombs, and about that time we down in the fire room, actually there wasn't much to do, we were just waiting for the rest of the ship to get things lined up, and the main engines warmed up so they could go. We took

turns to go up topside and see what was happening. We were way down in the fire room, we couldn't get anywhere on the ship. About 8:30 it was my turn to go up and see, and that's when I saw that the Arizona was burning, and the Oklahoma had rolled over, and oil all over the place, and where the bombs hit, it was just like somebody'd butchered and this type of thing. It was a wake-up call as to what war can really be.

**Mr. Nichols:** And it all happened almost in the blink of an eye, didn't it. It was only eight minutes for the Arizona to sink, and not long for the Oklahoma to capsize. I guess the Utah rolled up on its side, and actually the Nevada was the only ship that got under weigh, wasn't it?

**Mr. Eberheart:** The Nevada was the only battleship to get under weigh, but when we got under weigh, we were down in the water probably two or three feet, because of the flooding that we had done. I was on topside looking at them, the bomb hits and the damage that was done, as there were no planes attacking us. After being up there for three or four minutes you could see in the distance where planes were approaching and the second wave was coming in. So I figured, well, I better get back to the fire room. I spent the rest of - in fact, the whole engagement I was down below deck. So I didn't see any of the stuff, it's a matter of what you could get from a person that had the smoke watch detail, and what the people up topside said. but it was - they meant business.

**Mr. Nichols:** When the Japanese planes came across the Nevada again, were they dropping any more bombs?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Oh yeah. When the second wave came and they saw the Nevada out in the channel, heading out towards the channel to go out, then they concentrated on the Nevada and they tried to sink her in the channel. They hit us, with a near miss a dozen times, there were missiles and stuff, but they hit us about five times. We took five real



severe hits. And we got out to where the Navy yard is and Hospital Point is, we got word from the beach, "Don't go into the channel. You guys are sinking." From what I hear they sent signals over for us to return to where we'd come from, where we'd been tied, which was an impossibility to do with a big ship like that we couldn't get turned around. So they floated around Hospital Point with her nose up into the beach for five, ten minutes and then they sent a couple of tugs out, took us across the channel and just pushed us into the beach on the other side of the channel, and they tried to push us in stern first so that if it sunk, it would stay on a level keel and wouldn't capsize like - which it did. It did have a little list. But there we sat and they were pumping the bilges, we were trying to keep the fire room pumped out to keep steam pressure up. And we spent the rest of the day aboard ship. We stayed in the fire room, the engine rooms were flooded, dynamo, generators, only had one that operated, so we had electricity. We keep steam pressure up in one fire room so that the bilge pumps would work and we were pumping and we spent all night aboard the ship, trying to keep it so we could have power. But the water was getting the best of us, it was creeping up higher and higher, and about six o'clock the next morning they passed the word, "Let's abandon ship." We all came up topside and they had boats alongside and when we abandoned ship, we just stepped into a launch and they took us to the beach. Didn't even get our feet wet.

**Mr. Nichols:** How many sailors were killed?

**Mr. Eberheart:** We had about close to a hundred casualties on the Nevada.

**Mr. Nichols:** Was that the wounded?

**Mr. Eberheart:** This was wounded and - about fifty fatal casualties and about fifty guys that were wounded. We were very fortunate that it wasn't more than that. I went up to the gun deck and they dropped a bomb right in the middle of that. Of course the guns at that time didn't

have spinner?? shields around them and left them out in the open and a bomb hitting like that would just wipe the crews out. They had to get replacements crews up there to keep shooting. We had about fifty casualties, fatal casualties, and about fifty guys that were wounded.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you have any close friends that were killed or wounded aboard ship?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Not at that time. Later on - the first few days after Pearl they put out the word "Don't volunteer." A lot of these ships were coming in asking for different grades from the shore?? and people from the battleships were volunteering but they said, "Don't volunteer because we're going to keep the crew together, the Nevada isn't damaged that bad, we'll get her up and go back to Bremerton and get overhauled, and we want the crew to be able to stay with her." But after several days they realized that they miscalculated what time it takes to do that, so they broke the crew up and I was assigned to the San Francisco heavy cruiser.

**Mr. Nichols:** How long did it take them to get the Nevada back up and running?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I understand it was about April, about four months.

**Mr. Nichols:** About four months to get operational again.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I spent the rest of the war on the San Francisco. It was a very good ship.

**Mr. Nichols:** And where did you go then from Pearl on the San Francisco?

**Mr. Eberheart:** On the first deployment, the fifteenth of December we left Pearl and made up a task force of the Minneapolis, we had another aircraft carrier with us, I guess it was the Saratoga. And with the troop transports we went all the way up to Wake Island to reinforce Wake

Island. After three or four days, or two or three days, or whatever it takes to get up there, scout planes going in, the were Japs all over the place. The Japs were attacking. I don't think they had captured Wake at that time. Our Admiral decided that he'd make an offensive sweep to the east. We got out of there - that was the first mission we went on, I went on, after the war started. The rest of the year we took part in what they called "Blunders of the Pacific."

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you get over to Guadalcanal?

**Mr. Eberheart:** We patrolled down around Samoa early in the year because the Japs had - American Samoa - a Jap submarine surfaced and fired some shots over on the beach and they thought the Japs were maybe thinking about landing there so we patrolled down there for three or four weeks. This was when the battle, the Midway battle, was going on. We missed that entirely. And after that we took a convoy of troops down to Auckland, New Zealand, the first American troops that went down to New Zealand, and those people were real happy to see us. Then they started - well, we'd been down to the Guadalcanal area earlier in about February, then we tried to sneak up to Rabaul and Bougainville. Of course they spotted us and sent planes in to attack, but we didn't get damaged too badly, shot a couple of their planes down, we left. Otherwise, Guadalcanal was the big campaign down there.

**Mr. Nichols:** Were you in the battle of Savo Island at Guadalcanal?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Oh yes. We weren't in on the landing force, that was another task force, but we were laid off about a hundred miles with I think it was the Enterprise giving air cover, and I always remember the next morning - the landing went fine, no problem. But the next morning they sounded General Quarters and they passed the word there's 60 unidentified aircraft approaching, be on the alert. Captain Callahan said, the Admiral was there too, he said "Yesterday we lost four of our cruisers at Guadalcanal." They called it the Battle of Savo

Island. The destroyer Quincy Vincennes and Australians, Canterbury, I guess it was, they snuck in there that night and they didn't even know they were there, and they just blasted. We had a lot of things to learn when that war started, and we learned most of them from the Japanese.

**Mr. Nichols:** And probably learned them pretty fast.

**Mr. Eberheart:** Very fast.

We went back to Mare Island early in '42 and got \_\_\_\_\_?/\_\_\_\_\_ cable and they came out with magnetic mines at that time, magnetic mines kind of surprised you, they put a big \_\_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_\_ cable in, and we got TV, not TV, radar laid on. They didn't trust it, didn't know how to use it very well.

**Mr. Nichols:** How long after Pearl Harbor did your parents find out whether you were dead or alive? Did they notify your parents, or did you notify your parents, that you had survived . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** They gave the people on the Nevada a little postcard, it was all filled out, all you had to do was fill in that you were all right, or that you were in the hospital, or unhurt, and sign it.

**Mr. Nichols:** Theoretically they mailed it back . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** And then they mailed it back to your parents. It was all right.

**Mr. Nichols:** Someone told me it took his parents four months to receive that card.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I don't know. I was told - I talked to my brothers - when my mother got that card she didn't even read it, she said "Roland is dead, Roland is dead."

- Mr. Nichols:** Did you serve the rest of your time in Navy then on the San Francisco?
- Mr. Eberheart:** I made chief petty officer in 1943. After Guadalcanal we reported to - we pretty well got shot up down there in the third battle and we went back to Mare Island, this was in the Fall of '42, it was part of January before we got back out to that area. they made up a task force then and we went up to the Aleutian Islands. The Wichita was flagship of that group, and we patrolled around the Aleutian Islands. Attu and Kiska, where the Japs had landed. I understand it was to keep the Japs from reinforcing their bases.
- Mr. Nichols:** Were you up there then when we landed the Americans to get these two islands back?
- Mr. Eberheart:** Yes, yes. We were up there when they landed at Attu and we were there when they landed at Kiska. I don't know how much later that was, probably a week or two later. The Japanese were there, too, they chased them up in the hills, it took them a while to get them out of there, but when they landed at Kiska we just bombarded the heck out of that place. I forget whether it was the Marines landed or the Army, but they couldn't find any Japs. They'd snuck in there and taken them all out. We didn't even know it.
- Mr. Nichols:** Were you ever on Dutch Harbor too . . .
- Mr. Eberheart:** No, we didn't ever get there. I think they bombed Dutch Harbor or something, but I don't think they hammered it. They were concerned about hammering it.
- Mr. Nichols:** Were you still in the Navy when the war ended, or had you gotten out?
- Mr. Eberheart:** After the Aleutians we went to the Marshall Gilbert Islands I guess they were. Started on Kwajalein, Truk, Carolinas, we spent '43 and

part of '44 and ended up in the Marianna Islands about the end of 1944. We were out there the whole time. I was aboard that San Francisco for over a year, never left the ship.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you participate in Okinawa, Iwo Jima . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** No. After the Mariannas, \_\_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_\_, Saipan, and Guam, they sent me and another chief officer, back to Philadelphia, Oil Burning School. They were coming out with new ships that were carrying six, seven hundred pound steam pressure, and on the Frisco we had about 250. Everything was faster, newer, and they wanted the update, and then when we went they said, "We don't care if you really learn anything, you're been out here the whole war, just go back and have some R & R." So when we got through the Oil Burning School I was sent out to the Philippines for further assignment.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you make it back to Wisconsin to visit your folks before you went to the Philippines?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Yes. I had a leave the, a week. I made it back. I just don't know - I remember going back after Pearl Harbor and I don't really know how that was possible, but I think we went back when we got the \_\_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_\_ cable and they let us go back for about a week. We were in about three weeks getting it done and stuff. I was back there then and then once after that. After going to Oil Burning School, the Mariannas, that was about the last action or conflict that I had as far as being on the front lines. I went to Oil Burning School for three months and then was out there at Salamaua, what was the name of the base, they had a big base. they were building up for landing in Japan, they were getting troops and getting ready for the big push. I was there for about two or three weeks, then they assigned me to a hospital ship, the USS Refuge, which was acting as the hospital up in Manila. They'd lay out there in the harbor and take all the - well, they really didn't have casualties, the fighting was over already.

Whatever hospital people get sick and get hurt and stuff. When our rolls were full onboard ship we'd get under weigh and go down to the Admiralty Islands, I think it was an Army hospital they had down there, we'd unload our patients and steam back up to Manila, drop the anchor, stay there for three or four weeks. And it was good duty. Best duty I had in the whole war.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you receive any decorations?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Our ship got a Presidential Unit Citation. First Presidential Unit Citation ever issued for a Navy ship. Roosevelt actually had made it private?? because of the San Francisco. Our admiral at that time, he was a captain, Captain Callahan, and he made admiral and as you know things weren't going very well in Guadalcanal, we were about to lose our fannies down there, in '42, and we had to do something so they relieved the admiral, I believe his name was Bromley(sp??) and Halsey took over down there. He changed his headquarters from Auckland, he went up to Noumea, New Caladonia. Our forward base was at Esperito Santo and I guess the brains had a meeting, I think they even went to Guadalcanal itself and conferred with the Marine general there, (portion intelligible, including the name) told them "I can do it." He said, "All I need is help." The way I understand it, Bull Halsey told him "I'll get you the help." On November 12th, we went up there with a task force, reinforcements, supplies, ammuniton, and we unloaded the whole day. We got there early, daybreak. No Japs there. Then about two in the afternoon here came the Japanese down from (unintelligible). Torpedo planes. We squared off with them and (unintelligible) and shooting and they never got a hit, they didn't make any hits, but we had one plane come in and drop his torpedo and of course they turned into it to make a narrower target and it missed, and when that plane pulled out they hit him and he started burning and then he turned his plane and then crashed into our after control - what do they call it - in the back anyway. We had about forty casualties, including our executive officer.

“OK, let’s get these transports unloaded and get out of here before it gets dark.” We buried our dead and took the wounded over to one of the transports and we headed back to Esperito Santo. About nine o’clock that night the skipper came on the PA system, old Admiral Callahan, and he said “Well, we got orders to go back out. They just got word that the Japanese are sending two task forces down, one that’s got two battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and go up there and stop them.” Here we go! Turned around, steamed back, all we had were two heavy cruisers, the Alamo was with us, about seven destroyers, but we steamed up there and all heck broke use. Anyway, they steamed right in them, might have just run them down. Didn’t trust radar, everybody starts shooting at everybody else, including themselves. We got hit pretty badly and a lot of casualties. The only reason we didn’t sink was we didn’t get hit below the water line. Anyway we left, and when they met the next morning at whatever spot they had agreed on, the survivors would. We went in there with thirteen ships and we have five of them left the next morning.

**Mr. Nichols:** Any PT boats helping you out?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Yep. They made runs and \_\_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_\_. The next morning it wasn’t yet nine o’clock, because we were low in the water - we’d asked - the Juneau was out there, she’d been torpedoed, she’d survived - she was a light antiaircraft \_\_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_\_ and she’d taken a fish and she was low in the water. We didn’t have any medical supplies. At that time, early in the war, we kept everything in one place down in the 60, down below deck, and they took a big hit down there, they just blew everything up. So the only supplies they had were what each individual in charge of a station would carry on his hip, you know, morphine, and that was used up and the guys were laying there and we didn’t have enough. So they asked the Juneau to send over some help. A lot of our medical personnel were hurt. Anyway, nobody wanted to come because the Frisco was low in the water and they didn’t think we could make it. Anyway,



they drew straws to see who would come over, and they got supplies over, and they weren't aboard ship but half hour, and the Juneau got torpedoed and she just blew up.

**Mr. Nichols:** The Sullivan brothers were on . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** The Sullivan brothers, seven of them, they just - some of them survived, but nobody picked them up. And I guess the skipper of the \_\_\_\_\_?? \_\_\_\_\_ got in trouble because he couldn't stop and pick up survivors. My god, everybody else would get sunk, too. We just had to go top speed.

**Mr. Nichols:** Leaving yourself wide open for . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** Oh, you couldn't, there was nothing you could do.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you make the Navy a career?

**Mr. Eberheart:** No. I was discharged October third, second, I guess, '45, Shoemaker, California.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you have a sweetheart before you left . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** (laughing) That was my problem. I got married in Philadelphia. I was married at the time.

**Mr. Nichols:** You were married when you were in the Navy?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Yes, I was at Oil Burning School at the time. During that period, that three months I was back there, I got married.

**Mr. Nichols:** Did you have any children?

**Mr. Eberheart:** Later on I had two girls, and then five years later two boys, I had four children in the family.

**Mr. Nichols:** Not while the war was going on.

**Mr. Eberheart:** Not while the war - this was after.

**Mr. Nichols:** Do you ever have any flashbacks to Pearl Harbor, any bad memories about Pearl Harbor?

**Mr. Eberheart:** No, no, I learned a lot. I saw my first casualties at Pearl Harbor. I remember standing on the deck there that evening, December 7th, look around, seeing the - what you couldn't believe if you didn't see it - all the ships caterwampused, and I said "My gosh, I wonder what's going to happen to me now." No, actually, to me, I've seen the results of combat, and when I think back on my life, that period when I was in the service, actually was the high point of my life. I'd seen things, and done things, that nobody in civilian life will ever do it unless the stuff we got going now keeps mushrooming. Everybody's liable to be a casualty at sometime or other, then.

I joined the Navy. I was a first-class farm boy when I enlisted, and they made a first-class seaman out of me. That's the way I always figured.

**Mr. Nichols:** You were a chief petty officer when you . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** I was a chief petty officer when I . . .

**Mr. Nichols:** You were promoted relatively fast.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I enlisted in '38 and I made second class in '41, and of course during the war rates come pretty fast because of the demand for it, and I made chief petty officer in '43. Of course, it was not - at that time they changed it from making it permanent rate to temporary rate. You had the authority, and chief petty officer's a good rate. The best thing in the Navy.

**Mr. Nichols:** You had no regrets about serving then, actually, other than the fact that if you had know what was coming you may not have decided to enlist.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I think even if I knew what was coming I'd have been there.

**Mr. Nichols:** You would have been there anyway.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I wouldn't have wanted to miss it.

**Mr. Nichols:** Maybe not until after it actually happened (unintelligible) . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** (Unintelligible) . . . it made it a lot easier. Everybody was . . .

**Mr. Nichols:** . . . rushing to the recruiting officers.

**Mr. Eberheart:** I'll tell you, in my case I enlisted right out of high school, well, I enlisted in '37, they didn't call me until 1938, and of course when I got discharged they said, "You have to report in to your draft board now," within a period of three months or something. We lived in Southern California and I reported in there. "Where did you enlist?" "Wisconsin." "Well, you got to go back there." I contacted Wisconsin. They didn't have any record of it. I went in before the war, they didn't keep much . . .

**Mr. Nichols:** What kind of occupation did you pursue after you got out? Did you go back to Wisconsin. Did you go back to . . .

**Mr. Eberheart:** No, we didn't go back to live, we went back for a visit. I took jobs on \_\_\_\_??\_\_\_\_ as steam engineer. Boilers, and generators, and worked for about a year for Southern California Gas Company, they had been making beautibeam(sp??), I guess they called it, it was synthetic rubber they used when they couldn't get the natural rubber, and of course when they got access to whatever they get at the Dutch East Indies or wherever they shut the plant down. I

worked around different power plants there in southern California. And then I built my home in the meantime and got into construction and worked around in that for awhile, and then finally moved up to Oregon and I went into the construction business.

**Mr. Nichols:** And you still live in Oregon?

**Mr. Eberheart:** I still live in Oregon.

**Mr. Nichols:** I guess this kind of wraps it up.

**Mr. Eberheart:** This was a long-winded one. I was out of breath.

**Mr. Nichols:** We're glad you participated, we're glad you served in World War II, and we're especially glad you came back in one piece and didn't suffer any serious injuries.

**Mr. Eberheart:** Well, I kind of feel guilty at times because when you see, of course a guy gets nervous too. During the first year of the war I got to the point where you couldn't even swallow water. This is crazy. If you're going to get killed, you're going to get killed. All you got to do is stay aboard, and my goodness, make it fast. And then we'd get through this battle and we'd get through this air attack and stuff and pretty soon, maybe the old man is looking out after me. You gain confidence. That was the time (end of tape)

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