

The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Dallas Harvey

December 8, 2001

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**Interview with Dallas Harvey
(*Pearl Harbor Survivor*)**

This is Andrew Ferrier. Today is December 8, 2001. I am interviewing Retired Commander Dallas Harvey. This interview is taking place at Bethany Lutheran Church, Fredericksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife, for the preservation of historical information related to this event.

Mr. Ferrier: Mr. Harvey, throughout this interview, how would you like me to refer to you?

Mr. Harvey: Mr. Harvey. Some people call me Commander, but it has been so long I've retired that most of the people nowadays call me "Mr."

Mr. Ferrier: OK. Well, if you don't mind I'll just call you Mr. Harvey when I ask you a question. Mr. Harvey, could you please share with us when and where you were born.

Mr. Harvey: I was born in Indiana in a very, very small town in 1919.

Mr. Ferrier: What town is that?

Mr. Harvey: Schneider.

Mr. Ferrier: Schneider, Indiana. And it no longer exists. Did you go to school there?

Mr. Harvey: No. My Dad was a railroad man. As most railroad men, we moved around. We were gone from there probably by the time I was four years old. We moved up toward Chicago in Hammond, Indiana.

Mr. Ferrier: Then you lived in Hammond until...

Mr. Harvey: No. There again, he was a railroad man, and so we moved again. Do you want the name of the town?

Mr. Ferrier: Sure.

Mr. Harvey: We moved to a town called Knox where my Granddad had been the Sheriff and so we lived there through my grade school years. Then the Depression came along and we moved then to a town called Kentland, Indiana, and that is where I finished high school.

Mr. Ferrier: So you finished high school and shortly thereafter I guess you started your life in the military. What factors influenced you to enlist?

Mr. Harvey: Two things primarily. The first one was the Depression. This was in 1937 and the Depression had finally hit our little corner of the world there. Nothing was moving in that section of Indiana. The Navy had been sending us brochures because I was about to graduate and my Dad had been looking at them. I hadn't. He started talking to me and said, "This looks like there's some prospects here that you might get some training and some education in some technical field". So I joined.

Mr. Ferrier: You joined the Navy, correct?

Mr. Harvey: Right, the Navy.

Mr. Ferrier: Where did you train?

Mr. Harvey: At Great Lakes, Illinois, which is north of Chicago about 33 miles.

Mr. Ferrier: And this was 1937?

Mr. Harvey: Right. 1937.

Mr. Ferrier: Can you share with anybody who is reading this history what the training was like?

Mr. Harvey: I didn't think it was all that rugged. Nowadays I hear about people going into Boot Camp and it is really rugged. I didn't particularly notice that. Yes, we had long hours and we had to get up early in the morning at 5:30, and such things as that. I think maybe at the time I was thinking the alternative would be sitting at home and not being able to get any job, so I can't say that I enjoyed Boot Camp. It was really educational, learning about the various guns, etc., and how to really take care of myself.

Mr. Ferrier: Right.

Mr. Harvey: Coming right out of high school in a small town.

Mr. Ferrier: Where was your first duty station after Boot Camp?

Mr. Harvey: After Boot Camp I was sent to San Diego, California, for further training. I went to, what they called at that time, a Trade School, a Navy Trade School for Hospital Corpsmen or medics. After that school I went back to Great Lakes, Illinois. To the Naval Hospital to work there.

Mr. Ferrier: As a Corpsman?

Mr. Harvey: As a corpsman, right.

Mr. Ferrier: How did you wind up in Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Harvey: I had gone to a further training school in Washington, D.C. I had trained to become a dental technician and work in various phases of dentistry. I was working making prosthetics, etc. After that I was almost ready to complete four years, and I guess the Navy figured it was time for him to go to sea so I

was ordered to sea in the Pacific Fleet. I ended up at Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Ferrier: OK. So what were you doing in Pearl Harbor? What were your duties and responsibilities?

Mr. Harvey: I was working on this repair ship, the USS Argonne, and we had about twelve hospital corpsmen and our responsibility was, of course, to take care of the Sick Bay as we called it, take care of the medication and treating of patients that might come for sick call, etc. But my further individual duty, of course, was working with our Dental Officer in the dental office doing the various work in the dental office. But, as I say, after hours and on weekends, etc., we all became just plain medics and were supposed to be qualified in all ways.

Mr. Ferrier: So, your office and everything, you worked and lived on the ship, the USS Argonne?

Mr. Harvey: Right.

Mr. Ferrier: OK. We are going to go ahead and talk a little bit now about December 7th. Share with us your recollections of that day starting with the earliest hour, or even the night before.

Mr. Harvey: Well, to bring it up to date. The night before, and a lot of people have heard of this, but the night before they were having the “Battle of the Bands.” Have you heard of that?

Mr. Ferrier: No.

Mr. Harvey: Bands from four of the ships were having a “battle” of music over at the arena at Pearl Harbor. Our ship was one of them. The Pennsylvania was

another, The Arizona was another, and the Detroit, a cruiser, was the fourth one. I went over there to watch the Battle of the Bands with some of my shipmates because I wanted to cheer on our musicians, our band. I knew them all. We didn't win the battle. The Pennsylvania won. Next was the Arizona, they came in number two, and their prize, and this is a little bit of history, not a lot of people know this. The Arizona band, their prize was Sunday morning they would not have to get up and be out on deck to play the National Anthem for Colors, or raising the Flag. In the Navy we term it Colors. They got to sleep in Sunday morning. They didn't have to go out on deck and play the National Anthem. This was the Arizona, where most of the people were killed. They were down in their bunks. Of course the whole band was wiped out.

Mr. Ferrier: Just to back-track a little bit. Hawaii, at this time, after you served your stations in Great Lakes and you said that you went to Washington, and now you are in Pearl Harbor. You were first assigned to Pearl Harbor in what year?

Mr. Harvey: January of 1941 is when I got out there.

Mr. Ferrier: So in the course of almost a year, what was Hawaii like? A lot of music?

Mr. Harvey: Well, you hear about paradise and I guess that was as close to paradise. At that time it was just a beautiful, sleepy, south sea island. So much different than what it is now, and I've been over there in recent years. Now it is just a busy, busy tourist place. Then it was a sleepy south sea island community. It was just delightful. Palm trees everywhere. You've seen

pictures of them in the movies, and it was just a real nice place to go, or to be.

Mr. Ferrier: Well, let me ask you this. Is the setting is peaceful, is sleepy, you just had the Battle of the Bands the night before and had a great time, and the band of the Arizona is given the opportunity to sleep in late, now comes the question of what do you recall from Sunday morning?

Mr. Harvey: I think one of the reasons why I went over to the Battle of the Bands the night before was just to get off the ship for a while because Sunday morning I had to take over what we called “the duty.” I became the main, in fact the only, hospital corpsman working in the sick bay. If anybody came up for sick call the first thing in the morning I had to take care of them and be sure that there were no problems that we might have to call the doctor out. The doctor wouldn’t normally come for sick call on the weekends, although he might be on board the ship. I had stepped out on the deck to have a cigarette just before I was going to take over the duty. Sick call started at 8 o’clock, so I had a few minutes to have a cigarette. I no longer smoke by the way. Not because of that, but I learned later about the smoke. But, I was standing there on an open deck just looking at the whole Pearl Harbor. Where our ship was located we had a panoramic view of the whole harbor and beyond. I was just looking at the cane fields, sugar cane fields out beyond Pearl Harbor, and just the beauty of the whole place in general.

Mr. Ferrier: Still sleepy?

Mr. Harvey: Oh yeah.

Mr. Ferrier: Still peaceful?

Mr. Harvey: Oh yes, just as I say a peaceful south sea island that we've heard so much about in the past. I'm not sure any of them exist any more.

Mr. Ferrier: What did you see next?

Mr. Harvey: Well, as I was smoking this cigarette, some planes came in and they flew over. In the middle of Pearl Harbor there is a small island, which was the Naval Air Station, and I glanced up at them and thought, "well, all right, they are off one of our carriers." I knew, obviously, that our aircraft carriers were not in port, but when I saw these planes I thought there must be a carrier that is going to be coming this afternoon and this was routine. They would fly off the planes before the carrier would come in to lighten the load of the carrier, to make it easier to navigate into Pearl Harbor. I thought this is what they are doing and later on this afternoon we will be seeing the aircraft carrier. These planes came in and one of them dive bombed out toward the Naval Air Station, which was called Ford Island, the island in the middle. I still didn't think anything about it. I thought it is just some of these crazy fly boys that you always hear about, and he is going to pull a stunt so that everybody will know he is back in town. He dropped something, and it was so out of the ordinary I still couldn't quite figure out and I thought, well they have a water bomb and they have a marker over there at the Air Station and they are supposed to hit the marker with this water bomb. Instead, the bomb hit the hangar and the whole hangar exploded. At that time then your mind just couldn't grasp. That wasn't supposed to happen. That doesn't happen in life. My first thought -- Somebody has made a terrible mistake, put a real bomb in

there instead of a water bomb. Then another plane, immediately behind him, he dive bombed and he let loose a bomb, and that hit the hangar again, or the other hangar. It exploded. Then I finally looked at the wings and saw the big red dot and I realized these are Japanese, these aren't ours. So I ran back into the ship and grabbed my first aid kit, which was always hanging on my bed, and I yelled at everybody, "We're under attack, go to your battle stations!" So I went to my battle station, which was two decks below where sick bay was at that time, but we were still way above the water line. We were still where we could look out the window, or the port holes, and see what was going on. **Mr.**

Ferrier: Now, when you went down below deck to get your first aid kit. This was on the Argonne? Where was the USS Argonne in relationship to the other battle ships, or the other ships that were docked?

Mr. Harvey: It was tied up at one of the docks. We had an Admiral aboard our ship. So his ship was always tied up at that one particular dock. In the normal chain of events the USS Pennsylvania would have been right across the dock from us. The USS Pennsylvania had the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet on board. A four star Admiral in other words. But the Pennsylvania was in dry dock in another section of the Navy Yard. So right across from us there was nothing. Our ship could see the whole of Pearl Harbor because our view was not blocked.

Mr. Ferrier: So it was still very much in the thick of things?

Mr. Harvey: Oh yes. I have always maintained, and I might not be totally right on this, but just to the stern of our ship was a great big, tall, floating crane, and I

maintain that we probably were not bombed in any way, or tried to be
torpedoed or anything because that big floating crane was so much higher than
our ship none of these planes could get around us.

Mr. Ferrier: That is very interesting. So there was a floating crane right by the USS
Argonne? OK. Returning back to the morning now, you had just run down
a flight of stairs below deck to get your first aid kit. You've warned others
that you were under attack. You were running back up top side. Now what
happens?

Mr. Harvey: No, I didn't run back up top side. I stayed two decks below top side. I
was no longer on the top deck, but it was still above the main deck so all we had
to do was look out our port hole. We were in one of the Officers' dining
rooms is where our battle station was. We could use the tables there for an
operating tables and various other things, so they made that available to us for
our battle station.

Mr. Ferrier: As the minutes unfolded, what did you see through the port hole?

Mr. Harvey: Well the first thing that I think that I saw, and it was closest to us, was the
Oklahoma starting to tip over, which it finally did, actually in a very short time.
It had turned within 15 or 20 minutes anyway. I was thinking, because I knew
it was the Oklahoma because a friend of mine from my hometown was aboard
there, and my first thought was, "I wonder if Oris had made it, or if he was
going down with the ship." He did go down with the ship.

Mr. Ferrier: Can you describe what other sights, what sounds, what smell, anything.
How were your senses working during this?

Mr. Harvey: I think they were all on hold as far as the sense of smell or anything, and even hearing. Sometimes I think back and I remember the sound of the bombs and everything, and I can't remember them, but I do know that I was hearing them at the time. I don't have any remembrance of that. Later on I want to tell you a story about later on in the day, which I blanked out totally from my memory. People have told me about this, but I cannot remember a thing about it. That will be latter on in the day.

Mr. Ferrier: OK. So you are looking through the port hole, you see that one ship flipped over.

Mr. Harvey: And of course the planes were coming in and torpedoing, dropping torpedoes to hit these other ships. Everybody always asks about the Arizona because supposedly a bomb dropped down the smoke stack of the Arizona and hit their magazine. So everybody is always interested, "Did you see the explosion from the Arizona?" I cannot remember seeing that. I might have, but I do remember seeing the USS Shaw explode. The USS Shaw was in what they called a floating dry dock. What this floating dry dock is they lower this dock on railroad tracks down into the water. A small ship comes in and then they drag this dock up out of the water, and it sits there and they can do their repairs on this small ship. It was a destroyer. I remember when that ship exploded. That to me was more spectacular than anything I've seen about the Arizona. I'm not trying to take anything away from the Arizona. It was a horrible tragedy when that happened, but the Shaw it was just like some great big fireworks all at once. Just a humongous fireworks

when the Shaw went up.

Mr. Ferrier: Now you are in your battle station on the USS Argonne, did you see duty in your station that day?

Mr. Harvey: Just a few. Our ship was not hit and I can't remember any specific numbers, but I supposed that a few people who were out on the dock next to our ship might have been hit by shrapnel, and they were brought onboard ship and we bandaged them up or fixed them up so that they could go back to work. About an hour after the initial attack they asked for volunteers to go

and help, what the Navy called "A Fire and Rescue Party." They asked for volunteers to go over to one of the battleships to help rescue anybody that might be over there and help put out the fires on the ship. I volunteered. We went over to the USS California. We got down off our ship, went across the dock, and there was what we called a flat bottom barge. If you've ever been around the Mississippi River they have these flat bottom barges up and down the river. This is what this was. Just one great big, huge flat bottom barge. They piled us all on there. There might have been 20 or 25 of us. There were Machinist mates and various other people who could help fight fires. I was a hospital corpsman to go and help with anybody that was still aboard that needed rescue medically. We were on this big humongous barge. They put what the Navy would call a motor whale boat, it is about the size of a standard lifeboat that is on a passenger ship and that little motor whale boat had to tow that great big, huge barge across what we called the channel, the main part of Pearl Harbor that separated our dock from Battleship Row. We were slowly

making headway, maybe going about 2 miles an hour, and we got out into the middle of the channel between us and the battleships and the second wave of planes came over. That is the only time I can say that I was really, really scared that day. We were standing on this barge, no protection and here came this second wave of Japanese planes to attack. They started dive bombing and we thought we had to be goners for sure. I started looking to which side of this barge am I going to jump off. Fortunately, I guess they were after bigger game. They thought “those people down there are helpless, there’s no use to do anything to them.” So they let us go and we got on over to the California.

As I say, that was the one time during the day that I was scared to death.

Mr. Ferrier: Did you see where the planes did fly to and what they strafed or bombed?

Mr. Harvey: I wasn’t paying that much attention at that time. I was looking out for my neck. None of us had any guns out there.

Mr. Ferrier: I totally understand. So let’s talk about latter on that day.

Mr. Harvey: Oh, by the way, when we got over to the California they had already abandoned ship. There was nobody left except two men who would not leave with us. They were going to stay with their ship. Nobody else was aboard and it was resting on the bottom, so it was beyond any help at that point, but they wouldn’t come back on our barge to come back on over to our ship. They stayed there. Latter on, and I didn’t hear about this until I went back to Hawaii for the 50th reunion and they told me that after all the bombing was over. Of course, immediately we are going to have to start rescuing people and bringing the dead, the floating dead up out of the water. They brought

them to the dock where our ship was tied up. I cannot to this day remember this, but as hospital corpsman I must have been helping to get these bodies up out of the water. They said they were bringing them up by boats or whatever they could bring them and stacking them on the dock along side of our ship. They said they had them stacked as high as my waist, and almost as long as our ship, the bodies. I don't remember a thing about it, but as hospital corpsman right there I had to be helping bring these bodies up.

Mr. Ferrier: Do you recall buddies that you had? You mentioned there was one on a ship that went down with the ship. With all of the attacks that happened that day were any your friends injured or killed?

Mr. Harvey: No, but I do remember. When I got ready to go on this volunteer Fire and Rescue Party over to the California a friend of mine from Indiana, he was on one of the machine guns up on the top deck of our ship and he only lived about 20 miles from where I came from, and I can remember going up and saying goodbye. So I told him what to do if we didn't come back and he told me what to do with regards to his family if he wasn't there when we did come back.

Mr. Ferrier: So you contacted his folks?

Mr. Harvey: No, because he told me in case anything happened, but nothing happened. He was there when we came back from the California.

Mr. Ferrier: So the attacks finished. Now maybe you can recall what your senses were like at that point. The aftermath of the attack, what it looked like, what it smelled like, what it looked like.

Mr. Harvey: Well, most of Pearl Harbor was burning. I mean by that, most of the harbor itself was burning. The oil had leaked out of all of these ships and had spread across over the waters of the harbor, and of course they had been set on fire by the burning from the ships, or bombs themselves. So there was fire across most of the water of the harbor. That lasted, I can still remember, well into the night because obviously they went into total blackout. In that case it didn't do any good because all these fires were burning throughout the whole harbor. The skies were lit up and the whole harbor was lit up just like a day.

Mr. Ferrier: So all battle stations were manned throughout the night?

Mr. Harvey: Yes. I can remember in that regard. This started on Sunday morning. I finally got to bed Tuesday night. And I can remember the time. At 7 p.m. Tuesday night I finally got to go to sleep.

Mr. Ferrier: Tell us about your emotions and your reactions when you realized Pearl Harbor was under attack, the attack is over, the fires continue, you finally got some much needed sleep after several days. What were your emotions before you slept and especially after you woke up? How did you feel about what had happened?

Mr. Harvey: Well, there was so much to be done that I didn't have any emotions in that regard I don't think. Just work, get out there and work. Whatever you could do. I cannot describe the looks of that whole harbor. The closest I can come to it is -- it was just a mess. That might sound a little bit humorous, but that is just what the whole harbor looked like. Before it had

been a beautiful harbor. Nice looking ships in it. Now everything was a mess. There was floating debris every place and oil all over everything. Even after they got the fires out there was oil still all over everything. People were trying to do this and that and the other thing. I'm not too sure just how good some of these things were, but they had to be doing something because there was just so much to be done. So you started right where you were and tried to clean up your little corner, or whatever it was to try to improve. One thing that impressed me and I can look back on this is our ship had an Admiral aboard, and it so happens that after the attack our ship was the only ship left in the harbor that had an Admiral aboard. Now I'll grant you, several of the ships that had an Admiral had been sunk. Several others that might have had an Admiral were immediately sent out to sea. Our ship with an Admiral aboard, and by the way, he was in command of Pearl Harbor itself basically. I was surprised at how fast they got technicians and all kinds of highly qualified people coming out from the mainland. There were deep sea divers to go down into these ships that had been sunk trying to rescue anybody that might be down in there. Highly qualified people from all over the United States, and they were out there within a week. All of these people reported in to our ship, to our Admiral, so I could see them coming and going. Where they got all these people, many of them civilians from private companies, I don't know. Of course I'll grant you that many divers and various other things were being brought out by the Navy from the Atlantic and every place else, but as I say, we had

all kinds of civilians running around who were highly qualified. I didn't realize all of the very technical skills that might be needed. **Mr. Ferrier:**

Within a week's time.

Mr. Harvey: Within a week's time.

Mr. Ferrier: What is the name of the Admiral that was on your ship?

Mr. Harvey: Admiral Calhoun. I still remember him because it so happened that sick bay was on the same deck as his quarters, and so we would see him fairly frequently. They used to call him Wild Bill Calhoun. His name was William C. I remember. W. C. Calhoun. He was from some place here in the south, Alabama or some place. I can't remember exactly where.

Mr. Ferrier: So afterwards, you had to think, well the United States if going to be at war.

Mr. Harvey: Oh, I knew it. I knew the United States was at war right after that second bomb went off.

Mr. Ferrier: What were your feelings about war then?

Mr. Harvey: Well, I think I probably thought, "well's its finally come to us now." Of course World War II had been going on for more than two years at that time, mostly of course in Europe. A little bit in the Far East, but that was primarily just between China and Japan. We thought "the war" was in Europe. So when it finally hit us we realized that "it has finally come to us now."

Mr. Ferrier: And what did you do at that point and they started to make heads and tails about Pearl Harbor -- to clean it up? What assignment were you given?

Mr. Harvey: I specifically wasn't given any assignment because, of course, as a hospital corpsman all the bodies had been taken out of the water. There were a few

men who had been rescued from the Oklahoma. They had heard them clanking on the bulkheads of the Oklahoma and the steel workers, here again some of the civilians, were able to burn down in through the steel and rescue these men. I think there was something like 32 men rescued that had been trapped in the submerged ship.

Mr. Ferrier: So you remained in Pearl Harbor, but throughout World War II what did you do?

Mr. Harvey: Well a variety of things. Our ship eventually was sent out on a couple of details. We were supposed to go down and rescue a passenger ship which had been converted to a troop transport and this troop transport had run around on a little atoll down in the Central Pacific, down south of Hawaii. We went down there and we couldn't rescue it. It was too hard aground and so we just left it there. Went back to Pearl Harbor. As an aside to that, after the war, and I was coming back after the peace had been signed on the USS Missouri, and I was coming back on a transport, and that transport stopped at that same island and that same passenger ship was still sitting there. This was almost four years later. And I don't know whether it is still there or not. It was a rusting old hulk.

Mr. Ferrier: Actually this is a question I should have asked earlier. After the attack on December 7th, your family back in the States. What kind of reactions did they have or concerns about you there at Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Harvey: Well, here I guess is almost a comedy of errors, if you want to call it that. When I was ordered to sea I was supposed to go to a hospital ship, but the

hospital ship wasn't there when I got to Pearl Harbor. So they kept me on the Argonne, the USS Argonne. When the hospital ship finally came in the doctor on the Argonne, he was so pleased with my work, he pulled strings some way to keep me on there instead of going on over to the hospital ship. I had told my family I had been ordered to a hospital ship. So through the whole attack, they thought that I was just perfectly safe and happy because nobody would touch a hospital ship. Well, I wasn't on a hospital ship. I never told them otherwise. They thought that I was perfectly safe. It wasn't until months later that they found out.

Mr. Ferrier: How did they react to the news?

Mr. Harvey: Well, they were shocked. I can remember my Mother was shocked. She said, "Well, I thought you were on a hospital ship the whole time." I said, "I never got there, never was on it."

Mr. Ferrier: Mr. Harvey, so the ship went out on several details throughout World War II. Did you see any other action?

Mr. Harvey: In the fall of 1942 we were ordered to go down into the South Pacific. We had no idea where we were going and I'm not sure even our Captain knew at that time because we went down and visited several different places, including the Fiji Islands. Then we finally ended up on a little island that nobody has ever heard of, New Caledonia. It was a French possession. Of course France had already been taken over by the Germans, but this island had kept itself, the troops had kept it away from the German influence. It was still run by the Free French they called them. We came

in and the next thing we knew our ship became Admiral Halsey's Flag Ship.

If you have ever heard of Admiral Halsey.

Mr. Ferrier: Yes sir.

Mr. Harvey: He later became a five-star Admiral. We became his Flag Ship. Not because we were a great fighting force or anything. As I say, we were a repair ship primarily, but we had an awful lot of communication gear on our ship. That is what they needed at that time, a ship that had a lot of communications. I think maybe from that, that after the war they started building ships that became, they were called "command ships." They had lots of radio equipment and various other communications facilities.

Mr. Ferrier: The Command Ship doesn't have to have great fighting qualities?

Mr. Harvey: Right. They just have to have the equipment so the Admiral or whoever is in command, I suppose they could have a Marine General or whatever, he can have communications with people from one end of the Pacific in that case, to the other end.

Mr. Ferrier: That gets me to think. OK, it was 1942 and you are in New Caledonia, the island. Did you remain there for a while?

Mr. Harvey: I stayed there until I finally got ordered back to the States in March of 1943. So I went back to the states -- for five whole month I got to stay in the States.

Mr. Ferrier: Where did you arrive then?

Mr. Harvey: That is a good question. I can't remember. I suppose it was San Francisco. Because I remember it was San Francisco where I left from. When

I came back I was assigned for five whole months in the States.

Mr. Ferrier: It was a different atmosphere, different setting, environment.

Mr. Harvey: Oh yes. Of course I hadn't been back in the States since January of 1941, well before the war. It was amazing to me what everybody was doing here in the States. They rationed this, and they rationed that. I can still remember. Out in the Pacific, of course, we didn't have to worry about this, but here in the States if you used a tube of toothpaste, when you got finished you took the empty tube back to get a new tube of toothpaste.

Mr. Ferrier: Why would that be?

Mr. Harvey: Well, now of course they are all plastic in most cases. But at that time, they were metal. Either, as I recall, they were thin lead. I remember they were fairly heavy. It wasn't like a little piece of aluminum or something. Lead was valuable. They needed lead in the war effort. Although as I recall, toothpaste was not being rationed, but you had to turn in the empty tube to get a new tube of toothpaste. A lot of people don't realize that. They have heard about the ration cards for gasoline, or for new tires.

Mr. Ferrier: So it was a totally different thing when you got back to the United States?

Mr. Harvey: Oh yes.

Mr. Ferrier: So you were here for five months, and then?

Mr. Harvey: Well, during those five months I made Chief Petty Officer, and Chief Petty Officer Hospital Corpsman, they were in desperate need of them out in the Pacific. So, back to the Pacific I went.

Mr. Ferrier: Can you share with us where you were at?

Mr. Harvey: Well, when I went back I was ordered to a new hospital that was organized in the San Francisco area to go overseas with the Marines to set up hospitals a little more permanent than those you see in MASH. It was a more permanent hospital, but it was that same idea. It was under war conditions, and we eventually built a 1,500 bed hospital on Guam.

Mr. Ferrier: So you are on Guam and what other areas?

Mr. Harvey: First we went to Hawaii when our hospital was finally organized and sat there waiting for Guam to be recaptured. Guam had been an American possession before World War II. The Japanese took it over at the beginning of World War II. The United States went back in in August 1944 and recaptured it. Our hospital unit landed on Guam the day before it had been formally designated by Admiral Nimitz as being secured.

Mr. Ferrier: So you really had no idea when you landed there if this was really a secured island?

Mr. Harvey: No. As far as I was concerned at least, it was a real unsecured island, and I found out later that very same day that it was an unsecured island.

Mr. Ferrier: What happened?

Mr. Harvey: Well, they got us off of the transport that took us over there. We had to march, and I can remember that it was during the rainy season, and if you've ever seen rain in the tropics, we were literally knee-deep in mud. We had to march, walk six miles to where our hospital was being built. The Seabees, by the way, were already there and were building our hospital even though the

island had not been secured. The Marines were still fighting the Japanese all up and down the island. But the Seabees had already landed and were in there building our hospital. So when we got through the 6 miles of walking through this mud we found the Seabees all set up and they had tents all set up. The Seabees do it first-class because they put wooden platforms and then they had wooden sidings around them, then only the top was tent. They put me in with two Seabees in this one tent. It was almost like living at the Hilton. That evening, one of the Seabees, and by the way I was a Chief Petty Officer as I mentioned before, and so they put me in with two Chief Petty Officers, or two Chiefs. One of these Chiefs said, "Would you like to come with me tonight?" He said, "I go check caves." I said, "Yeah, I don't mind." I said, "Where do you check them?" He said, "Down at the south end of the island." Now we were about in the middle of the island, and he said, "We'll go down in the jeep." I said, "That will give me something to do and find out what is going on here on Guam." So I got in the jeep with him, we went down to the south end, and there were cliffs. He had his guns and everything else. Of course everything was black-out. On the jeeps they had little tiny, tiny parking lights that would shine out maybe ten feet in front of them. He said, "I get to where these caves are and then I turn on the brights, the bright lights, and walk up there and see if there are any Japanese in the caves because there are Japanese all over this island, up and down this island." I said, "You brought me here for this, and you are going to go up with those bright lights behind you, and you are going to go up there and see if there's---" I said, "I'll stay in the jeep."

He did, he walked up there and peered in those caves. There were several of them along there. I thought the man must be a mad man. We got finished, went back to our tent, back to the base and the next morning. I need to back up a little bit. Our latrine, I guess the Army would call it, out of necessity was just outside of our camp area. Our camp area was patrolled. They had guards. Just outside of the camp area was our latrine. Obviously an “out house” type of thing. During the night we heard gun shots. The next morning we found a Japanese at our latrine that we would be using, that we would have used during the night if we had needed it. Here was this dead Japanese laying out there. Of course they buried him.

Mr. Ferrier: Now, this is in 1944? On Guam?

Mr. Harvey: Right.

Mr. Ferrier: Did you remain on Guam until the end of the war.

Mr. Harvey: Right.

Mr. Ferrier: What were you doing when you heard that the war was over?

Mr. Harvey: I was in charge of our records office. Not very glamorous, but we typed up medical records. The injured from first Iwo Jima and then next from Okinawa were flown down to our hospital. By the way, it was one of three hospitals on the island. Our hospital was 1,500 beds. There is another one 1,000 beds, another one 500 beds. The 500 bed was primarily to take care of patients on Guam from the various units there. The 1,000 bed and our hospital of 1,500 beds were to get patients coming in from the battles at various places. First Iwo Jima, next Okinawa. Some from the Phillipines, but I cannot

remember specifically many great numbers coming in from the Philippine battles. But I do remember many hundreds coming from Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Mr. Ferrier: What were you doing, or how did you hear that the war was over?

Mr. Harvey: I don't know. I suppose we must have heard it on the radio. Of course Harry Truman, President Truman, made the announcement. Nobody knew it until he actually made the announcement. So I supposed we might have heard him making the announcement. I can't remember.

Mr. Ferrier: How did you feel when you heard that?

Mr. Harvey: Well I thought "well good, there will be no more casualties coming in." That was my first thought, and "maybe finally some of us will get the chance to be going home." At that time I had been overseas since the fall of 1943, and this was August of 1945.

Mr. Ferrier: That leads me to my last two questions. Did you have any more casualties after that? Did you see any more at the hospital on Guam?

Mr. Harvey: I'm sure we must have, but not many because if there is anything I can say positive about the Japanese during the way, when their Emperor said that they were suing for peace, then in most cases the Japanese did quit fighting. Of course we still had some Japanese on Guam. I knew it. Everybody knew it. They were in dugouts or something.

Mr. Ferrier: So were you one of the lucky ones to go back home after you heard the news about the war being over?

Mr. Harvey: I didn't get a chance to go back home until in December. The war was

over in August, and I finally got to go back home in December.

Mr. Ferrier: Can you share how your trip back home was. Your return back home?

Mr. Harvey: In many ways it was terrible. Because I got on this transport, which by the way if you've heard it was an old Liberty Ship, which was then made for World War II. They had just been thrown together. I know hundreds of these Liberty Ships were built and they didn't have much power. They were slow. All they were built for was to get some supplies overseas. There weren't any supplies going back to the States so they were taking troops back. We stopped several different places on the way back. I can remember we stopped at Bora Bora to pick up a few more troops. The most beautiful island I have ever seen. Just spectacular beauty. We went from there over to what we called Canton Island. It isn't an island. It is an atoll. An atoll is just a piece of sand sticking up out of the water. Literally that is all there is. This island had one palm tree on it, and this was where that ship was, that passenger ship that we had tried to go down and rescue in 1942. This was in December of 1945, still sitting there. It had become a piece of rust. It was just rusting away there. Then we went through the Panama Canal and up to Norfolk, Virginia, and I got there on Christmas Eve. All the troops from Europe had long since come back, so us poor folks coming from way out there in the Pacific, there weren't too many of us coming back that way, and so we came into Norfolk and nobody cared and it was Christmas Eve on top of that. So it was pretty desolate.

Mr. Ferrier: Well maybe things improved once you got home.

Mr. Harvey: Yes, it did. I was able to get a train out on Christmas Day and I'm sure I must have taken the train to Chicago. You always had to go into Chicago and take a bus to where we lived. There was no train service. So I went down by Greyhound bus.

Mr. Ferrier: Had a good Christmas at home?

Mr. Harvey: Yes.

Mr. Ferrier: Then, I take it you stayed in the military after that?

Mr. Harvey: Yes. I joined in 1937 in the regular Navy. So at the end of the war they were letting reserves out and all that, but regular Navy they stayed on for the end of their regular enlistment. My regular enlistment at that time then was going to be finished in late 1947. This is in 1945. In late 1947 I was married.

Mr. Ferrier: When did you retire from the Navy?

Mr. Harvey: I retired in 1967 as a Commander.

Mr. Ferrier: Well, Mr. Harvey is there anything else you would like to share about Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Harvey: Nothing I can think of. It is interesting though, on September 11th I was watching television. I had turned it on and they were showing the one tower and the fire. The one TV station they didn't know what had caused the fire and they were discussing how did that fire get started, and then as I watched it the second plane came in and hit the second tower and these people at the TV station then started talking among themselves. "Another plane, weren't they watching where they were going?" But to me I knew, just as I knew when the second bomb dropped at Pearl Harbor. This was not a mistake and

all the emotions, I can still feel it, the fear, the horribleness of it, the hatred and everything else. All the emotions that came to me on December 7th came back on September 11th.

Mr. Ferrier: Well, Mr. Harvey, I want to express my most sincere thanks for you taking this time to share your history with us. On behalf of the museum here I want to say “Thank You.”

Mr. Harvey: Well, thank you for taking your time. I do think these are important.

1 Appendix

Transcribed by:
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**Appendix #1
to Oral History Interview
of
Mr. Dallas Harvey**