

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

THE NIMITZ MUSEUM

PRESENTS

AN ORAL HISTORY BY

KENNETH K. LITTLE

TAPE NO. 349

THIS IS MARILYN WALTON FROM THE NIMITZ MUSEUM SPEAKING TO KEN LITTLE. I AM ALSO FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON. TODAY IS DECEMBER 8, 2001. I AM INTERVIEWING MR. LITTLE. THIS INTERVIEW IS TAKING PLACE AT THE BETHENY LUTHER CHURCH IN FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS IN SUPPORT OF THE PACIFIC WAR STUDIES ARCHIVES FOR THE ANTIONAL MUSEUM, TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS SITE.

HELLO MR. LITTLE

KEN

HELLO

MARILYN

WOULD YOU START BY TELLING US A LITTLE BIT OF PERSONAL INFORMATION, WHERE YOU WERE BORN, HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS YOU HAD, ABOUT YOUR PARENTS.

KEN

I WAS BORN IN SAN DDIEGO, CALIFORNIA. I HAD ONE SISTER AND PARENTS.

MARILYN

WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

KEN

I WAS BORN FEB. 2, 1921, THAT'S GROUNDHOG DAY OF COURSE. MY FATHER WAS A VETERAN OF WORLD WAR I. MY PARENTS HAD BEEN MARRIED ABOUT A YEAR BEFORE I WAS BORN. MY FATHER WAS FROM NEBRASKA AND MY MOTHER WAS FROM IOWA. BOTH CAME OUT WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND MET IN SAN DIEGO.

MARILYN

WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

KEN

I ATTENDED MCKINLEY GRAMMER SCHOOL IN SAN DIEGO, WHICH WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM OUR HOUSE. THEN I WENT TO WOODROW WILSON, JR. HIGH SCHOOL IN SSAN DIEGO. I HAD A PROBLEM THERE AND MY DAD WAS VERY INCENSED WITH THE SAN DIEGO SCHOOL SYSTEM AND HE WAS REALLY GOING TO TELL THEM OFF, AND I FINALLY WENT TO A PAROCHIAL SCHOOL . THAT WAS THE LAST I HEARD OF THAT. THEN I ATTENDED AND GRADUATED FROM SAN DIEGO ARMY AND NAVY ACADEMY. ABOUT A YEAR AND ½ LATER IT BECAME THE BROWN MILITARY ACADEMY. IT WAS LOCATED IN THE PACIFIC BEACH AREA OF SAN DIEGO. I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL THERE IN 1938.

MARILYN

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN SCHOOL? WERE THERE ANY UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT----?

KEN

NO. I DIDN'T CARE FOR THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL. I DON'T KNOW. IT JUST WASN'T MY THING. WHEN I STARTED GOING TO THE MILITARY ACADEMY, I REALLY LIKED IT. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT I WAS A DAY STUDENT AND I HAD TO GO OUT TO THE CAMPUS EVERY DAY AND THEN COME HOME EVERY NIGHT. THAT TOOK QUITE A BIT OF TIME. MY LAST YEAR I WAS VERY FORTUNATE IN THAT I WAS A BOARDING STUDENT AND I GOT MORE INVOLVED IN STUDENT AFFAIRS. I REALLY ENJOYED IT AND GOT A LOT OUT OF IT. I WAS TOO MUCH OF A NERD I GUESS TO GET IN TROUBLE WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

MARILYN

DID ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU THAT ENCOURAGED YOU TO GO INTO THE ARMY OR WERE YOU GONG TO GO ANYWAY, OR THE NAVY? I'M SORRY.

KEN

I PROBABLY COULD HAVE GOTTEN AN APPOINTMENT TO THE NAVAL ACADEMY AT ANNAPOLIS BUT, EYES WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH AT THAT TIME. AT THAT TIME YOU HAD TO HAVE 20/20 VISION TO BE ADMITTED. THAT WAS KIND OF A DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME I GUESS. WHAT REALLY HAPPENED WAS THAT THIS SCHOOL THAT I WAS ATTENDING WASN'T CHEAP AND ABOUT HALF WAY THROUGH THE LAST SEMESTER, I FOUND MYSELF WAITING ON TABLES IN THE STUDENT MESS HALL. I GUESS IT WAS TO HELP PAY FOR MY BOARD AND TUITION. WHEN I GRADUATED, I COULDN'T GO ON TO COLLEGE. I WENT TO WORK IN THE FAMILY DAIRY. I WAS MAKING 30 CENTS AN HOUR WORKING FOR THE DAIRY AND I WAS WORKING LONG HOURS. I GUESS I WAS PRETTY WELL SUPPORTING THE FAMILY FOR A WHILE THERE. AT THE DAIRY, THEY HIRED A PART TIME FELLOW TO WORK THERE. HE WAS A STUDENT AT SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE WHERE I HAD INTENDED TO GO TO GET 2 YEARS TOWARDS MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

HE WAS IN THE CLASS OF '42 WHICH WAS THE CLASS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN. I WAS WASN'T VERY HAPPY ABOUT BEING ASSOCIATED WITH HIM AND ACTUALLY SUPRERVISING IN ONE OF HIS TASKS. WE TURNED OUT TO BE THE BEST OF FRIENDS. I FOUND OUT HE WAS IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD IN SAN DIEGO. WE BECAME SOCIALLY INVOLVED AND WE DOUBLE-DATED AND ALL THAT. HE TALKED ME INTO ENLISTING IN THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD. WHAT THEY DID WAS EACH MEETING WHICH WAS ONCE A WEEK WAS YOU WERE PAID A DOLLAR AND THE MEETINGS WERE 2 HOURS LONG SO THAT MEANT THAT I WOULD BE MAKING 50 CENTS AN HOUR INSTEAD OF 30 CENTS AN HOUR. THE THING I DIDN'T CONSIDER WAS THAT

YOU HAD TO BE THERE ABOUT ½ HOUR BEFORE HAND BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T TAKE YOUR UNIFORM HOME. YOU HAD TO CHANGE YOUR UNIFORM THERE AT THE ARMORY AND THEN YOU HAD TO TAKE IT OFF, SO IT WAS ABOUT 3 HOURS THEY WERE GETTING OUT OF ME FOR A DOLLAR. THEN I EXPECTED SOMEBODY TO HAND ME A NICE CRISP DOLLAR BILL WHEN I WALKED OUT THE DOOR. THAT ONLY HAPPENED ONCE EVERY 3 MONTHS. IT WAS KIND OF A DISAPPOINTMENT. THAT IS WHAT GOT ME INTO THE ARMY.

MARILYN

YOU HAD MENTIONED THE ARMY. YOU DIDN'T GO INTO THE ARMY. YOU WENT INTO THE NAVY?

KEN

NO. I SAID THAT I BELIEVED THAT I COULD HAVE GOTTEN AN APPOINTMENT TO THE NAVAL ACADEMY AT ANNAPOLIS BUT BECAUSE OF MY EYES, I WAS INELIGIBLE SO THEN EVERYTHING WENT TOWARDS THE ARMY BECAUSE I ENLISTED IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.

MARILYN

OH. OK, ALRIGHT. WHAT TRAINNG DID YOU GET IN THE NATIONAL GUARD?

KEN

ACTUALLY, NOT VERY MUCH BECAUSE I WENT THROUGH THEIR BOOT CAMP OR BASIC TRAINING IN LESS THAN 2 HOURS BECAUSE I KNEW MORE THAN THE INSTRUCTOR BECAUSE I HAD 3 YEARS OF ARMY ROTC . I THINK HE WAS VERY HAPPAY TO GET RID OF ME. I'M NOT BRAGGING, I KNEW MORE ABOUT BASIC MOVEMENTS AND THAT TYPE OF THING. THE THING WHAT REALLY SHOWED ME OFF WAS THAT HE TOLD ME TO ROLL A PACK. IN THOSE DAYS, A PACK WAS A ROLL. YOU ROLLED YOUR BLANKET AND TENT-HALF AND EVERYTHING. I THINK IT WAS THE BEST ONE I HAD EVER DONE IN MY LIFE. HE SAID, "OK, GO REPORT TO YUR FIRST SEARGEANT." SO, THAT WAS THAT.

BUT, THE QUESTIION WAS MY TRAINING. IT WAS LIMITED IN ROTC NATURALLY. IN MY NATIONAL GUARD UNIT, IT WAS ANTI AIRCRAFT, IT WAS ENTIRELY FOREIGN TO ME. THAT IS REALLY WHAT I LEARNED.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YU DO IN TERMS OF LEARNING?

KEN

I WAS MOSTLY JUST BEING TOLD AND REPEATING MOVEMENTS AND LEARNING ABOUT THE GUNS. THE TRAINING WASN'T ALL THAT GOOD. ACTUALLY, I FOUND OUT LATER, THE BEST TRAINING YOU COULD GET WAS TO SIT DOWN AND READ A BOOK, THEN GO OUT AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU LEARNED.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOU END UP DOING? HOW DID YOU END UP GOING TO PEARL HARBOR?

KEN

IN THE SUMMER OF 1940, THINGS WERE GETTING A LITTLE HOT. THE WAR IN EUROPE, YOU KNOW, THE GERMANS WERE TAKING OVER EVERYTHING AND JAPAN WASN'T SITTING STILL EITHER. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS A NATIONAL EMERGENCY BUT THE 16TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1940 WAS THE FIRST CALL FOR THE ACTIVATION OF SEVERAL NATIONAL GUARD UNITS WHICH WENT INTO FEDERAL SERVICE AT THAT TIME. WE BECAME THE SAME AS THE REGULAR ARMY. IT WAS NO MORE ONE NIGHT A WEEK AND TWO WEEKS SOME PLACE ELSE. IT WAS FULL TIME.

MARILYN

DID YOU EXPECT THAT?

KEN

I DON'T THINK ANYBODY DID, BUT AFTER ALL THEY SHOULD HAVE. THEY DIDN'T JOIN THE NATIONAL GUARD FOR FELLOWSHIP AND GOOD TIMES. IT WAS A SURPRISE AND A SHOCK REALLY BECAUSE YOU WERE UPROOTED FROM YOUR FAMILY LIFE AND WHATEVER YOU WERE DOING. WE HAD A LOT OF STUDENTS, MARRIED PEOPLE AND BUSINESS OWNERS, TEACHERS.

MARILYN

DO THINK PEOPLE JOINED BECAUSE OF THE MONEY THEY MADE?

KEN

I F THEY DID, THEY WERE CRAZY. I DON'T KNOW. PERHAPS SOME OF THE COLLEGE STUDENTS MIGHT HAVE BECAUSE IT MEANT A LITTLE EXTRA. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ONLY A DOLLAR A WEEK, IN THOSE DAYS, A DOLLAR WAS A DOLLAR.

MARILYN

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT OFTER YOU JOINED?

KEN

MINE PERSONALLY OR THE UNIT/

MARILYN

YOUR'S PERSONALLY.

KEN

I HAD A MILITARY OCCUPATION SPECIALTY THAT WAS A CREWMAN ON A 3 INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN. THAT WAS WHAT I RETAINED. IN OTHER WORDS, MY POSITION DID NOT CHANGE AT ALL. I WASN'T MOVED TO A DIFFERENT JOB OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THE UNIT, THE ORGANIZATION WENT, JUST PICKED AND MOVED AND WENT ON ACTIVE DUTY, FULL TIME INSTEAD OF JUST 2 HOURS ONCE A WEEK. IT WAS THE SAME COMMANDER, SAME ORGANIZATION. THE PURPOSE OF IT WAS TO GET MORE ADVANCED TRAINING IN VIEW OF THE WAY THE WORLD SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING.

MARILYN

WHAT WAS THE ASSIGNMENT THAT LEAD YOU TO GO TO PEARL HARBOR?

KEN

OKAY. WHEN WE FIRST WENT ON ACTIVE DUTY, WE WERE INFORMED THAT WE WOULD GO TO VENTURA, CA. FOR 3 MONTHS. VENTURA, CA. IS ABOUT 200 MILES NORTH OF SAN DIEGO. THERE IS A COUNTY PARK ON THE OCEAN. THE STATE LEASED IT FOR 2 WEEKS EVERY YEAR FOR US TO GO, SET UP OUR GUNS, TRAIN, AND DO ACTUAL FIRING AT AIRBORNE TARGETS. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO UP THERE, SET UP OUR CAMP FOR 3 MONTHS AND THEN THERE WAS TO BE A CAMP BUILT NEAR RIVERSIDE, CA. WHICH IS INLAND AND SOMEWHAT SOUTH OF VENTURA. THE CAMP WAS BUILT AND BECAME CAMP HAHN WHICH WAS ABOUT 70-80 MILES NORTH OF SAN DIEGO. ON THE 16TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1940 OUR ENTIRE UNIT MOVED UP TO VENTURA AWAITING THAT TIME WHEN THAT CAMP WOULD BE READY FOR US AND WE WOULD MOVE DOWN THERE FOR THE REST OF THE 12 MONTHS. INCIDENTALLY, WE WERE CALLED UP FOR A 12 MONTH PERIOD JUST FOR TRAINING. THEN, IN OCTOBER OR MAYBE LATE SEPTEMBER, 1940 WE READ IN THE NEWSPAPER IF YOU COULD BELIEVE IT, THAT WE HAD BEEN ORDERED TO HAWAII.

MARILYN

WHOSE NEWSPAPER?

KEN

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER. SOMEHOW IT CAME OUT OVER THE WIRES HOWEVER, THAT WE, THE UNIT, HAD BEEN ORDERED TO GO TO HAWAII. I THINK EVEN THE COMMANDING OFFICER

WAS SURPRISED BECAUSE SHORTLY AFTER PEOPLE PASSED THROUGH THE GATES SELLING US THE NEWSPAPER TELLING US THAT WE WERE GOING TO HAWAII. I CAN SEE HIS CAR BURNING RUBBER GOING OUT THE GATE, AS HE HEADED TOWARD FORT MACARTHUR TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON. WE WERE HEADED FOR HAWAII AND ON OCTOBER 31, A GREAT HALLOWEEN TRICK, WE BOARDED THE *S.S. WASHINGTON* AT SAN PEDRO AND WE SAILED FOR HAWAII ARRIVING THERE ON THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER 1940

MARILYN

WHAT WAS THE TRIP LIKE?

KEN

THE TRIP WAS NOT BAD CONSIDERING BECAUSE THE *WASHINGTON* WAS A LINER OF THE UNITED STATES LINES. IT WAS A TRANSATLANTIC LINER. IT HAD BEEN LEASED BY THE ARMY CAME THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL, CAME UP TO PICK US UP AND HAD NOT BEEN CONVERTED TO AN ARMY TRANSPORT. WE SLEPT ON COTS AND ACTUALLY THE ENLISTED MEN ATE IN THE FIRST CLASS DINING ROOM AND WE HAD A LITTLE ENSAMBLE UP ON THE BALCONY STRUMMING AWAY FOR LUNCH AND DINNER. WE ACTUALLY HAD A MENU. I'VE KEPT SOME OF THE MENUS FROM THE TRIP. IT WASN'T BAD AT ALL EXCEPT THAT THERE WAS SOME DESEASE OR SOMETHING ABOARD THE SHIP AND SEVERAL OF OUR PEOPLE INCLUDING ME GOT QUITE SICK. IT WAS LIKE A FLU. THE SICK BAY THAT THE SHIP NORMALLY EMPOLYED WAS OVERFLOWING AND THEY SET UP A HOSPITAL UP IN THE PROMENADE DECK. SOME WERE ONLY SICK A DAY OR TWO AND THEY WERE OK. I COULDN'T SHAKE IT. WHEN WE LANDED IN HONOLULU, INSTEAD OF MARCHNG OFF WITH MY PACK AND RIFLE, I WAS CARRIED OFF THE SHIP ON A STRETCHER.

MARILYN

YOU HAD A PRETTY SERIOUS ILLNESS?

KEN

YEAH. I HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL. MY FIRST VIEW OF THE PARADISE OF THE PACIFIC, WHICH HAWAII WAS KNOWN AS, WAS OUT THE BACK WINDOW OF AN ARMY AMBULANCE.

MARILYN

HOW WAS THE TEATMENT THAT YOU RECEIVED AT THE HOSPITAL?

KEN

THE TREATMENT AT THE HOSPITAL WAS FINE. THEY WERE TRYING ---- THEY COULDN'T GET MY TEMPERATURE DOWN. THEY JUST FORCE FED ME WITH FLUIDS. EVEN AT NIGHT, THEY WOULD WAKE ME AND MAKE ME DRINK PINEAPLE JUICE. I DRANK THAT STUFF BY THE GALLON.

MARILYN

DO YOU DRINK PINEAPPLE JUICE NOW?

KEN

I LOVE IT. WHILE I FINALLY GOT MY TEMPERATURE DOWN TO NORMAL FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS, THEN THEY LET ME GO.

MARILYN

DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN BITTEN BY A MESQUITO OR SOMETHING?

KEN

I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS. I PROBABLY WAS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS ONES. THERE WERE JUST A FEW OF US THAT WENT TO THE HOSPITAL I WAS THE LAST ONE TO BE DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL.

MARILYN

WHAT WERE YOUR SYMPTOMS?

KEN

FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS. HIGH TEMPERATURE, FEVER AND HEADACHE.

MARILYN

GEE, THAT SOUNDS LIKE ANTHRAX.

KEN

I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS BUT I SHOOK IT WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF ANTIBIOTICS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE THEM THEN. THERE WAS A HUMOROUS THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME WHEN THEY CAME TO PICK ME UP AND PUT ME ON THE STRETCHER. I WAS IN MY UNDERWEAR BECAUSE I DIDN'T WEAR PAJAMAS. THEY STARTED TO CARRY ME OFF THE SHIP AND WE WERE DOCKED AT THE ALOHA TOWER, WHICH IS A HONOLULU LANDMARK. I LOOKED UP AND I COULD SEE IT AND I RECOGNIZED IT BECAUSE I HAD SEEN PICTURES OF IT. SOMEBODY STOPPED AND JUST IN TIME TO SAY, "AREN'T YOU GOING TO THROW A BLANKET OVER THE POOR GUY?" SOMEBODY GOT A BLANKET, THREW IT OVER ME. WE WERE GOING DOWN THE GAGNPLANK, I LOOKED UP AND THERE WAS KIND OF A VIEWING PLATFORM UP THERE AND THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WATCHING US. I HEARD ONE GIRL SAY, "IS HE DEAD?" I WAVED AND I GUESS SHE FIGURED I WASN'T DEAD.

MARILYN

YOU LOST ALL SENSE OF PROPRIETY.

KEN

I DIDN'T WANT TO ARRIVE IN HONOLULU IN MY UNDERWEAR. MY LEGS AREN'T QUITE THAT GOOD LOOKING.

MARILYN

APPARENTLY SOMEBODY THOUGHT SO. WHEN YOU FINALLY GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, WHEN WAS THAT?

KEN

I COULDN'T TELL YOU EXACTLY. IT WAS SOMETIME IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1940.

MARILYN

AND WERE YOU IN GOOD HEALTH THEN?

KEN

YEAH.

MARILYN

THEN WHAT DID YOU DO?

KEN

I WENT BACK TO MY UNIT. AT THAT TIME, OUR UNIT WHICH WAS BATTERY B OF THE 251ST COAST ARTILLERY WAS STATIONED TEMPORARILY AT FORT RUGER, WHICH IS CLOSE TO DIAMOND HEAD, SOUTH OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF HONOLULU. WE STARTED OUR TRAINING THERE BUT IT WASN'T VERY MUCH BECAUSE WE WERE THERE JUST TEMPORARILY IN TENTS. WE WERE JUST KIND GETTING ACCLIMATED TO FULL TIME ARMY LIFE.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOUR TRAINING CONSIST OF?

KEN

AT THAT TIME, WE WERE GOING THROUGH OPERATION OF THE GUNS. WE HAD 3 INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AND WE ALSO HAD THE RANGE SECTION WHICH WAS THE PEOPLE WITH THEIR INSTRUMENTS WHICH DETERMINED THE SPEED AND THE ALTITUDE AND THE RANGE OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT. AND OF COURSE, MANY OTHER THINGS, INFANTRY DRILL AND WE WENT TO THE RIFLE RANGE, FIRED OUR RIFLES. WE HAD A COUPLE OF MACHINE GUNS IN THE BATTERY AND WE FIRED THOSE, AND HOW TO STAGE INSPECTIONS AND THING LIKE THAT; JUST REGULAR ARMY LIFE.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOU WEAR? WHAT WERE THE CLOTHES?

KEN

THE CLOTHES OVER THERE WERE KHAKIS, VERY COMFORTABLE. THIS WAS THE DRESS UNIFORM. "THE DRESS UNIFORM" AND I'LL PUT THAT IN QOUTATIONS FOR THE ENLISTED PERSON CONSISTED OF A KHAKI SHIRT AND KHAKI TROUSERS, NECKTIE AND THE OVERSEAS CAP. OFFICERS WORE MORE DRESSY UNIFORMS THAN THE ENLISTED MEN. MOST OF THE TIME, WE DRESSED IN WHAT WE CALLED FATIGUES. NOW IT'S CALLED BATTLE DRESS. FATIGUES WERE OUR WORK UNIFORMS. THEY WERE BIG, SLOPPY DENIM STUFF THAT DIDN'T FIT. THE JACKETS WENT ON OVER YOUR HEAD. THEY WERE COMFORTABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE SO LOOSE BUT THEY WERE ----THEY SURE LOOKED HORRIBLE. THEN, WE HAD THE FATIGUE HAT WHICH I USED TO HATE BUT NOW I THINK IT WAS PROBALBY THE BEST HAT WE EVER HAD BECAUSE IT WAS A BIG SLOPPY HAT THAT YOU JUST PUT ON YOUR HEAD ANYWAY. THERE WAS NO FRONT, BACK OR ANYTHING. YOU JUST PLOPPED IT ON YOUR HEAD. IT WAS GOOD BECAUSE IT SHADED YOUR NECK AND FACE. IT WAS COMFORTABLE TOO.

MARILYN

DID THAT KEEP YOU FROM GETTING SUNBURNED OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

KEN

YEAH, BUT WE WERE SO STUPID, THE FIRST CHANCE WE WOULD GET WE WOULD TAKE OUR SHIRTS OFF AND OUR HATS OFF AND GET SUNTANNED AND THAT'S WHY I'VE HAD SKIN CANCER PROBLEMS. BECAUSE OF THAT I'M SURE. WHEN WE GOT SO THAT WE WERE----WELL IN OUR FIELD EXERCISES WHEN WE WOULD ACTULLY TAKE OUR GUNS AND GO INTO THE FIELD, WE WOULD WEAR, WELL, I GUESS A BATTLE UNIFORM. I HATED THIS BECAUSE INSTEAD OF A KHAKI SHIRT WE WORE WHAT WAS CALLED AN OD OR A BROWNISH COLORED WOOL SHIRT AND I CAN'T WEAR WOOL EVEN NOW BECAUSE WE WERE WEARING WOOL IN THAT TROPICAL CLIMATE. IT WAS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE. WITH THAT, WE HAD ANOTHER NICE HAT I LIKED. IT WAS CALLED A CAMPAIGN HAT. THIS IS JUST A COWBOY HAT AND WE HAD THEM WHEN THEY WERE ISSUED, THEY LOOKED JUST LIKE SOMETHING THE BOY SCOUTS WOULD BE ASHAMED TO WEAR BECAUSE IT CAME TO A POINT AT THE CROWN. IT LOOKED ASSININE. YOU COULD TAKE IT TO A TAILOR AND THEY WOULD TRIM IT AND THEY WOULD PUT SOMETHING ON IT THAT WAS HARDENED AND WOULD FLATTEN THE HAT SO THAT THE CROWN WAS MORE FLAT. IT WAS A FINE LOOKING HAT. I REALLY LIKED THAT HAT. SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, WE WERE ISSUED A JUNGLE JIM HAT OR A TROPICAL HAT LIKE THAT. OF COURSE, THAT WAS VERY COMFORTABLE BECAUSE IT HAD SO LITTLE OF THAT HAT ACTUALLY RESTING ON YOU; JUST A SMALL BAND AROUND YOUR HEAD. WE WORE THAT TROPICAL HAT INTO TOWN ON LEAVE. IT WAS KIND OF HARD TO PUT DOWN. WITH THE OVERSEAS HAT, YOU COULD JUST FOLD IT UP UNDER YOUR BELT AND YOU WOULDN'T WALK OFF AND FORGET IT. YOU COULDN'T DO THAT WITH THE CARDBOARD TROPICAL HAT.

MNARILYN

WHAT WAS LEAVE LIKE?

KEN

HONOLULU: REALLY DIDN'T GET ANY LEAVE WHILE I WAS THERE. IT WAS A LONG TIME ACTUALLY BEFORE I EVER GOT ANY LEAVE AT ALL. ONE A WEEKEND, OR SOMETIMES, IT THINK A COUPLE OF TIMES WHILE WAS THERE, I GOT A THREE DAY PASS. IT WAS WHAT YOU WANTED. HONOLULU WAS NOT THE NICEST PLACE IN THE WORLD. THERE WAS AN AREA WHERE PROSITUTES WERE OPENLY SOLICITING AND APPARENTLY IT WAS ACCEPTED. THEY HAD QUIITE A CLIENTELE.

MARILYN

WHERE THEY JAPANESE, PHILLIPINOS?

KEN

THEY WERE EVERYTHING, ANYTHING. A LOT OF THEM WERE PEOPLE FROM THE STATES. THERE WERE OTHER RACES INVOLVED. THE BUNCH I RAN AROUND WITH, WE LIKED TO GO IN AND GO TO DINNER SOMEPLACE. YOU COULD GET A GREAT DINNER FOR AROUND A DOLLAR. I HAD A RELATVE THAT LIVED THERE NOT FAR FROM FORT RUGER ACTUALLY SO I SPENT SOME TIME AT THEIR HOUSE WITH THEM. WHAT I REALLY ENJOYED DOING ON A SUNDAY FOR INSTANCE, WHICH WAS THE ONLY FULL DAY OF NON-DUTY THAT WE HAD, WE WOULD GET AN ARMY VEHICLE AND WE WOULD GET SANDWICHES FROM THE MESS HALL FOR EACH PERSON. WE WOULD STOP SOMEPLACE AND BUY A CASE OF BEER, ICE IT UP AND JUST GO TRAVELING AROUND THE ISLAND. I BET THERE ARE A LOT OF NATIVES WHO LIVED THERE THAT HAD N'T SEEN SOME OF THE PLACES THAT I HAVE SEEN. I REALLY ENJOYED MY TIME THERE BECAUSE THE TIME WOULD NEVER BE AVAILABLE AGAIN. GET AWAY FROM HONOLULU AND IT WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL THERE. THERE WERE SOME VERY SPECTACULAR WATERFALLS, RIVERS AND VIEWS AND DRIVES. YOU NAME IT, THEY HAD IT.

MARILYN

AND THE WEATHER WAS?

KEN

THE WEATHER WAS JUST FABULOUS. EXCEPT FOR OUR CAMP AND I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THAT, OUR PERMENANT CAMP WAS HORRIBLE. THE TEMPERATURE IN HONOLULU WAS IN THE HIGH 80's , BUT IT NEVER SEEMED TO BE HOT BECAUSE THE WIND WAS ALWAYS BLOWING. IT WAS HOT BUT IT WASN'T UNCOMFORATABLE. I ENJOYED THE WEATHER AND IT COULD GET PRETTY COOL AT NIGHT TOO. WE SWAM A LOT AT THE BEACHES.

MARILYN

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD A NICE DEAL IN ARMY LIFE.

KEN

I FIGURED THE FIRST----WHEN WE FIRST WENT IN, THEY TOLD US THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE A YEAR AND I FIGURED WE WOULD EVENTUALLY END UP 80 MILES FROM HOME. WE COULD GO HOME ONCE IN A WHILE VERY EASILY. I MIGHT BE SAVING MONEY FOR COLLEGE. WHEN THEY SENT US TO HAWAII, THAT WAS SHOCK NUMBER TWO BUT MADE THE BEST OF IT. I BECAME A FIRST TOURIST. THE FIRST THING I WANTED TO DO WAS GO SEE "HAWAII CALLS" WHICH WAS A RADIO PROGRAM THAT I USED TO LISTEN TO WHEN I WAS IN THE STATES THAT CAME FROM THE MOANA HOTEL ON WAIKAKI BEACH. I GOT TO SEE THE PROGRAM AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF LISTENING TO IT AND WISHING I COULD BE THERE AND THERE I WAS. IT DIDN'T COST ME A CENT.

MARILYN

WHEN DID NEWS OF ANYTHING CONCERNING THE JAPANESE REACH YOUR EARS.

KEN

WE READ THE NEWSPAPERS. WE ALL FELT THAT THE JAPANESE WERE GOING TO ATTACK, OR WE WERE GOING TO BE IN WAR WITH THE JAPANESE, PARTICULARLY IN AUGUST, WORD CAME OUT AND THE ORDERS HAD BEEN SIGNED THAT WE WEREN'T GOING HOME IN A YEAR. WE WERE THERE FOR THE DURATION OF THE EMERGENCY FOR WHICH WE HAD NO ENDING DATE.

MARIYLN

WHEN THIS ORDER BECAME KNOWN?

KEN

IN AUGUST OF 1941. THAT WAS WHEN WE WERE THINKING ABOUT WE BETTER GET CRACKING TO GET BACK TO SAN DIEGO BY THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER BECAUSE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE IN FOR ONLY A YEAR.

MARILYN

DID ANYTHING START HAPPENING THAT ALERTED YOU?

KEN

WE WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE THE ARMY WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF SENDING US OVER THERE WHICH WASN'T CHEAP AND TOOK QUITE A BIT OF TIME SO WE WOUND UP BY BUILDING OUR OWN CAMP. FOR A FEW MONTHS, WE HAD VERY LITTLE MILITARY TRAINING AND THIS WAS VERY DISCOURAGING PLUS WE WERE JUST DAY LABORERS, YOU

MIGHT SAY IN BUILDING THIS CAMP. WHEN THINGS BEGAN TO LOOK UP, THAT IS THINGS WERE GETTING SERIOUS, THEY ACTUALLY HAD A CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR COME IN AND FINISH THE CAMP AND WE WERE SOLDIERS 24 HOURS A DAY INSTEAD OF A COUPLE OF HOURS A WEEK ALMOST. YOU COULD JUST SENSE IT BECAUSE OF WHAT THE NEWSPAPER SAID. I THINK MENTALLY WE WERE READY FOR IT BUT WE WERE NOT MILITARILY READY FOR IT.

MARILYN

THEN THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 7TH. YOU WERE NOT EXPECTING ANTHING?

KEN

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

MARILYN

BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT ON THE WATER AND YOU WERE AT FORT RUGER, VERBALLY DRAW ME A MAP. HOW FAR WAS THAT FROM PEARL HARBOR?

KEN

I AM GOING TO HAVE TO BACK UP A MINUTE. WE DIDN'T COVER IT BUT SHORTLY AFTER JANUARY 1, 1941, WE LEFT FORT RUGER AND WENT TO CAMP MALAKOLI. THAT WAS THE CAMP THAT WE BUILT AND WE WERE THERE BUILDING THIS CAMP AND GO VERY LITTLE MILITARY TRAINING FOR A FEW MONTHS. THEN WHEN THINGS BEGAN TO TIGHTEN DOWN, IS WHEN WE BACAME MORE AND MORE INVOLVED IN MILITARY TRAINING.

MARILYN

WHAT DID "TIGHTEN DOWN" MEAN?

KEN

WE STARTED DRILLING MORE. WE HAD SEVERAL PERIODS WHEN WE COULD ACTUALLY FIRE OUR GUNS. WE HAD MORE MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING ON THE GUNS AND THE RANGE SECTION, DRIVING TRUCKS AND ALL THAT. WE WERE RIGHT ON THE WATER AND THE BEACH WAS A PERFECT PLACE TO FIRE THESE GUNS BECAUSE WE FIRED OVER THE WATER. THEY WERE ANTIACRFT GUNS AND ANTIACRAFT THROWS OUT A LOT OF FLAK AND IT HAS TO COME DOWN AND IT COMES DOWN INTO THE WATER THERE. THERE WAS NOBODY LIVING NEARBY SO WE DIDN'T DISTURB ANY PEOPLE BANGING AWAY WITH THE GUNS.

MARILYN

AT THIS TIME YOU WERE A GUNNER?

KEN

YES.

MARILYN

TELL ME AGAIN SPECIFICALLY WHAT GUN YOU ENDED UP WITH.

KEN

‘ THIS WAS A 3 INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN. IT WAS MOBILE.

MARILYN

THREE INCH?

KEN

IS THE DIAMETER OF THE BORE. IT HAD A SHELL THAT WAS ABOUT 30 INCHES LONG. OF COURSE, THE PROJECTILE WAS 3 INCHES IN DIAMETER AND THE PROPELLANT WAS SOMEWHAT LARGER IN DIAMETER, MAYBE 3-1/2 TO 3-3/4 INCHES. I DON'T REMEMBER THE WEIGHT OF THEM BUT THEY WERE PRETTY HEAVY. IT WAS A VERY COMPLEX OPERATION BECAUSE THE GUNS WERE MOBIL. THEY TRAVELED ON WHEELS SO WHEN YOU GOT TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU WANTED TO EMLACE THE GUNS, YOU HAD TO GO THROUGH THIS (PROCEDURE) THAT TOOK ABOUT ½ HOUR TO GET THE WHEELS OUT WHICH WERE ON BOGIES, GET THE GUN SET DOWN, HAD TO LEVEL IT AND YOU HAD TO DIG IT IN A LITTLE BIT SO THAT IT WOULDN'T SLIDE WHEN IT WAS FIRED. IT HAD TO BE LEVEL AND IT HAD TO BE ORIENTED AND SYNCHRONIZED SO THAT ALL FOUR GUNS OF EACH BATTERY WAS FIRING AT THE SAME TARGET. THIS HAD TO BE DONE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RANGE SECTION AND THEIR INSTRUMENTS. IT WAS QUITE A LENGTHY AND DIFFICULT PROCESS TO DO IT RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT WE TRAINED FOR ALL DAY LONG. THE GUNS WOULD BE IN TRAVELING POSITION, WE WOULD PUT THEM IN FIRING POSITION. WE WOULD DO ALL THAT AND THEN WE WOULD PICK THEM UP AND PUT THEM IN TRAVELING POSITION, BACK THEM UP AND BACK AND FORTH TO GET AWAY FROM THE POSITION WHERE THEY WERE BEFORE AND THEN SET THEM DOWN AGAIN AND START THE PROCESS ALL OVER AGAIN.

MARILYN

YOU WERE THERE TO DEFEND THE ISLAND.

KEN

THAT WAS OUR STATED PURPOSE, YES. BUT, YOU CAN'T DEFEND FROM ATTACKING AIRCRAFT IF YOU ARE IN BED, WHICH IS WHERE I WAS WHEN THE ATTACK STARTED.

MARILYN

IN BED. SLEEPING?

KEN

NO, I WASN'T SLEEPING. THERE WAS SOME NOISE THAT WAS GOING ON THAT WAS DISTURBING MY SLEEP AND I THOUGHT, SUNDAY MORNING AND THE NAVY IS HAVING TARGET PRACTICE. THE NAVY WAS HAVING TARGET PRACTICE, BUT THEY HAD LIVE TARGETS THAT MORNING.

MARILYN

PEARL HARBOR HIT WHEN THE JAPANESE PLANES HIT, YOU THOUGHT IT WAS TARGET PRACTICE?

KEN

YES, OUR NAVY. WHAT ELSE WOULD ONE THINK?

MARILYN

AND THEY WERE. CAMP MALAKOL WAS HOW MANY MILES FROM PEARL HARBOR?

KEN

I DON'T REALLY KNOW. IT DIDN'T TAKE VERY LONG. DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU WHAT WE HAD TO DO?

MARILYN

YEAH.

KEN

OUR GUNS WERE SET UP IN TRAVELING POSITION AT WHAT WE CALLED THE GUN PARK AND ALL THESE GUNS WERE THERE. FIRST, THE GUN CREW HAD TO BE ASSEMBLED. WE HAD TO GO INTO THIS THING OF GETTING GOING. THIS WAS SOMETHING ELSE WE HAD PRACTICED OVER AND OVER AGAIN. WHO DOES WHAT. SOME HAD TO GO GET THE TOOLS AND THINGS THAT WENT ALONG WITH THE GUNS. SOME HAD TO GO TO THE GUN PARK, GET THE TRUCK BACK IT UP AND HOOK IT TO THE GUN, PUT THE TOOLS ON AND GET READY AND GO. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO GATHER YOUR FIELD UNIFORM AND YOUR RIFLE AND BE READY TO GET ON THE TRUCKS AND GO. THAT WAS WHAT WE HAD TO DO. WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THE NAVY DID AS FAR AS BEING SUBJECT TO BOMBARDMENT OR ANYTHING. SOMEBODY TOLD ME THEY DROPPED A COUPLE OF BOMBS ON OUR CAMP. I NEVER HEARD THEM AND I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY WOULD HAVE. THE PLANES THAT WE SAW WERE COMING BACK FROM PEARL HARBOR ON THE WAY RETURNING TO THE JAPANESE FLEET.

MARILYN

NOW JUST A MINUTE. I WANT TO ASK YOU IF IN FACT, AT CAMP MALAKOL, YOU ONLY HEARD WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS THE NAVY HAVING TARGET PRACTICE.

KEN

YES

MARILYN

DID YOU SEE ANYTHING?

KEN

YES.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

KEN

WE SAW THE JAPANESE PLANES FLYING OVER THE CAMP ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE SHIPS, THEIR FLEET..

MARILYN

THE FIRST ATTACK?

KEN

YES. AFTER THE FIRST ATTACK. THEY STRAFED US, I GUESS IF THEY HADN'T USED UP ALL THEIR AMMUNITION, THEY USED IT ON US.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOU DO?

KEN

LEAPED OUT OF BED. I WAS A GUN COMMANDER SO I HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE OF THE FOUR ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS IN THE BATTERY. I HAD TO GET THE GUN GOING. I HAD TO GO ROUST THE GUYS OUT OF THE BARRACKS. I WAS IN THE SERGEANT'S QUARTERS AT THE END OF OUR BARRACKS AREA AND GO UP THERE. WE WERE VERY WELL TRAINED ACTUALLY IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING. THEY WERE ALL READY REALIZING WHAT HAD HAPPENED. EVERYBODY WAS GETTING READY SO WE WENT THROUGH WHAT WE HAD TO DO TO GET THE GUN HOOKED UP AND READY AND GO TO OUR ASSIGNED FIRING POSITION.

YOU ASKED ME AND I DIDN'T TELL YOU THE DISTANCE FROM US TO PEARL HARBOR. IT WAS JUST A COUPLE OF MILES REALLY BUT WE HAD TO TAKE THE TRUCK ON THE ROAD AND OUR POSITION WHERE WE HAD ESTABLISHED A FIRING POSITION, AT THE WEST LOCH PART OF PEARL HARBOR NAVAL AMMUNITION DEPOT, WHICH WAS FURTHER THAN THAT. WEST LOCH WAS ON THE WEST SIDE OF PEARL HARBOR. WE WERE RIGHT ON THE WATER. THERE WERE NO SHIPS THERE. IT WAS JUST THIS AMMUNITION DEPOT.

END SIDE ONE

MARILYN

YOU WENT AND GOT YOUR GUNS READY AND DID YOU SHOOT ANYTHING?

KEN

NO. WE COULDN'T SHOOT BECAUSE WE WEREN'T IN OUR POSITION AND WE WEREN'T SET UP TO FIRE. THE ONLY THING WE SHOT WAS A FEW MACHINE GUNS WERE SET UP AND EVERYBODY, WHEN WE FINALLY GOT SOME AMMUNITION, EVERYBODY IF THEY COULD WERE SHOOTING THEIR RIFLES AT THE STRAFING JAPANESE AIRCRAFT. WE COULDN'T DO MUCH OF THAT BECAUSE WE WERE TOO BUSY TRYING TO GET OUT OF THERE AND DOING WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING, NOT TAKING POT SHOTS AT AIRPLANES.

MARILYN

WHAT WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE DOING?

KEN

WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GETTING OUR EQUIPMENT READY TO GET OUT INTO THE FIELD, MOVE THE TEN MILES OR SO FROM OUR CAMP TO OUR ASSIGNED FIRING POSITION AND SET DOWN AND GET READY TO FIRE OUR GUNS.

MARILYN

NOW LET ME UNDERSTAND. YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE SHOOTING AT YOU FROM THE AIR AND YOU ARE STILL SUPPOSED TO BE GETTING YOUR GUNS READY TO GET OUT IN THE FIELD?

JEN

YES.

MARILYN

OK.

KEN

IT'S NOT LIKE CARRYING AROUND ON THE DECK OF A BATTLESHIP, WHERE THEY ALWAYS HAVE THEM. WE DIDN'T ALWAYS HAVE THEM.

MARILYN

ALRIGHT. DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE GOING?

KEN

OH YES. WE GOT THERE FINE.

MARILYN

DID THEY CONTINUE SHOOTING AT YOU?

KEN

NO, BECAUSE WE POSTED AIR GUARDS ON THE TRUCK. THOSE ARE PEOPLE WATCHING FOR AIRCRAFT AND THEY DIDN'T SEE ANY, WHICH WAS GOOD. THE OTHER THING WAS WE

COULD HAVE DONE WAS PULL OFF THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND JUMPED OVERBOARD AND HID BEHIND THE TRUCK OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

MARILYN

BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST ATTACK?

KEN

YES. WELL DURING THE FIRST AND PROBABLY WENT OVER INTO THE SECOND, I DON'T KNOW.

MARILYN

WHAT DID YOU GUYS DO AFTER YOU GOT TO YOUR POSITION?

KEN

WE SET OUR GUN DOWN AND LEVELED IT AND ORIENTED AND SYCHRONIZED IT. WE HAD A WATER TOWER TO SIGHT ON SO THAT EVERYBODY WOULD SIGHT ON THE SAME WATER TOWER IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RANGE SECTION SO THAT ALL OF OUR GUNS WOULD FIRE AT THE SAME POINT THAT WAS DIRECTED BY THE RANGE SECTION. THAT';S WHAT WE HAD TO DO THEN. THEN, WE HAD TO GO GET AMMUNITION. WE COULD BE ALL SET TO GO AND NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT AMMUNITION. AMMUNITION WAS NEARBY AND WE WENT AND TOOK OUR AMMUNITION OUT OF THE "IGLOOS" AND BROUGHT THEM UP TO THE GUNS AND PUT THEM IN PLACE WHERE THEY WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR FIRING.

MARILYN

AND YOU NEVER FIRED THEM EVEN AFTER THAT/

KEN

WE DIDN'T SEE AN AIRPLANE AFTER WE GOT ALL SET UP AND READY TO GO.

MARILYN

DID YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE RADAR?

KEN

YES, WE HAD RADAR. IT WAS CALLED A BEDSPRING BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE EXCEPT THAT IT WAS A VERY LARGE BED. IT WAS A VERY COMPLICATED PIECE OF MACHINERY AND IT TOOK A LONG TIME TO SET IT UP. WHILE WE WERE SET UP AND READY TO FIRE WITHOUT IT LONG BEFORE IT READY TO BE USED. IT WAS VERY CRUDE AND WE HAD ONLY HAD IT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS. WE WERE JUST GETTING TRAINED ON IT AND KNOWING HOW TO WORK IT.

MARILYN

I UNDERSTAND THERE IS A TALL MOUNTAIN THAT YOU TRIED TO PUT IT ON BUT THE PARK SERVICE WOULDN'T LET YOU.

KEN

THERE WAS A---I CAN'T THINK OF THE NAME OF THE MOUNTAIN AT THE NORTH END OF THE ISLAND OF OAHU. ON THAT WAS A LONG RANGE RADAR. OURS WAS A SHORT RANGE RADAR. THIS WAS A LONG RANGE RADAR THAT ACTUALLY PICKED UP THE INCOMING JAPANESE AIRCRAFT WHEN THEY WERE 200 MILES AWAY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

MARILYN

BUT, WHEN DID THAT WORK?

KEN

IT WORKED VERY WELL BECAUSE IT TOLD THE OPERATORS AND NOBODY SEEMED TO BE INTERESTED OTHER THAN THEM THAT THERE WERE UNIDENTIFIED PLANES APPRPACHING THE ISLAND OF OAHU.

MARILYN

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I TOLD YOU THAT THE RADAR; I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS THE SHORT RANGE OR THE LONG RANGE, DID NOT PICK UP ANYTHING?

KEN

I WOULD TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE WRONG INFORMATION.

MARILYN

OK, OK, ALRIGHT. IT DID PICK UP SOMETHING AND THEY REPORTED IT?

KEN

YES.

MARILYN

THE POWERS THAT BE CHOSE TO IGNORE THE REPORTS?

KEN

YES. THERE IS ONE THING THAT HPPENED THAT STILL SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE. THERE WAS A FLIGHT OF B-17's THAT WERE COMING FROM CALIFORNIA TO HAWAII AND THEY WERE COMING IN AND WHEN THIS WAS REPORTED, THEY SAID, "OH, IT'S THOSE B-17's COMING IN. IF THEY HAD PLOTTED, THE COURSE OF THE INCOMING JAPANESE, THEY WOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT THE JAPANESE COULDN'T COME FROM CALIFORNIA. THEY WERE COMING FROM THE NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOMEBODY'S EXCUSE BUT IT WAS NO EXCUSE. IT WAS UTTER STUPIDITY.

MARILYN

DO YOU THINK THE AMERICAN OFFICERS, THE PEOPLE IN POWER, KNEW ABOUT THE JAPANESE ATTACK?

KEN

I HAVE NO----YOU READ ABOUT THAT. I HAVE READ BOOKS ABOUT IT AND ROOSEVELT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE A SECRET AGREEMENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND.

MARILYN

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN OR WINSTON CHURCHILL.?

KEN

I REALLY DON'T KNOW IF THAT IS TRUE OR NOT.

MARILYN

THE QUESTION THAT HAVE IS THAT, WERE THE JAPANESE ATTACKING BECAUSE OF ----- WHY DID THEY START THE WAR?

KEN

I THINK THAT THEY WERE BEING PUSHED TO THE BRIM. THEY LIVE ON A GROUP OF ISLANDS AND THEY HAD VERY LITTLE OF ANYTHING IN THE WAY OF NATURAL RESOURCES. THAT IS WHY THE PRESUMABLY FINALLY WENT INTO CHINA AND SOUTH WAS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MORE INFLUENCE. OF COURSE, WE WERE PUTTING THE SCREWS TO THEM BECAUSE OF THAT. I THINK IT WAS ALMOST A DESPERATION ACT. IF THEY DIDN'T DO SOMETHING AND GET THE UNITED STATES OFF THEIR BACK THEY WERE JUST GOING TO SHRIVEL UP AND DIE.

MARILYN

THIS IS A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ASK, BUT WAS THE UNITED STATES AN AGGRESSOR THAT THE JAPANESE HAD TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST?

KEN

I DON'T THINK SO. I REALLY DON'T THINK SO. AFTER ALL, THE JAPANESE BOMBED AN AMERICAN PATROL BOAT ON THE YANGTZE RIVER IN CHINA. THAT WAS AGGRESSIIVE. WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING IN RETALIATION EXCEPT STAMP OUR FOOT.

MARILYN

THAT WAS NOT THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT AGGRESSION AND THE JAPANESE HAD BEEN AGGRESSIVE BEFORE.

KEN

THEY WERE VERY AGGRESSIVE IN CHINA.

MARILYN

DO YOU RECALL HAVING SEEN ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES OR COMMANDING OFFICERS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT SHOT OR WOUNDED?

KEN

WE HAD FOUR PEOPLE WOUNDED AT THAT BASE ON THAT DAY. THEY ALL SURVIVED. THE MOST SERIOUS WOUNDED WAS A FELLOW I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT WHO TALKED ME INTO JOINING THE NATIONAL GUARD IN 1939. IN FACT, THAT WAS WHAT GOT ME OUT OF BED. HE WAS IN THE SENIOR SERGEANT'S QUARTERS AT THE OTHER END OF THE BUILDING AND I HEARD HIM SCREAM. I HEARD A MACHINE GUN FIRE. I JUMPED OUT OF BED. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I DID THEN. I BEGAN TO GET SERIOUS THEN. THE STRANGE THING WAS THAT WE HAD 3 OF OUR PEOPLE WHO WERE ON LEAVE AT THE TIME AND THEY WERE TAKING PRIVATE FLYING LESSONS. THE THREE OF THEM WERE FLYING OFF ROGERS FIELD WITH PRIVATE INSTRUCTORS IN 2 AIRPLANES AND BOTH OF THOSE PLANES WERE SHOT DOWN AT THE ATTACK. THOSE WERE THE ONLY DEATHS WE HAD. THEY WEREN'T ON DUTY BUT THEY WERE KILLED.

MARILYN

WERE THEY KILLED BY ACCIDENT?

KEN

NO. IT WAS INTENTIONAL. THEY WERE SHOT DOWN BY JAPANESE AIRCRAFT. THEY RECOVERED ONE OF THE PLANES AND IT WAS RIDDLED. IT WAS JUST AN OLD PUTT-PUTT TRAINER.

MARILYN

WOW. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

KEN

I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT AT THE TIME. IT WAS SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THIS HAPPENED THAT IT BECAME A KNOWN FACT.

MARILYN

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ATTACK, PERIOD?

KEN

I THINK WE WERE ----- WELL, LETS GET WITH IT. WE WERE SITTING ON THE EDGE, AS I MENTIONED, WE BELIEVED THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. OK, IT DID HAPPEN AND NOW WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING.

MARILYN

AFTER THE GUNS SUBSIDED, WHAT DID YOU DO THEN>

KEN

THAT WAS THE WORST PART OF THINGS AFTERWARDS. IT WAS REDICULOUS. WE HAD WHAT WE CALLED TRIPLE AIS, ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY INFORMATION SERVICE. THIS TOLD US WHAT TO DO, WHAT WAS GOING ON AND IT WAS BROADCAST OVER AM RADIO. THE RECEIVER WAS A ZENITH PORTABLE RADIO THAT THE SAME ONE I HAD BOUGHT IN THE PX SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE THAT. WE HAD NO SECURE COMMAND LINE BETWEEN WHOEVER WAS RUNNING THE SHOW AND OUR UNIT. WE GOT ALL SORTS OF FALSE REPORTS OVER THAT. WE WERE JUST RUNNING OUR HEADS OFF LOOKING FOR JAPANESE THAT WERE COMING EVERY WHICH WAY. THEY WERE LANDING BY SEA, BY AIR, BY LAND, BY PARACHUTE, BY THINGS WE HAD NEVER EVEN HEARD OF AND WE HAD TO GO OUT AND LOOK FOR THEM. WE CUT AN AWFUL LOT OF SUGAR CANE DAY AND NIGHT, WITH THE UNNECESSARY FIRING OF OUR RIFLES.

MARILYN

I WANT TO ASK YOU, BECAUSE OF THERE BEING RUMORS OF JAPANESE EVERYPLACE, I WANT TO ASK YOU 2 QUESTIONS. FIRST OF ALL, HOW MANY JAPANESE WERE ON THE ISLANDS THAT GOT ARRESTED AND ALSO WAS THE ARMY AIR CORPS PART OF YOUR UNIT?

KEN

THE ARMY AIR CORPS WAS A BRANCH OF THE ARMY AT THAT TIME. IT DIDN'T BECOME SEPARATE BRANCH UNTIL 1947. YES, IT WAS THE ARMY AIR CORPS, JUST LIKE WE WERE THE ARMY COAST ARTILLERY. IT WAS JUST ANOTHER BRANCH. AS FAR AS THE JAPANESE, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW MANY WERE ARRESTED. I KNOW THAT ONE OF THE FALACIES OF THE PRE-ATTACK COMMAND OR SITUATION WAS THAT WE WERE ON A SABATAGE ALERT AND THAT MEANT THAT EVERYTHING HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN CLOSE TOGETHER AND GUARDED SO JAPANESE COULDN'T SNEAK IN THERE AND THROW BOMBS AND SET FIRES AND DO ALL THESE HORRIBLE THINGS. THAT IS WHY SO MANY AIRCRAFT WERE DESTROYED BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT DISPERSED LIKE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN, BUT THEY WERE CLOSE TOGETHER AND CLOSELY GUARDED FROM THE GROUND.

MARILYN

DID YOU FIND OUT WHICH GNERAL HAD ORDERED THAT?

KEN

I BELIEVE IT CAME FROM WASHINGTON. GENERAL MACARTHUR SUFFERED DEARLY BECAUSE OF THAT. HIS AIRPLANES WERE LINED UP AND BEAUTIFUL PARADE LINES AND THEY JUST CAME DOWN AND MOWED THEM DOWN. THAT WAS THE FIRST FALCITY. I DID NOT HEAR OF ANY SABOTAGE ON THE ISLAND. IN FACT, THAT NIGHT THEY WERE BURNING SUGAR CANE, WAR OR NO WAR, THEY WERE GOING TO HARVEST THEIR SUGAR CANE. SOMEBODY CAME AND SAID, "OH, THAT'S AN ARROW, A BURNING ARROW ON THE SIDE OF THE HILL POINTING TO PEARL HARBOR." I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY GOT THAT IDEA, BUT I DON'T THINK IT WAS. THIS WAS THE TIME TO HARVEST SUGAR CANE SO THAT WAS PART OF THE HARVEST PROCESS, BURNING THE FIELDS.

MARILYN

DID YOU GET LETTERS FROM FRIENDS OR RELATIVES AT THAT TIME?

KEN

IT WAS SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE WE GOT ANY MAIL. IN FACT IT WAS MAYBE TEN DAYS BEFORE I WAS ABLE TO GET CABLE TO MY PARENTS THAT I WAS OK.

MARILYN

DID THE ARMY OR NAVY GIVE YOU ANY PARTICULAR CARDS AND LETTERS TO----?

KEN

NO. MATTER OF FACT, OUR MESS SERGEANT HAD TO GO INTO TOWN TO GET SOME SORT OF SUPPLIES AND OUR BATTERY COMMANDER ASKED IF ANYBODY WANTED HIM TO SEND CABLES AND THAT WAS THE WAY I GOT. HE WENT TO PICK UP WHATEVER HE HAD AND STOPPED AT WHATEVER THE CABLE COMPANY NAME WAS AND WE WROTE OUT WHAT WE WANTED SENT. WE DIDN'T PAY FOR THEM. THE RECIPIENT PAID FOR THEM BUT THAT WAS OK. THAT WAS THE WAY THAT MANY OF US GOT WORD TO OUR PARENTS.

MARILYN

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT THE ATTACK?

KEN

NO. THE FUNNIEST THING HAPPENED ON THE 27TH OF NOVEMBER, WE WENT ON THE ALERT. WHEN WE WENT ON ALERT, WE DROPPED EVERYTHING, WHATEVER WE WERE DOING, WE GOT THE GUNS READY TO GO. WE GOT TO OUR ALERT POSITION. WE SAT OUT THERE ON THE ROAD AND WAITED, WAITED AND WAITED AND FOOLED AROUND AND THEY CANCELED THE ORDERS. WE FINALLY WOUND UP BY HAVING A PARADE AND CALLING IT A DAY. IF WE HAD BEEN IN THE FIELD AT THAT TIME AND WE WOULD HAVE HAD AMMUNITION RIGHT AT OUR

GUNS, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO A CREDIBLE JOB OF DEFENDING THE FLEET. I DON'T THINK THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NEARLY THE DAMAGE THAT THERE WAS. THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN DAMAGE, THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT. I JUST THINK IT WAS ONE OF THE GREAT MILITARY BLUNDERS THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS CONCEIVED.

MARILYN

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY?

KEN

NO. YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU HOW GREAT I THINK THE PEOPLE OF FREDERICKSBURG ARE?

MARILYN

SURE, GO AHEAD. MAKE THAT PART OF THE RECORD.

KEN

IT WAS JUST A STUPENDOUS RECEPTION THAT WE GOT HERE. I WAS IN THE PARADE YESTERDAY. WHEN I GOT INTO THE BACK OF THE NOT TOO WELL MAINTAINED ARMY VEHICLE, I HOPE IT DIDN'T BELONG TO THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD. I HOPE IT WAS A MUSEUM PIECE BECAUSE IT DROVE LIKE IT WAS A MUSEUM PIECE. WE TURNED DOWN THE MAIN STREET FOR THE PARADE AND I SAW ALL THOSE PEOPLE LINED UP ALONG THE STREET. I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. FIRST OF ALL, THAT THERE WERE SO MANY AND SECONDLY, THE RECEPTION THEY GAVE US. IT WAS JUST TREMENDOUS.

MARILYN

DO YOU EVER SEE ANY OF THE GUYS THAT YOU KNEW?

KEN

OH YEAH. THERE IS ONE HERE TODAY AND HE AND I WERE ON THE SAME GUN CREW, BUD HENDRICKS. I'M NOT WEARING MY PEARL HARBOR SURVIVORS CAP, BUT I WAS YESTERDAY. IT HAS THE NAME OF YOUR STATION OR YOUR SHIP ON IT. THIS GUY COMES UP TO ME AND HE SAID, "HEY, YOU ARE FROM MALAKOL?" HE WAS FROM "A" BATTERY OF THE 251ST. I HAD NEVER MET HIM UNTIL YESTERDAY. ANYWAY, IT WAS NICE TO SEE HIM. WE HAVE A REUNION BECAUSE WE ARE FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ORIGINALLY. WE HAVE A REUNION EVERY YEAR AND WE GET TOGETHER. WE SEE EACH OTHER QUITE OFTEN. IN FACT WE HAVE BEEN CO-CHARING THE REUNION FOR SEVERAL YEARS NO. I SEE THEM---THIS FELLOW I TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT WAS BADLY WOUNDED ON PEARL HARBOR DAY WAS LIVING IN COLORADO SPRINGS AND HE JUST DIED ABOUT A MONTH AGO. ANOTHER ONE WAS A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE LIVED IN GEORGETOWN, TEXAS AND HE DIED ABOUT 6 MONTHS AGO. ONE OF THEM WAS MY BROTHER IN LAW.

MARILYN

WHEN DID YOU MEET YOUR WIFE?

KEN

I MET HER AFTER THE WAR IN 1948. WE WERE MARRIED IN 1949. ACTUALLY, I MET HER THROUGH THE MOTHER OF THIS FELLOW THAT WAS WOUNDED AT PEARL HARBOR THAT GOT ME INTO THE NATIONAL GUARD.

MARILYN

BLESS YOUR HEART. OH WOW. THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH KEN.

KEN

IT WAS A PLEASURE. IT'S BEEN A LOT OF FUN.

MARILYN

I HOPE YOU CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE NIMITZ MUSEUM.

KEN

WE SENT SOME MATERIAL TO THEM WHEN WE FOUND OUT THIS WAS ABOUT OUR UNIT. WE HAVE A BOOK, NOT A VERY GOOD BOOK, IT'S RING BOUND AND THE PICTURES IN IT ARE TERRIBLE BUT IT IS KIND OF AMAZING AND GIVES THE HISTORY OF THE UNIT, THE 251ST BASICALLY GOES BACK TO WORLD WAR I. IT WAS IN THE PACIFIC ALL DURING WORLD WAR II. I HOPE NOBODY WAS IN IT FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END BUT SOME OF THEM WERE THERE FOR QUITE A LONG TIME, MANY YEARS.

MARILYN

WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

KEN

THANK YOU AND IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TALKING TO YOU. I SEE YOU ARE WEARING THE YELLOW BANDANA AND TO ME THAT IS A SIGN OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE.

MARILYN

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

KEN

BYE BYE.

TRANSCRIBED BY FOREST J. REES
FREDERICKSBURG, TX AUG. 2002
EDITED SEPT. 29, 2002