

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Ed Stone

Date of Interview: Unknown

Presentation by

Mr. George DeLong

Date of Presentation: Unknown

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Interview with Mr. Ed Stone

Interviewer: Unidentified

{Tape begins with conversations in a group. Appears to have been made at a social gathering, probably at a reunion function. No individuals are identified. There is considerable background noise throughout the interview, making it difficult to accurately transcribe specific comments and to identify speakers.

Following the interview with Mr. Stone is a presentation made by Mr. George DeLong, a survivor from the USS Oklahoma. There is no information as to the location or date of this presentation and it is incomplete. }

Unidentified man: Is it true that they used acetylene to start with, and that that burned up the oxygen?

Unidentified man: No, not on the Oklahoma.

Unidentified man: I've heard from several guys since then that a few of the guys were killed by that, that two of the guys in the radio station (unclear), that they cut down through the bulkheads, and when they did, they burned the insulating cord material and all that and the fumes went down, and that's why they cut off using the acetylene torches. (Several unidentified voices talking together).

What happened, they were cutting out plates trying to get to these guys that were hurt and when they did, the fumes went down and the guys were asphyxiated before the plates dropped. When the plate dropped, it was a matter of two minutes; we're talking about two or three minutes where the acetylene torch had cut that out, and when it dropped, the guys were gone. They decided no more of that and that's when you guys (unclear) you guys came in with chipping drills--

Unidentified man: That's right.

Unidentified man: --after the pneumatic drills. Steel on steel, rather than acetylene torches. At least that's the way they explained it to us, and because of that, it was cut very jaggedly--

Unidentified man: Right, exactly, like a can opener.

Unidentified man: Yeah, like a can opener, so that when the men came out, they'd get cuts on their backs and sides or arms.

Unidentified man: I had like tiger stripes on my back. Everyone, all eight of us, that got out, all had the jagged scratches. In other words, if you would have taken something and gone like that, that's what it was on our backs. Now I was (unclear) now just picture me trying to get out of there now.

Unidentified woman: You'd never make it.

Unidentified man: You think I have (unclear) back then (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Maybe you'd get a purple heart. (Several people laugh, followed by several talking together).

Unidentified man: I wasn't even wounded. I was scratched; I wasn't wounded.

Unidentified woman: I can fit into dad's Navy pants. I can wear them, just as a regular outfit. I wear them (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Fifty years, fifty years. I don't wax sentimental too often. (Several people laugh.) I'm going to say, if it wouldn't be for Ed Stone and several of his cohorts, I (unclear) wouldn't be here. Fifty years later, (unclear) every day of my life. Fifty years is a long time, but I (unclear). I just want to tell you that my life has been so full (unclear). I have a wife, who's always been my first friend. (Unclear, several people laugh, several talking together). I have a wonderful wife; I have three lovely children, and two lovely grandchildren. Not many people have had as much as I have. (Unclear, several people talking together.) I really enjoy it immensely. As I said, I'm seldom emotional, but I am tonight because it represents something to me and my family, my wife, my daughters, my son and grandsons (unclear, several people talking together) I can't say enough to express how much I feel. Thank you so much.

Unidentified woman: Thank you.

Unidentified woman: Thank you. We've had a good life, too. We've had lots of (unclear). I mean, I recently had some major ups and downs and

it's your attitude that I inherited that kept me going through my first semester. I really appreciate that. (Several people talking together.)

Unidentified woman: Andy, did you see the tape? I'm not sure if you did or not. No, you didn't. And Gail didn't see it either. Gail really hasn't been home that long to see it. George and I watched it (unclear).

Unidentified woman: Now, we've all heard George's story. Tell us your story. (Several people laugh). We've heard George's story many times.

Unidentified child: Many, many, many times! (Several people laugh).

Unidentified woman: Tell us your story, from your point of view, yes. We'd like to hear your story.

Mr. Stone: Well, it dovetails with George's.

Unidentified woman: Yes.

Mr. Stone: He has to tell his part, too.

Unidentified woman: All right.

Unidentified voices: But they have that...we know that...we've heard that before.

Unidentified man: How did you get over to the Oklahoma? How did you get assigned to start cutting into the Oklahoma?

Mr. Stone: Well, let's go back. Roosevelt declared an emergency three months before Pearl Harbor, which meant that the Navy Yard had to have one-third personnel in the Yard at all times. Therefore, I had to work Saturday, Sunday, Monday, all the way

through. So therefore, my boss was called a shipfitter. He's called a journeyman mechanic, and that's a jolly good position. I was just a helper, and not a very good one at that (several people laugh). (Unclear). Well anyway, he is the one, who's given different jobs to do and our job for December the 7th, a Sunday, was to change the admiral's tiles from hexagonal to rectangular (several people laugh).

Unidentified man: Do you know why that was necessary?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, he didn't like hexagons.

Unidentified voices: {Comments regarding Mr. Stone's answer, laughter}.

Mr. Stone: That was on the Maryland, which was inboard, which was next to Ford Island, whereas the Oklahoma was outside of the Maryland.

Unidentified man: It was next to Ford Island?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, it was next to Ford Island.

Unidentified voices: (In background, unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yes, that's right. (Several people talking together.) So, they said that I had to be between Drydock Number One and Drydock Number Two at 7:30 without fail. And when he said without fail, that meant be sure I'm there on time. And so, I was there. I was there at 7:30 (unclear), and--you have to understand that in Drydock Number One was the battleship Pennsylvania, and in

front of the Pennsylvania were two, I think they were destroyer escorts, so that there were three ships in Drydock Number One.

Unidentified man: The Cassins and the Downes.

Mr. Stone: The Cassin and the Downes. This is right. I forget what was in Drydock Number Two, but there was another ship in the floating drydock, which is further down. So we were there and ready to go, and there's a little landing there, and the gigs came over from battleship row and dropped off the civilian welders, chippers, machinists, shipfitters, whatever, and helpers, and riggers possibly as well, and they would bring the civilians back at a quarter of eight and then take us over so that we were on the Maryland at eight o'clock. This being a Sunday morning, many of the sailors had shore leave, you know, the evening before. I'm not sure that all of them got back in time, because I heard later that some of them had not gotten back to their ships.

Unidentified man: Do you remember what you were doing that night? Were you out on the town?

Mr. Stone: Oh, yes, I was! (Several people talking in background.) Do you want to hear about that? (Several people laugh and comment in background.) That night, we were swimming at Waikiki Beach. At that time, there was only two major hotels; one was the Royal Hawaiian and one was the Moana. Near the Royal Hawaiian, closer to Fort DeRussy was another little hotel. It was called by

(unclear), it was called The House Without A Key, but it really was the Hale Kulani Hotel, which we in Hawaii only knew as a restaurant, the Hale Kulani. You go to the Hale Kulani, it was a nice place to eat, excellent food. But, the hotel part was little grass huts around this gorgeous garden, and you rented a hut or house as a guest. So that also existed, but my friend, Jack Templeton Smith and I had been surfing. I did a lot of surfing--

Unidentified man: (Unclear).

Mr. Stone: No, they're eighteen foot boards.

Unidentified man: Eighteen--wow (laughs)!

Mr. Stone: On top of the Royal Hawaiian were batteries of powerful lights, and at night there were boys up there who would put the pink lights on a wave and bring that wave in as pink, you see, and the next wave would be blue and the next one yellow and the next one green and so forth. So in surfing, you would be surfing in pink light or in blue light or whatever it was. It was fun. So we got tired and Jack's mother was at the Royal Hawaiian. We met her that night. She at that time, she had already been married six times and this--her boyfriend for that night was a Navy captain and he later became her seventh husband. I was always confused as to whether it was Jack Smith or Jack Templeton Smith or Jack Whorley--he had a whole bunch of names. But he was my roommate in boarding school. Anyway, we got tired

and we had a deal with his mother that, at a certain time, we would be on the wall that looks into the dance floor and into the gardens, and she would come over to introduce her captain friend, which she did. Admiral, no--Admiral Kimmel was there, and Jack's mother pointed him out. There was a whole big table of naval officers with their wives, and they would go dancing. It was the most beautiful place. The Royal Hawaiian was one of the most beautiful dancing places in the world. So it was all very romantic. So, I went home; I didn't stay too late and went home. I lived not far away. The next morning I got a bus and went down to the Naval gate--a very early bus; the busses started around four o'clock in the morning so I had plenty of time to get down there and made sure I was between Drydock Two and Drydock One at 7:30. At a quarter of eight, the gig, which is--it looks like a lifeboat from a passenger liner, only it has a little canvas house and steering thing--it was supposed to come at a quarter of eight and it didn't come. Finally at ten of eight, Bay was saying, "Well, this is Sunday morning, you know. Everybody's sleeping in. They probably overslept," making these comments and a few minutes later these airplanes came. Now you have to realize that that's battleship row and this is the ship at Number Ten dock, the hammerhead crane and the shipfitter shop, and the machine shop, and Drydock One here

and Drydock Two here. We are seeing everything side view. You have to understand that. (Several people talking together in background.) Oh, yes, I'll show you where I was sitting. Let's see, I was sitting right in between those two drydocks.

Unidentified man: The Shaw and the Downes?

Mr. Stone: The Shaw and the Downes were in front of the Pennsylvania. The floating dock was a little further over here, about where the corner of that rectangle is.

Unidentified man: (Unclear) Ten-ten Dock.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, and over at Ten-ten Dock is the Helena and the Oglalla. The Helena is here and the Oglalla is here (several people talking together in background). And over here under these things is the, no there they are, here's the Oklahoma and here's the Maryland.

Unidentified man: They're the first in the row of the battleships, the closest to you.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, and the Nevada actually got up steam (several people talking together in background). Yeah, almost got out of the harbor, but anyway, so we were to go on this battleship and the admiral's shower is way up high, you have to realize his rooms are up there.

Unidentified man: Up in the superstructure?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, way up in the superstructure.

Unidentified woman: That's where you were going to change the tile.

Mr. Stone: Yes. (Several people laugh.) So we had a pneumatic chipper with us, you know (several people talking together in background), to chip the hexagonal tile away and then we would, Bay and I, were going to lay with this sort of cement stuff (several people talking and laughing in background) the rectangular tile. And the gig never came, and we're sitting here. So the airplanes are flying down here, you see, shooting torpedoes into all of these ships here. Over here, the--not the Detroit but the (unclear)--

Unidentified man: And the Utah.

Mr. Stone: Well, here's the Utah. Well the Utah, also like the Oklahoma, turned over. And it's still there; you can see the hull upside down, yeah.

Unidentified man: But she was only a target ship; she was no longer a battleship.

Mr. Stone: No, I don't think anyone was on board.

Unidentified man: There were about, I think, twenty or thirty people on her. They used to take her out to sea and use her as a target ship. And some of them were killed.

Unidentified man: Well, she's still upside down.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear. She asks a question, and gets a reply from an unidentified man, "No." She then goes on to make another comment, but it is not clear.)

Mr. Stone: Anyway, the thing never came and in the meantime, a torpedo, no, a bomb, was dropped on the forward section, just forward of the forward guns of the Pennsylvania, and made a mess of the Pennsylvania, and a torpedo landed between the Cassin and Downes and blew one of them on top of the other. That's how powerful it was.

Unidentified man: How did you have room to run? There's no space there.
(Several people talking together in background.)

Mr. Stone: There were two. There was one that landed in the Pennsylvania and one between--

Unidentified man: And the bomb between--(unclear, several people talking together.) He said torpedo but he meant bomb.

Unidentified man: The Japanese had all the special torpedoes specifically--(unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: Well, anyway, it was terrible. The noise was unbelievable, and we saw--then the Arizona blew up, and then we--

Unidentified man: That must (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yeah. One of the worst in history, and so Bay and I ran down here to the--here's the San Francisco; she's gutted. San Francisco has no engines. All the engines are in the machine shop, but she has all her guns, which have no ammunition, and the San Francisco was not sunk on December 7, but it couldn't move anywhere; it had no engines. So we got over here to the

shipfitter's shop and asked for orders. They told us to go over to the San Francisco and we're going to load ammunition. They got railroad cars in with ammunition and it was unbelievable to lift those sixteen inch shells and other shells, you know, one after another. There were two thousand men going up the gangplank and then on the ship, on the San Francisco, the sailors are all in line passing this ammunition to the different guns. And then the gunners were at their places, you know, and they would shoot these shells up to catch the planes--

Unidentified man: Are these five inch shells, or forty millimeter?

Mr. Stone: I don't--they were so heavy; after an hour I almost passed out.

Unidentified man: They were forty--

Unidentified man: They may have loaded just whatever they had handy; the six inch shells--

Unidentified man: They couldn't have used the six inch guns. The highest antiaircraft was five inch.

Unidentified man: But you know, what goes up--(several people laugh.)

Unidentified woman: Must come down (several people talking together.)

Mr. Stone: Well, they were all coming down at the hospital, on the (unclear) of the fields, on the schools. So everyone in Honolulu said the Japanese were bombing them but it wasn't the Japanese, it was--

Unidentified man: It was the San Francisco! (Several people talking together.)
They didn't think about that, you know. But they forgot that what goes out, and if it misses a plane, has to come down.

Mr. Stone: So we did that for an hour and a half anyway, when I heard that my father's office had been torpedoed. That's what I heard.

Unidentified man: Where was his office?

Mr. Stone: His office was right next to where the Helena (unclear).

Unidentified man: He was in the dock, right behind us. The dock is here and in other words, the ship is here, the dock--and then was his office.

Mr. Stone: He looked out his window, and there was the Helena, you see. So I heard that it had been torpedoed, so I decided--I asked permission if I could leave the line and go and see if my father was all right, and they gave me that permission. So I went to the intersection of the roadway, where I turned right to go down to the Helena. It's that main road that goes down--you should know that.

Unidentified man: I know the road (unclear).

Mr. Stone: All right. I was walking down there, sort of a fast walk, when I heard an airplane up the road shooting, you know, bullets, strafing. That's what they were doing, and there were no air raid shelters at Pearl Harbor. I didn't know what to do. I just decided to lie down on the ground, so as not to give them the satisfaction of seeing my body fall, just lie down. And (unclear)

around me, something's hitting the ground and I wasn't hit, so I was sort of preserved by the Lord on High. (Several people talking together.) So I got up and got to my father's office, and the whole building had just fallen on its face. It had not been torpedoed. So when I got in the door that would take me up the stairs, the stairs were vertical, you see, and the hole that you go through a floor is at a slant, so I just grabbed ahold of it, lifted myself up and slid down the hallway, and as I went by the door of my father's office, which was really at the bottom now, I heard his voice. He was sitting on top of his desk with his feet over the front of it, and the phone lines had not broken. Because of the explosion in the Helena, the building just fell over. Hawaiian buildings are not terribly, you know, well constructed. They're only wood. The nails stretched a little bit and so the whole thing fell down, and he was giving orders, do this, do that.

Unidentified woman: He was on the telephone?

Mr. Stone: He was on the telephone, sitting on top of the desk.

Unidentified man: It'd make a great picture (several people laugh.)

Mr. Stone: He saw me at the door and he said, "Hi, Bud." (Several people laugh.) I took off and went back (several people talking together.) Yeah, well that's where the two drydocks--the Shaw and the Cassin-- So, we worked, oh, we did all kinds of emergencies all over the yard that day, and nighttime came and

around, oh I'd say around nine o'clock it's getting dark. The master of the ship (unclear) said that those who wanted to go home, there was no transportation, it was blackout and so forth, so no cars were running, he said you'd have to walk home. So people who may have lived in the hills around and about may have tried it but I decided to walk to Diamond Head. That's twenty-something miles, but because of the shells coming down, everybody in Honolulu thought we were being invaded by the Japanese. So any of them who may have had guns got their guns out and ammunition, and they were going to kill anybody who moved in the night, you see. So we were given instructions that if you walk home, sing American songs all the way. And at that time, such a song as "Red Sails In The Sunset" was very popular (several people laugh.) Making sure it was pure English and so forth, and I walked all the way home in that state, singing, twenty, twenty-two miles, about.

Unidentified woman: And this was Sunday night?

Mr. Stone: This was Sunday night. In the meantime, somebody in a gig had gone by, close enough to the hull of the Oklahoma to hear the knockings.

Unidentified woman: And that you were tapping upon.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, and those knockings, it was reported, and it got up to Ghormley's office--Ghormley was the admiral in charge at that time.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) before that time? A whole day had passed?

Mr. Stone: Yeah. There was so much noise, there was so much people having to be saved off of other ships, and there were people in the water and they were taking bodies out of the water and all kinds of things. Nobody paid much attention to the Oklahoma, you see, until they heard this. And it was a sailor who heard it. Well, anyway, it electrified the entire Navy Yard, so my father had--

Unidentified woman: There was no idea that there were people alive on the ship?

Mr. Stone: No. (Several people talking together.) Yeah, it was distraction everywhere. The ship turned upside down, you think, what were the chances there could be people alive?

Unidentified woman: But didn't the bombing--the bombing only lasted an hour or two?

Unidentified man: They bombed two hours (several people talking together.)

Unidentified man: But the secondary (unclear) all day.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, (unclear) the fires then, hitting ammunition. (Several people talking together.) Also, at around eleven o'clock, three Japanese planes flew overhead. We later found out they were photographing everything.

Unidentified woman: At night, or--?

Mr. Stone: No, no. That was on December 7th at eleven in the morning, because I saw those planes, three hours after the first attack, you see, so we later found out they were photographing so they could prove in Tokyo, you know, that they--

Unidentified woman: They could go home and celebrate.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, they could go home and celebrate.

Unidentified man: You rationalized they're not coming back with another wave (unclear, several people talking together.)

Mr. Stone: Which is, was their bad decision. They should've invaded Hawaii, and taken Hawaii, and they could have.

Unidentified man: Or at least bomb the oil storage (unclear, several people talking together.)

Mr. Stone: They never did. No, they didn't touch the tanks.

Unidentified man: And the repair facilities.

Mr. Stone: No, the shipfitter's shop, the machine shop, you know, nothing. It wasn't touched. (Several people talking together.) So, then, when I got home, all of the Japanese who lived near and around us, and several of them were servants in the house, they brought their husbands in, for fear they would be killed and Commander Stone would protect them, because he was a naval officer. Well, my father was home, and when they found out I had walked all the way--

Unidentified woman: Commander Stone, was that your father?

Mr. Stone: Yes.

Unidentified woman: Oh, okay.

Mr. Stone: He said, "Well bud," he said, "You can't go to bed because I'm leaving now to go back to the Yard." And I said, "Can I bum a ride?" It was the first time I had asked a favor of my father (several people laugh, people talking together.) No, we had an agreement, at my request that, in the Navy Yard if we ever met, that I would never recognize him, because I didn't want anyone in the Navy Yard to know that I had any connection with him at all. And he agreed to that. And there's a funny thing that happened later, but anyway, I had to get out of the car before we got to the gate in case any of my friends would recognize me. So he left me off and then I walked to the gate and then went into the Yard, and that started, that day started three years of sixteen hours in the Navy Yard, non-stop work, as we had to raise all of these ships. It was non-stop work, no day off, for three years, sixteen hours a day, which meant I could not go home because if I went home, I'd use the few hours left for travel. So I just slept on the floor in the locker room, just like in the bunk, that was it. It was delightfully comfortable (several people laugh). I could sleep the moment I lay down--

Unidentified woman: Died.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, died. And then you got up in the morning and off you'd go again.

Unidentified woman: So, your father took you back.

Mr. Stone: Yes, and we were working--

Unidentified woman: What time of the morning was it?

Mr. Stone: Well, we were there at five o'clock in the morning--

Unidentified woman: It would have been five o'clock on that Monday morning then (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: So you didn't have any time to sleep, you got--

Mr. Stone: No. I got home and he drove me right back, and so there was no sleep that night. But there wasn't for many nights. We did all kinds of things. One of the things was to pull men out of the water. There's still men in the water, still on Monday. My uncle was a naval officer and he was over where the floating drydock was; that was at Ewa Point, and a man was floating in the water and he was still conscious. My uncle got down into the water to lift him out and the man said, "Don't bother," he said, "I won't survive, and you couldn't stand the sight of me." And my uncle's a very sensitive type, you know, this is how he went insane. He went insane. He started to lift the man out when he realized the man's leg had twisted through and came out of his stomach, out of his own stomach, and he almost

fainted. Well, they got the man, but the moment they lifted him out of the water, he died. My father had to be taken to the psychiatric wing; went absolutely insane.

Unidentified man: Your father?

Mr. Stone: My uncle. I'm sorry, my uncle, uncle Bob.

Unidentified man: So, did he recover from that?

Mr. Stone: Oh yes, he did. He was sent to the United States and then he recovered and he was on active duty for many years (unclear). But anyway, during all that day, we kept hearing that there were knockings in the Oklahoma. It upset me; I said, "Well then, why don't they do something about it?" You know, I kept worrying about it, and Bay agreed. He was really after doing something, but the rumor was that Ghormley would not give the okay because we'd have to drill into areas near the ammunition rooms and using an acetylene torch would be dangerous.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear)?

Mr. Stone: (Unclear, several people talking together.) Then the rumor came that they were having difficulty finding the blueprints of the Oklahoma, but they found the blueprints of a similar constructed ship. Then the naval architects, the naval architects laid it out. They got onto the hull of the Oklahoma and with chalk, they laid out where we were to, you know, to do the chipping. And there were several placed that they marked because we could hear the

knockings. You know, if you hadn't done the knockings, we wouldn't have known where people were, you see.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear. Several people talking together.)

Unidentified man: I know where the wrench came from. It was a big twenty-five pound monkey wrench.

Unidentified man: Wow!

Unidentified man: And we just banged against the bulkhead.

Mr. Stone: We're grateful you did, because we would not have known, you know, because they weren't in every point; there were only some places where they were, you see. So the naval architects did the layout, and then the chipping crew did the chipping, and the shipfitter's helper did the watering, watering and oiling, you know, and they were sort of the supervisor, and if they thought the metal was too hot, they'd say stop, you know. You'd water it down, maybe three or four buckets on that spot, so we could put our hands and keep them there, and then they'd say all right, go a little bit further, a little bit further, you know, and so finally--

Unidentified man: How thick was the metal on the bottom?

Mr. Stone: Oh, I'd say an inch and a half to--about an inch and a half thick steel.

Unidentified man: How long did it take to chip through an inch and a half?

Mr. Stone: A long time.

Unidentified man: Yeah, it sure did.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) they just made one hole in the hull? Because that's all you ever see (unclear), one hole. And then from there, they went to different compartments?

Mr. Stone: No! There were several holes in the hull.

Unidentified woman: Oh!

Mr. Stone: No, no. We started with one, and faced all our problems there, and then when that plate fell through, then you are in the oil tanks, you see, and the oil tanks--and they stank because the black oil--

Unidentified man: Double bottom (unclear).

Mr. Stone: That's right, double bottom.

Unidentified woman: It's the space between the hull and the other parts, right?

Mr. Stone: It's about three feet, or so, I would say. And it's slick with oil; I mean it just drips with oil. And then--

Unidentified man: Were they intended to be oil tanks?

Mr. Stone: Oh, yeah. That was their fuel, for the engines.

Unidentified man: They filled the double bottoms with oil, when they were at sea. However, they were empty now, at this point. (Unclear. Several people talking together). They had taken the oil out; the oil was not there. (Unclear. Several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: Oh, yeah. You could--

Unidentified woman: So that it wouldn't catch fire.

Mr. Stone: So it wouldn't catch fire, yeah. Because, though they had taken the oil out, that place was covered with oil. It was just sticky and gooey. Oh, the fumes are unbelievable. You must have smelled that when you came through.

Unidentified man: We did, when we came through it.

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: But we didn't before that. Before that, we were down inside.

Mr. Stone: That's right; you were in clean country, rather watery but clean anyway. So then the hole was right over a manhole cover, which is bolted, really, from the inside, and we had to chip the heads off of those and--

Unidentified woman: And that was your compartment.

Unidentified man: That's right. Yeah.

Unidentified woman: Now, were there other--?

Unidentified man: No, that was another compartment--(unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: No, there's others.

Unidentified woman: How many other compartments did you save people from, before you got to George's?

Mr. Stone: I don't--I don't know where George was.

Unidentified woman: Okay, I think--

Unidentified man: I was in the after steering station. We were some of the last ones out. You got some out before you got us out.

Mr. Stone: We started about in the middle, the highest--(Unclear. Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: (Unclear) to the inner hull; that's where you cut your other holes. There's only one hole in the outside of the ship.

Mr. Stone: No.

Unidentified man: Oh, you cut several holes in the exterior of the ship?

Mr. Stone: Yes. Oh, yes.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear).

Unidentified man: I have to get my glasses, because I can't see--(unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: It was pretty much in the middle where we started. Because the--we had to find out if the ship was going to sink.

Unidentified woman: George was about the third or fourth compartment that they rescued people from. (Unclear).

Unidentified man: (Unclear) it was about that far from the stern of the ship, because we were looking at the batteries the last time we looked at this. It was about that far from the stern of the ship and the after steering section.

Mr. Stone: We started--

Unidentified woman: The other ones back farther were rescued first, and then they worked toward dad's compartment.

Unidentified man: They worked from the midships portion-- (unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: --and also, every hole was over a manhole cover, so you had to chip the bolts off and then the cover would drop down into the compartment where the men were, you see. Because I was so tall--they're all Orientals, all little people--

Unidentified man: Even this guy, what's his name, that he was with them, ahh-- (unclear, several people talking together). He was in the Reader's Digest. I can't remember his name.

Unidentified woman: I know who you mean now. But most of them were Hawaiians, right, and they were Orientals.

Mr. Stone: Well, they all would call themselves Hawaiians or Americans. (Unclear, several people talking together and static on tape). They were Orientals. There were no Japanese at Pearl Harbor, but there were Chinese or Koreans, Vietnamese or whatnot. I didn't run into any Filipinos either, but the Chinese are not such a big people, so they wanted--a whole bunch of us got into the oil, the inner bottoms. Then from there I would, because I was tall, let down. We assumed that the people inside were standing on the ceiling of a compartment or on a slanted ceiling or whatever. Hopefully they could pull themselves up near, you see, but if not then the best I could do is to try to get my hands under the armpits and lift them up. But you have to realize, I'm all full of goo; I'm oily.

Unidentified woman: But who was holding you? Where were you?

Mr. Stone: There was a man on each foot. They were holding me down.

Unidentified woman: There were two people holding you?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, holding my feet.

Unidentified man: (Unclear) jagged metal edge (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Who was holding them? (Unclear).

Mr. Stone: Oh, no. They were braced in the inner bottoms, but it was slippery. You have to realize that oil is goo.

Unidentified woman: They were braced (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yeah, yeah.

Unidentified woman: George says something about they (unclear) or something for somebody to stand on. Is that correct or is that (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: I don't know--

Unidentified man: The one guy that described this said that they had tacked little metal plates that they could stand on, and lean forward. As a result, their bodies were at an angle like that over the hull, and when they came down there, the guy that actually opened--we opened the hatch from the inside. Where you guys had to chip off the (unclear), they didn't have to in our case. In our case, we reached up and opened them ourselves.

Mr. Stone: Oh, because you had a wrench.

Unidentified man: That's right. We had a wrench and we opened those ourselves and when we did, it held. After we opened the bolts and then

they were (unclear) bolts. You would turn them and pull the nut off this, and we had all of them open and when Don came with (unclear) but they had a hand thing on the bottom side, you would lift them up. Now it's up here and we finally pulled it down. It was a rubber (unclear, several people talking together) --an oval hatch, and when we pulled on that, the gasket stayed. We weren't sure whether it was the air pressure that was holding it on or whether it was just there for a long time that the rubber was frozen to the metal. Whatever caused it, it didn't give right away and we finally pulled, and when we pulled, the thing swung open. The guy that was outside had a flashlight. In other words, we could see light for the first time. The first thing we saw in this oval hatch that's above us, right about at an angle, a hand came down and they said, "Don't rush." In other words, he was afraid because he was standing on this little pedestal and if we would have gone out too fast, he would have slipped and gone down into the double bottoms in the--

Mr. Stone: Which you could go all the way around--

Unidentified woman: Right. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: He was afraid that when we opened the hatch we'd start rushing out of there. Well, we couldn't because we had to go up and he didn't realize that. He--

Unidentified woman: Somebody came down and reached and--

Unidentified man: Well, at that point, exactly what he said. At that point, the hatch is now open and now we're starting to line up to get out. And his hand comes through and he says, "Don't rush. Don't rush. Don't rush." So we get back but the water's starting to come up now because all of a sudden the (unclear) were opened and he said, "Okay, one at a time." And that's when these guys came down under our armpits. They raised us up, and they're at an angle about (unclear). It didn't take too much but it was enough so that they reached under there and they got salt water in their hands at this point.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear).

Unidentified man: Right. And we were very buoyant; there was no problem lifting us but they said, "We'll take care of you. We'll take care of you."

Unidentified woman: How did you get them out there? If you're lifting (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: I could only lift up so far but there's two other people who are in the inner bottoms. Each one would take an arm and they lifted up through that space, and then there were men, a whole lot of people, out on the hull. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Somebody was holding you by your feet, right?

Mr. Stone: Two men.

Unidentified woman: And where were they? Where (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: They were where my feet were.

Unidentified woman: Were they outside the ship?

Mr. Stone: No, no. They're on the inner hull, and they had the hold on because if they fall, they would slide down into the dark--

Unidentified woman: What did they hold onto?

Mr. Stone: That I don't know.

Unidentified man: Were they just lying down prone?

Mr. Stone: They were lying down. (Several people talking together in background). They had to be because everything is all oily and slippery.

Unidentified man: We're (unclear) up and down; we're at an angle like that, see. What he is saying is, these guys are laying like this; they're not like this. They're lying down over the hull. (Unclear, several people talking together). All of a sudden, there are two levels. The one arm is tied up holding, and the legs are holding but he has one hand free and so does the other guy. He has his right arm free and the other guy, his left arm free. They could pass us right up through there.

Unidentified woman: Okay, so now they (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: No. I know what your question is, and I can answer it. You have to realize that a ship is made out of frames, okay? And the frames are maybe three feet apart or four feet apart at the most, is another frame. You have to picture that. In the inner bottoms,

that is, under the bottom-most deck, in the space where the oil is, these frames have big holes in them so that the oil can slosh back and forth. You understand?

Unidentified woman: I think so.

Mr. Stone: They could put a foot in one of those holes. The foot goes through the hole.

Unidentified woman: Okay. They had places where they could anchor themselves.

Mr. Stone: They could anchor themselves so that they don't slide backwards, but they have to hold onto me, and I'm slippery with goo and oil and so forth. But, my boots they could hold onto, because that was a rough something, gave them friction. Now, I couldn't lift them up, you know. I could lift them up part way but opposite these two men holding my feet, on the other side of the hole in the bottoms, are two more men. One man gets an arm of this sailor, and the other man gets the arm of this sailor, and they also can only lift so far, but up to the hole in the outer hull.

Unidentified woman: There were other people--

Mr. Stone: There were a whole bunch of people.

Unidentified woman: Okay. That's different from what I had always envisioned.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, I know. The unfortunate thing was the people who were on top of the hull, pulled the sailors too quickly and the hole, the jagged edge cut their backs. (Several people talking together.)

Unidentified man: We all had scratches on our backs. There was no question about that. (Unclear, several people talking together). I remember, we all had tiger scratches down our backs--

Unidentified woman: Okay. That explains it.

Unidentified man: --where the ragged hole came. When they pushed up through there, I had six or eight scratches down my back, just like everybody else, but it didn't mean anything because we were so numb.

Unidentified woman: How did you get back then, after you were finished pulling them out? What did you do, and how did you (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: Well, they just pulled my legs up and the people up above pulled me right out. I didn't get scratched because I knew of the sharp edges there. I'd been cut so many times by jagged metal that I knew how to suck my tummy in and all sorts of things, and it was easy. Also, out on the hull it was slippery with oil and water. It was hard to walk around. When I went to get water and come up to the thing, I was--slid on my bottom and then (unclear).

Unidentified woman: In the lucky bag, you found (unclear, several people talking together) mentioned a double bottom.

Unidentified man: They weren't anywhere near that; no, they didn't have a double bottom. They only had a hole; they had an exit above it.

Unidentified woman: I didn't quite understand that (unclear).

Unidentified man: The lucky bag was over too much in the center of the ship; it wasn't on the outer hull.

Unidentified woman: They did not have a double bottom. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Well, we don't know. I'm not exactly sure. It was very close to the waterline. When the ship turned over, the masts stuck in the bottom at about one hundred sixty degrees and we were right about here and the waterline could have been here or here; we don't know. We think it was up here, because the water came in over the hole right after we got out, but the level of the water determined how many guys survived. In other words, anybody that was above that line survived; anybody that was down here didn't. (Background noise; several people talking together as more people arrive. People talking together in background continues for several minutes. Where possible, comments have been transcribed to the extent that they could be understood).

Unidentified man: It's like the Arizona, because you were salvaging Pearl Harbor all throughout the war. Did they dictate that the Arizona was going to be a war memorial?

Mr. Stone: Yes. (Unclear) pretty much from the beginning, because (unclear, several people talking together). Then they cut the superstructure off. (Unclear) decided not to raise the Arizona--

Unidentified man: And pulled the turrets off?

Mr. Stone: They cut them off with an acetylene torch.

Unidentified man: They were a shipping hazard, as I recall.

Mr. Stone: Yes, it was. They decided to leave the Arizona on the bottom as a coffin of all the men that went down with it. (Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: They tried to rescue (unclear).

Unidentified man: They lost men in the process.

Mr. Stone: I don't know that. (Unclear, several people talking together for several seconds). It's only the Utah and the Arizona that are still there. (Unclear) to raise everything, all the ships.

Unidentified man: They refloated everything, except (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Everything. The Maryland, all of them. (Several people talking together in background).

Mr. Stone: Do you know that I didn't see Bay for years?

Unidentified man: Really?

Mr. Stone: After December 7, I had no connection with him at all. He was my boss.

Unidentified woman: You didn't turn tiles for admirals after that? (Several people laugh, followed by several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: Once a British battleship came in to Pearl Harbor, and we had to do some silly job on that, and it was up in the admiral's quarters, and there was this British admiral who walked back and forth a lot. I noticed that in his cabin was a standing (unclear) that had,

you know, sort of silk tassels coming down, that when the wind blows they move a little bit, you know, the touch of home. And when I saw that, I said, “Tut, tut,” you know, (several people laugh), to those that were all around me, and he was insulted (several people laugh, following comments unclear).

Unidentified man: Do you know which battleship it was (unclear, several people talking together)?

Mr. Stone: This is two or three years after Pearl Harbor. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: The British lost almost of theirs.

Mr. Stone: They may have lost this one, for all I know. It came in for some little (unclear) job.

Unidentified man: What were they doing over there? The British didn't have much of a naval presence in the Pacific after the beginning of the war.

Mr. Stone: Well, they did, there at Singapore and that area.

Unidentified man: Singapore was Japanese at that point--

Mr. Stone: Oh, it sure was.

Unidentified man: --early 1942.

Unidentified man: The Australians were representative of (unclear). They had the-- what's the name of the ships--they had several, the Australians had several ships (unclear, several people talking together continues for several minutes).

Unidentified man: Inside the ship, was it a loud sound or was it just a muffled thud, or?

Unidentified man: Early on, it was confusion, total confusion. When the ship turned over, all the engine parts and all the spare things in the compartment, as that came crashing across the deck, it was so loud, it was--

Unidentified man: Was that louder than the hits on the ship (unclear)?

Unidentified man: The hits themselves, they were distant; to me, they were distant, and we weren't sure--

Unidentified man: How about the vibrations?

Unidentified man: The vibrations, and the ship shook all over, a massive, massive shaking. As the vibrations died down after the first two or three, whatever the number was, we didn't know, after she started to settle down, then there were some more and the ship turned over at about, maybe ten-fifteen degrees.

Unidentified man: Must have been a panic as this thing started to go over.

Unidentified man: What happened, it pulled over halfway, and we found out later the lines that were tied up to the Maryland, the ship inboard of us, the lines were still holding at that point and the ship was trying to sink but it couldn't because the cables over to the Maryland were holding us up. Whether or not somebody parted those lines, or whether the weight parted them, we don't know,

but the ship did part from the Maryland and when she did, the mast went over and went all the way around.

Unidentified man: How long did it take to go from--?

Unidentified man: Roughly seven or eight minutes. In other words, we--

Unidentified man: It was seven or eight minutes roughly. This is what the architects and the others have said since then, but I have no knowledge--

Unidentified man: Poseidon adventure (unclear).

Unidentified man: Exactly. We had no idea at all. Whether it was ten seconds or five hours, I don't know, but in the reports, it was apparently seven or eight minutes. She was hanging there for a while, trying to keep--the cables were taut over to the Maryland and then all of a sudden those cables parted, and she went over the rest of the way. When that happened, that's when I climbed up to my bunk stanchion. At that point, we can't get out because I knew the (unclear) doors were closed above me and all we could do was hang onto something. So, I got up as high as I could because the machinery was starting to crash across the deck here, so I climbed up to my bunk stanchion and hung on there and the ship went on over and I'm still hanging on, and finally I'm faced head-down, my legs are up in the air, and I'm hanging onto this stanchion on my bunk, and all of a sudden the water started to come in and flood the compartment. Nobody in there

knew what to do. There were no lights; the lights went off at about, just at about the time the water hit the engines. In other words, at about ninety degrees. The water hit the compartment-- up until that time we could see. That's when I saw this weightlifting bar coming toward me. It was over on the other side of the compartment and it was flying toward me like a javelin. Here it comes and I'm hanging onto this bunk stanchion, about that big around. I'm hanging onto that and this bar is coming toward me like a javelin and it hit the stanchion right in front of me and bounced off at an angle, and it went across my left leg down here, my right leg up here. It just fell across there and went down. In the meantime, all this machinery is crashing across the deck and everything else, and I hung on anyway, and I stayed there. That's it. I knew that I had to stay where I was. When the ship stopped, I looked around and here are all the guys, just floundering around the water, the sailors. (Unclear, several people talking together). At that point, I could see that there was activity going on in the compartment. The lights were still on at about the halfway point and then suddenly went out. (Unclear) and I lost contact. And then, I wasn't worried about them; I was worried about me. In other words, I couldn't see anything going on. At that point, we stopped and everybody--all of a sudden, everything stopped. All the noise

and commotion while that was happening as the ship was going down, from this point down to here, just about at the point where it was ready to hit the waterline, we hear more explosions. That was the second series of torpedoes that was hitting us.

(Unclear). There were a total of--there's a debate now as to whether there was seven or nine or twelve; we don't know exactly how many torpedoes. But we know that the first three were the ones that were critical. They tilted us over to here, and then (Unclear, several people talking together); there was no counterflooding. The hatches were all open; they can verify that. The double bottoms, there was no oil in there, there was nothing in there, no counterflooding at all. There was no chance, no time; the ship went over, and at this point, some of the junior officers said well, we know they can't sink a battleship; we know (unclear). It was unbelievable; these guys still believed that at the moment the damn ship is sinking!

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) for many people to jump off the ship there (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: There was one guy with a .45 saying you get back on your station. (Unclear) was down in the turret here; he said, "I want to get out! I want to get out!" (Unclear), you get back there. And we met these guys; some of them are still alive, and they'd say, "Well, we made a mistake." You know, they told these

guys to get back, wouldn't tell them to abandon ship. They left them in there and jumped off themselves because they were up there; they were scouting to see whether or not it was safe to get off. That's all in this book (unclear). You'll find that interesting. But as the ship went over, we had no way of telling what had happened. We didn't know at that point. All of a sudden, I'm facing head down and the water's coming in like mad in the compartment--

Unidentified man: Through the funnels--

Unidentified man: It was the air vents, actually, the funnels. What happened--we didn't have air conditioning in the ships then--but the way the air was going through the ship was big funnels that you see that you (unclear) the ship. Up in the bow, the great big funnels, they would curve the air down through the compartment. Under normal conditions, they were open. If you were in battle conditions, they were closed off; you locked them off so that (unclear, several people talking together). They would lock them off, so as a result, when the ship turned over, water rushed right in through there and came right down in the compartment. So right in the middle of this compartment that I was in, suddenly a big pressure of water, right up in the middle of the compartment, and it spun me up and we didn't know what to do. It looked like a broken line, you know what I mean. The water's

coming up and so we decided, well, we'll put some clothing in there. We went down to the lockers and we got clothing and we stuffed it in there and--

Unidentified man: (Unclear) by flashlight.

Unidentified man: One flashlight. There was one electrician's mate; that was his battle station. The rest of us were just getting out of our bunks. We were all quartermaster strikers. There was one third class and the rest were just seamen. We got--all of a sudden we're faced with a situation where, what do we do about stopping all this water? That was the most important thing. We realized that, my God, that water will flood this compartment in a matter of minutes. It was going to completely wipe us out. So we started pushing clothing in there, four of us standing at a time, pushing down in there and it just blew it right out. One guy said, "Get one of these mattresses off the bunk." So we got a mattress. We rolled it up, and this was a single bunk mattress, about the, not quite the size of (unclear). We rolled it up and we stuffed it down in there, and it fit. (Unclear) the rolled up mattress would allow water in the four corners but it was like a cork otherwise. So, we put that down in there, and the night before when I came back from shore--I was over raising hell the night before (several people talk together and laugh)--we came

back and as I went down the ladder into the compartment, the
(unclear) playing acey-deucey at one of these--

Unidentified woman: I was just wondering; I'm sorry to interrupt you, because you can tell this (unclear). Since David and Carrie (?) just got here, I was just wondering if Ed would like to tell his story to them, on how he saved (unclear). It would be interesting; David did not hear his story. It is, yes, but it is much more interesting to hear it in person. And the story that you told us, we'd like to hear it. (Several people talking together). And it's so rare that they can hear it in person; it's fascinating (several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: Let's see now, when was it? We were notified--

Unidentified woman: You had gone home that night, Sunday night. You had gone home and then your father brought you back.

Mr. Stone: I walked (unclear, several people talking together). The people in Honolulu were shooting at anything that moved. They thought the Japanese were invading, because Honolulu was bombed--not bombed (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: During the day before then, did you just sort of stand there and watch; were you helping at the time? (Unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: We worked mainly with the San Francisco, and the San Francisco had no machinery (unclear), next to the Ten-Ten

Dock. The San Francisco was (unclear), but the San Francisco, because the sailors were shooting at the planes and missing them, but the shells go up and come back down somewhere. We were shelling ourselves, you see, but it frightened people all over Honolulu and so they were all trigger happy and everything was blacked out when we were going to go home, so we had to walk in the middle of the streets and sing very loud, American songs.

Unidentified man: He's walking from Pearl Harbor to Diamond Head.

Mr. Stone: It was about twenty miles or so. So I got home, and our house is filled with Japanese people. My father was a naval officer and they all knew that, and so they felt protected to be in an American--they didn't know what was going to happen to them, you know, if the populace around them is (unclear). They were really quite frightened. So my father said to stay there, as my mother, you know, put them up, they could sleep on the floor or whatever, and then he drove me back to Pearl Harbor. Now this is very early on Monday morning--

Unidentified man: And you were what, about eighteen, nineteen, twenty years old?

Mr. Stone: I was nineteen--I was the same age your father (unclear). I had my seventieth two months ago. So I got into the Navy Yard and when I got down to the shipfitter's shop, already there was rumors everywhere that there were people knocking on the hull of the Oklahoma; in other words, there were people alive in the

Oklahoma. The Oklahoma had turned over and so all of us were concerned; couldn't we do something to get them out? But they were known to be there already in the late afternoon, evening of December 7th, Sunday. And nothing has been done all night. You have to realize that, and so I'm back there Monday morning at, say, five o'clock, and nothing has happened. Nobody has gone over to the hull to do something.

Unidentified man: You mentioned before that Ghormley had vetoed it. (Unclear) Kimmel overrule him or what?

Mr. Stone: Kimmel was about finished; Kimmel was out of it (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: What time was the first group of people from the Oklahoma rescued?

Mr. Stone: That was sometime in the afternoon of Monday. So you have to figure, from the morning of December 7th to the morning of December 8th, to still another three or four hours before they even started anything. It was Vice Admiral Ghormley who stopped everything.

Unidentified man: He stopped it?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, he stopped it. That's why my father--ooh, my father couldn't stand him (several people laugh). He couldn't stand him!

Unidentified man: But why did he stop it? Any idea?

Mr. Stone: Well, your father knows, because he's a (unclear) guy.

Unidentified man: Ghormley was not a (unclear). He was the admiral in charge.

Mr. Stone: He was under Kimmel, but he was just--he was a vice admiral; Kimmel was a full admiral.

Unidentified man: (Unclear) was four-star, right?

Unidentified man: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, it was Nimitz who was five.

Unidentified man: (Unclear) was worried about cutting into the hulls and all, for explosions, is that right?

Unidentified man: There were some people cutting holes in there, letting the air out and (unclear) the ship would sink. That was a concern. He didn't--at that time, nobody knew that the mast had stuck in the bottom of the harbor. They thought it might bob up and down like a cork.

Mr. Stone: We thought, at least we understood that Vice Admiral Ghormley thought that if we make a hole in the ship that would let the air how that's holding the hull up. Do you understand?

Unidentified man: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

Mr. Stone: So that is his concern, all right? And then there was an admiral on the Oglalla who--immediately, his ship turned over--and immediately he was assigned to assist Ghormley. That was a Rear Admiral Furlong. Rear Admiral Furlong was a real terrific guy. I mean, he said no, let's immediately start getting them out.

Better to get the men out and let the thing sink than to let it sink and not get any men out, you know. He (unclear). But Admiral Ghormley and Furlong and other admirals, and my father, got together and they tried to find the blueprints. That was happening during the night--find the blueprints, so that the naval architects could mark the hull--a mark on the hull that would be over, because there's a tank top which held oil at one time. You have to figure, if your ship was upright and the bottom's around here, there's a lower deck, but below that lower deck, about three feet below, is the hull. In between that lower deck and the hull is where they stored the fuel oil, black goo fuel oil. Most of that had been emptied out, but it sticks, it drips all over; it's a mess. So when the ship goes over now, this inner bottom is on the top and you have to get through that and you have to be not acetylene torching into oil.

Unidentified man: It has a tendency to go up.

Mr. Stone: Yes, it does. Therefore, the argument in the administration building with Ghormley and Furlong and all those people, the argument was--

Unidentified man: Would you like a little more of this? You go ahead; I'll (unclear several people talking and laughing together).

Mr. Stone: Anyway, they wouldn't allow an acetylene torch to burn because of burning. Now, let's say a hole is made in the hull, and below

that hole is a manhole that is bolted, nuts and bolts, you know. Usually on the bottom deck, which is now up, that fits onto the deck, so that if you break the bolts, the plate's going to fall in, where the men are, you understand. It was all upside down, you see? So, it was decided that they would pneumatic chipper--it's a pneumatic gun.

Unidentified man: Metal against metal.

Mr. Stone: It's metal against metal, and it's a grooved, it's a diamond-tipped chisel. It's a chisel and there's pressure behind it, and the chipper has to chip into this metal. Metal is about an inch and a half thick; it's the bottom hull. You know, that takes a lot of cutting. My job was, with a bucket and a rope down into oily water, to bring it up and you know, half the time the bucket turned over as it came up, you know, (unclear, several people talking together and laughing). And then bringing the water up and I kept pouring it on as the chipper was chipping. And then when I ran out of water, he'd stop and I would go down, and my boss, Bay, was supervising the whole thing. He liked the fact that there was oil in the water because that helped them cut metal into metal.

Unidentified woman: Were there a lot of people pouring water on?

Mr. Stone: Oh, yes.

Unidentified woman: There were quite a lot of people--was there one person or were there different--okay, were there--?

Mr. Stone: No, different people were doing it.

Unidentified woman: Were people cutting holes in different places at the same time?

Mr. Stone: Not at first. There was only one hole cut, because that was--all the naval architects were there. There were even people, the admiralty there, standing on the hull and they're all waiting. The moment they broke air into the inner bottoms, they expected a whewwww (mimicking the sound of air escaping from the hull), and the ship would go down.

Unidentified woman: So they only started with one hole?

Mr. Stone: Yes.

Unidentified woman: Then, when that was cut, then did they start to cut other holes?

Mr. Stone: Yes.

Unidentified man: Once they began to realize that, hey (unclear).

Mr. Stone: They realized that it didn't go down (unclear, several people talking together). Then they realized that the superstructure must have been what's keeping it from being all the way over, vertical.

Unidentified woman: In all the pictures, all you ever see is one hole. (Several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: No, there's other holes shown in these pictures.

Unidentified woman: Oh, are there?

Mr. Stone: Oh, yes.

Unidentified woman: Ohhhhh! (Several people talking together in background).

Mr. Stone: Here's one hole. (Several people talking together in background).

Unidentified woman: See, that's the hole that I have always seen, and see (unclear, several people talking together for some time).

Unidentified man: The muck was on the bottom of the port side of the ship. It wouldn't have been enough to keep her afloat. The masts sticking in the bottom is the only thing that saved her from going down. Otherwise, she would have--the air that was in the compartment that I was in would have been used up very quickly if she would have been sinking. She couldn't sink because the masts stuck in the bottom. Had the mast broken off--

Mr. Stone: You see, and that was another worry that Ghormley had.

Unidentified man: The air in the--and I can understand--the air in there was just enough to keep the mast from breaking.

Unidentified man: It was kind of a silly worry because, you don't cut them out and they die in the ship anyway. The ship (unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: So, when we got the first hole in the outer hull cut in, and it falls in, then we chipped the bolts and nuts and as soon as the first comes out, not air in the bottoms. Now we've opened into a handling room or into a compartment inside, and air did not rush

out. So we really felt confident now, let's--oh, I remember this now. The men inside said, "Don't hold off, cut 'em all off," and we tried to yell through the hole, "Is there any, you know, powder or anything that would catch fire?" They said, "No. Cut 'em as fast as you can. We're running out of air." So we really, I remember cutting those real fast. Whether they got hot or not, we didn't care. We told them to get out of the way, the plate was going to, you know, come down and it did come down.

Unidentified man: Was that the first group of people that got out then?

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: Now which group was that? Is that on the (unclear, several people talking together). Eight o'clock the next morning; eight o'clock that morning. What is the compartment?

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) Radio Four.

Unidentified man: Radio Four.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear). And the second one was the Lucky Bag.

Unidentified man: The second was the Lucky Bag.

Unidentified woman: And that was eleven o'clock. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: What was the Lucky Bag?

Mr. Stone: This is the one I think you came out.

Unidentified man: Right, that's the one I came out. (Unclear, several people talking together). The Lucky Bag was an old thing in the Navy.

The Lucky Bag was a place where, in the old days of the sailing ships, if a sailor escaped or ran away or anything like that, his clothing and his locker were left behind (unclear). So, the master-at-arms would go around the ship and he'd pick up all these things that belonged to a guy that ran away or somebody that died or somebody that was lost at sea, and he'd put the clothing and all his possessions into the Lucky Bag. The Lucky Bag was a place where, if you wanted to go down there and buy it--they'd stamp it with "deserter's clothes," "D.C." They'd stamp it with a red "D.C." and then you could buy it. A pair of shorts that cost fifteen cents, you could buy it for five cents. (Several people talking together). A jumper that cost thirty-five cents or a dollar even--

Unidentified woman: It was a lost and found.

Unidentified man: A lost and found. The Lucky Bag was a lost and found.

Unidentified man: Who did it belong to? Is it the boatswain's--?

Unidentified man: The boatswain's mate was in charge, but it was the--it belonged (unclear, several people talking together). It was one place where they'd collect everything on the ship, anything adrift or afloat (several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: What they did--you have to read the book. They actually started out--

Unidentified man: They were raiding the Lucky Bag and got in the air raid.

Unidentified woman: They actually started out in one compartment and they--

Unidentified man: They started out in the magazine. They started out in the magazine of turret four. Turret four was the big turret (several people talking together). Turret four, they saved a bunch of them there. Those were the guys that started up and they were ready to jump off and some guy said, "No, you get back down. Your duty station is down there."

Unidentified man: But we need those fourteen inch guns for the (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Those guys were saying, "We can't fire the fourteen inchers out here. Let us out." "No, you get back down there." Some boatswain's mate and one of the officers said, "No, you get back down."

Unidentified woman: So now he (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: He ought to be shot.

Unidentified man: Huh?

Unidentified man: He ought to be shot! (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: We saw him (unclear). But they couldn't decide what to do. These were the guys topside. The guy up there saying, "Don't cut that hole; don't let them out, because if you let them out the ship will sink." You know, what the hell, the ship was already sunk. (Several people talking and laughing together).

Mr. Stone: You have to realize that all the workers in the Navy Yard are all Chinese, most of them, not everybody, but most of them were Chinese, and the Chinese people at that time were still small people. They needed somebody tall to be dropped down into the hole, because the sailors inside are standing on a slanted ceiling. It was quite a distance, you know, between the decks. So, they chose me to do that.

Unidentified woman: The first people were rescued at eight in the morning, on Monday. Then the second people were rescued around eleven.

Mr. Stone: Oh! All right!

Unidentified man: Radio four got it at eight o'clock in the morning. That must have been the first batch they got to.

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: Later on was the Lucky Bag and that was around eleven, and then you have the AA handling room, double-A handling room; that was around two o'clock in the afternoon. At two, or that's oh-two-thirty on December 9th, they got A-231--

Unidentified man: There were two guys in the morning, at two-thirty in the morning, after us.

Unidentified man: On Tuesday.

Unidentified man: Those were the last two. (Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: And he was four o'clock in the afternoon.

Unidentified man: I was four o'clock in the afternoon.

Unidentified woman: There wasn't (unclear) compartments (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yeah, I would say that, about (unclear). I was going to say four or five.

Unidentified woman: Five compartments, and thirty-two of us.

Mr. Stone: Right. So, the problem was that the outer hull is already water and oil, so it's hard to walk on that thing, although they were washing it off all the time. Nevertheless, it was difficult at the beginning. Now, you go down into the inner bottoms and the stench is unbelievable, but because of your mother having a worry as to how men held my feet, what did they support because they could slide right down a frame, see? But the fact is that the frames--there's a picture here that shows it--the frames have holes in them, so that the sludge could go back and forth, fore and aft. The frame is still there as a support, but also so that it doesn't flow that fast. It makes them more stable.

Unidentified man: It's like a tank truck (unclear) baffle plates.

Mr. Stone: And they come about three feet apart, three or four feet apart at the most, so the men who held my shoes, my feet, and dropped me down through the inner hole, they were in the inner bottoms probably supporting their feet in those frame holes so they don't go sliding away because it was very slippery, you see. And then--

Unidentified man: Were you getting light from the hole in outer hull?

Mr. Stone: Oh, yeah. There's light from the hole.

Unidentified man: And are they holding your feet?

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: Okay, you went in head first?

Mr. Stone: Yes, head first, upside down (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: He is the hero.

Mr. Stone: Oh, no. I get my arms, my hands, under their armpits. I didn't have the strength to lift too far, so I'd lift up until two men who were opposite--there's four men in the inner bottoms, two holding feet and two opposite who are going to grab the arms of the men coming up. So I'd lift as far as I could, and they would get ahold of the arms, each man one arm, and they would lift up until the men who were on the outer hull, would have two men on an arm. Unfortunately, they pulled too fast, and all these people got their backs cut on the jagged metal of the outer hull.

Unidentified man: So that wasn't from the inner stuff--(unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: On the inner hole there was a hatch, so you had nice smooth--

Unidentified man: That was no problem. Getting through that hatch was not--

Unidentified man: I thought they cut a hole through the top of the compartment. That would be jagged, wouldn't it?

Unidentified man: No, just the outer hull. On the inner hull was a hatch (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Now, all of a sudden, it's (unclear), see that's nice and smooth. We got out through--(unclear, several people talking together). And they drug us out; they pulled us out and the first thing they said to us, "Don't do anything. We'll take care of you." The guys, what they were afraid of is that we'd struggle to try to help. And of course, we'd knock them off their pedestals, they'd go down over the double bottom, so they said, "We'll take care of you. Don't do anything! Just let us handle it." (Several people talking together). And the minute we did that, they were happy because they--

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) to how exactly, how it happened. He always explained it differently (unclear).

Unidentified man: What they're doing now, is they're passing us up. I said, "Okay." I just relaxed and enjoyed life (several people laugh). Because I was going to live now. (Unclear).

Unidentified man: So, how many people were you getting out? You say you were (unclear) on peoples' arms. Were you the front line, I mean, you were the first person that touched them as they were coming out of the hole? Were you the one that said, "Don't push"?

Mr. Stone: I suppose so; I don't remember.

Unidentified man: He must have been the guy (unclear)--

Unidentified man: The hand of God saying, “Stop!” (Several people laugh).

Mr. Stone: I was afraid that they would pull me in.

Unidentified man: As I said, there was a guy outside that said, “I’m scared they’re going to knock me off the side and put me down through the double bottom.”

Unidentified man: Were the rest of the guys in there that were helping Chinese guys?

Mr. Stone: Yes.

Unidentified man: Okay, so you would have been the one American down there--

Unidentified man: The human ladder.

Unidentified man: --the human ladder, yeah, which also would be, because they would tend to be speaking more broken English.

Mr. Stone: Oh, yeah.

Unidentified man: At this point, his instruction to us was, “Don’t do anything; we’ll take care of you.” This is the key, because had we tried to help, had we said, “Well, we’ll climb out of here,” we would have been in trouble because they were laying on the sliding double bottoms, they’re trying to pass us up over their backs. He said, “Well, don’t do anything and we’ll take care of you.” The last thing I remember before--between the compartment and daylight, between the compartment and getting out--I remember only one thing. They said, “Don’t do anything. We’ll take care of you.” As a result, we slid up over every one of those guys

through several hatches. In each case, as we went through it, I didn't recognize it at the time, but they were scratching our backs, and the reason we were, the holes that they had cut weren't too big. I couldn't make it today. It's one of those things--

Unidentified man: What's this several hatches? I'm confused; I thought you had two holes.

Mr. Stone: He's talking about the outer one in the outer hull.

Unidentified man: The outer hull.

Mr. Stone: The one we chipped with the chipping hammer was very jagged.

Unidentified man: They chipped through, I think, two or three of them, didn't they? I mean, to get to us.

Unidentified woman: I think he said they chipped through one.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, we knocked the bolts off (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: For some reason, I remember more than one.

Unidentified man: (Unclear, several people talking together). ...outer hull, jagged chipped through and then one manhole (unclear).

Unidentified man: It must have only been one, but I thought it was more than that because I felt more scratches, but that could be--

Unidentified man: You had other holes, (unclear) other chipped holes.

Unidentified man: When they passed us up through there, they were moving us up and we were sliding one above the other, you know, until we got

up to the hole that shows in that picture there, where we got out. When we did, we were high on the ship. In other words, we were high on the bottom and then the boats were down here, so when they took us down--

Mr. Stone: The boats were over on this side.

Unidentified man: Right. We (unclear).

Mr. Stone: Yeah, but you had to go down there. Because there was a greater, you know, flat surface there, whereas this is very steep. It doesn't show it here but it is quite steep.

Unidentified man: You had to find a boat that was on the flat bottom of the hull and (unclear, several people talking together). That way you got more of a step off (unclear).

Unidentified man: (Unclear). Once we got out, it wasn't too bad. The downhill side of the hull was not that bad. When we walked over there, the hole was like that, but they got us out over here and then we went down to the boats. The water was right here and they took us down to the boats and we got in the motor launch and went over to the hospital.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) the episode that Dad talks about where people were banging on--they were banging S-O-S and they heard an answer saying. "Don't bang anymore; we're on our way down, about to rescue you," and they heard the drilling and drilling and drilling, and then they heard eight other people say, "Yay, we're going to

survive.” And then they started banging again. Do you remember that? Were you involved with that?

Mr. Stone: You know, I don't know S-O-S, but what I remember very distinctly was this kind of thing (apparently he knocks on table to demonstrate a sound he heard, but the recorder did not pick it up).

Unidentified man: Wow. Shave and a haircut, two bits?

Mr. Stone: Yeah. Shave and a haircut, two bits. Over here, in this part of the ship was (again, he knocks on table). In another part of the ship--

Unidentified man: Now we never did that; that was a (unclear) group. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Didn't you tell us one time (unclear) that you could still hear knocking?

Mr. Stone: Oh yes. When Admiral Ghormley said, “That's it,” you know, and the response was, “Yeah, but there's still knocking. Is there nothing we can do about it?”

Unidentified man: Is that right?

Mr. Stone: This is why Vice Admiral Ghormley was hated by the civilian workmen at Pearl Harbor.

Unidentified woman: Did you ever find out why he just (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: No, no.

Unidentified man: Do you know if it was the Oklahoma or elsewhere?

Mr. Stone: Well, I don't know. I'm sure it was elsewhere, but it was definitely in the Oklahoma.

Unidentified man: (Unclear)?

Mr. Stone: I suppose, but orders were, there's nothing we can do.

Unidentified woman: Why do you suppose there wasn't (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: I don't have any idea. Nobody understands that except whoever gave that order.

Unidentified man: Probably because--well the last group that came out there was what, 2:31 a.m. on the 9th, and he probably said we've managed to get these guys out without getting anybody else killed, and it's the middle of the night, it's getting dark and since I'm a wimp--

Mr. Stone: Yeah, he sure was a wimp! (Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: We don't want to lose anybody and we (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: They didn't do a thing to Ghormley until he got out there in the Pacific, and that's what going after now. Ghormley, when he got out to Noumea in New Caledonia, he took over the Pacific Fleet, and when he was there and he was going to desert--he was going to desert the Marines at Guadalcanal. He was going to leave them! He said, "We can't afford to risk more ships, more aircraft carriers, more anything."

Unidentified man: Who was in charge of the task force that left off the Marines at Guadalcanal? Was it Ghormley that said they needed to refuel so they all--

Unidentified man: First of all, he got his orders to drop them off, and then his orders were to protect them.

Unidentified man: Yeah, but he said he had to refuel.

Unidentified man: He had to refuel and he had to do other things, and he said, "Well, I'm sorry. We're going to have to leave them there, because we can't risk these ships." Ghormley was the kind of guy that said I was trained in the old Navy that said you don't risk ships if you don't have to. So he dropped the Marines off on Guadalcanal and then said we're going to take off because we can't afford to stay here; the Japs are around and they'll sink our ships.

Unidentified man: That wasn't Fletcher?

Unidentified man: It was Ghormley. Ghormley is the guy. Fletcher was borderline, but he was not a Ghormley. Fletcher, I think had more smarts, but Ghormley, he was so totally a traditional Navy admiral, unbelievably so. The luckiest thing that happened to us, the reason we're here, is the fact that Ghormley was relieved of his command--

Mr. Stone: Yes, he was.

Unidentified man: --at Noumea in New Caledonia.

Unidentified man: Early '42, or late '42?

Unidentified man: Early '42.

Unidentified man: Well after (unclear) Guadalcanal, I guess.

Unidentified man: Before--just right after the landings. After the landing in Guadalcanal, and this is what I'm going out there for, I want the history of this, when we landed at Guadalcanal, the Marines were on the island, the Navy was in the area, and Ghormley says, "I'm sorry, fellows, we did put you ashore but we're going to desert you now because we can't support you here, because the Japs have a bigger Navy than we do, and we're going to take off and go back to our base." And at that moment, to FDR's credit, he said, "We're going to relieve Ghormley; we're going to put in Halsey." Admiral Halsey came out to Noumea, in New Caledonia, and he took over the command and he said, "Did we put those guys there? Are we responsible for their safety?" And he said, "Yes." He said, "We don't have much. We don't have much to fight with." And this was my group, the Helena and the San Francisco and the (unclear). He said, "We don't have much to fight with, but we're not going to leave those Marines on Guadalcanal."

Unidentified man: This was just a cruiser force, right?

Unidentified man: A cruiser force.

Unidentified man: No battleships--

Unidentified man: No battleships; the battleships were too far away. The aircraft carriers--we hardly had any. We hardly had any battleships; we hardly had any aircraft carriers. We had cruisers and destroyers and they said, "You will defend the Marines on Guadalcanal."
This is Halsey.

Mr. Stone: Good for him.

Unidentified man: Halsey said (unclear).

Unidentified woman: No, no, no, no. Finish your--I just want to get (unclear).
(Several people laugh and talk together). Okay, let me question. You were sent out when they were taking the Oklahoma, when they were trying to put it upright. Rescue, okay. Explain that to us.

Unidentified man: The salvaging later on?

Unidentified woman: Salvaging, that's the word (unclear).

Unidentified man: This was after the--

Unidentified man: Later on.

Unidentified man: --long after Pearl Harbor.

Unidentified woman: This was during the war.

Mr. Stone: This was many years later.

Unidentified man: What year, what year was, forty, what year (unclear)?

Unidentified man: Forty-three, forty-four?

Mr. Stone: Around there.

Unidentified woman: Well tell us--what happened then?

Mr. Stone: Well, you have to picture that over here on Ford Island, here on Ford Island, I don't know, there was about sixteen. You have to picture concrete abutments--

Unidentified woman: I've seen them. We were over there.

Mr. Stone: All right. They're deep in the earth. It seems to me it was around sixteen; I'm not just sure, it could've been eight. I'm not positive of that. And there's heavy, many-wired steel cables--

Unidentified woman: We saw that; that's still there.

Mr. Stone: Yeah. All right. Now, on the Oklahoma, on the far side, they welded these, what I call padeyes--

Unidentified man: Big metal hooks (several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: --metal things that are welded to the hull, and they were welded under water to the hull, and then the cable, there's a bolt that goes through and the cable has a loop, and metal all around it. Then through that they have a toggle pin or something that goes into itself over here, and then they tighten that up. It's controlled over on Ford Island. Every day, they just tightened it a little bit more.

Unidentified man: So, a winch mechanism?

Mr. Stone: Yeah.

Unidentified man: Exactly, there was a winch.

Unidentified man: So they constructed the base for the winch specifically to raise each ship (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Ed, do you know if it's still there?

Unidentified man: The winches that pulled up the Oklahoma, are they still over on Ford Island?

Unidentified man: No, I don't think so.

Unidentified man: I think they're gone, too.

Mr. Stone: I see, all right. Well, they were there--

Unidentified man: It was a blank, pretty much it was just a--there was a flat piece of concrete there, kind of overgrown with grass and stuff.

Unidentified woman: We saw the place where the Oklahoma was and where it was raised.

Unidentified man: But there are no longer winches on the shore.

Mr. Stone: Oh, I see.

Unidentified man: They (unclear) them off since then.

Mr. Stone: But this was how they did it. They just tightened up on these, but they did it through scientific kind of measurement because they're watching what is happening, and as the Oklahoma was coming up, they were burning off superstructure so--

Unidentified man: The mast was stuck in the bottom so they're cutting it off.

Mr. Stone: Yeah, they're cutting it off.

Unidentified man: It was down, well below the waterline, well below the waterline.

Unidentified man: Divers were doing this?

Mr. Stone: Yes.

Unidentified man: So, they're looking (unclear) and they're severing the anchor--

Unidentified man: No, they (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: The mast is in the bottom; they're cutting it off here so that they can pull it (unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: It took almost two years to right (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: Really?

Unidentified man: He's talking about 1943 or '44.

Mr. Stone: Yes. And they have a caisson over all the holes in the hull. You know, they built the caisson--

Unidentified man: It took a while (unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: And so finally, they righted it and then they welded these side things onto it, and then they towed it into Drydock Number One. That drydock was built for Queen Elizabeth. I mean, the Queen Mary.

Unidentified man: It was for big ships.

Mr. Stone: At that time, the biggest passenger liner in the world, the longest, and the Queen Mary could have been repaired in Drydock Number One. Drydock Number Two was smaller. But anyway, Drydock Number One would take our battleships or our aircraft carriers or whatever.

Unidentified man: It could only have one at a time. If you had two aircraft carriers at the same time, you were out of luck.

Unidentified man: That's right.

Mr. Stone: No, we had Drydock Two but (unclear, several people talking together). I don't think it would take an aircraft carrier.

Unidentified man: One at a time, at the most.

Unidentified woman: And this is Hawaii, right?

Mr. Stone: Yes, this is Pearl Harbor. And so, the tug brought it into--oh, this is where my job begins, because I spent a year or two on the Oklahoma and it came into drydock (several people talking together). They weren't sure just how it would, when they started to pump water out, how it would set on the keel blocks on the bottom of the drydock. So, they emptied it very slowly, and if they noticed it was tipping one way or another, they'd put water back in and they'd make adjustments. I remember that took days to finally empty the drydock and the Oklahoma sitting on the keel blocks.

Unidentified man: Why was it so much more difficult with the Oklahoma?

Mr. Stone: Because it was so torn, almost an entire side and metal sticking out, and it might be on a keel block (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: No flat surface.

Mr. Stone: There was no flat surface, you see. So they had to create new keel blocks and, anyway, she finally settled down and they emptied it, and then we could really see. Then my job was, by this time I was raised in position, and I was no longer a helper.

I'm an apprentice shipfitter (several people comment and laugh). But I really did skip apprentice shipfitting because my boss, I don't know that you know of him but he was Nimitz's favorite. He was called Bill Bennett, and he's the (unclear) in charge of repairing the Oklahoma. He (unclear) repair in San Francisco; he did everything. But he was the best; he was the one that, when Nimitz would say, "I have to have this ship in three weeks"; Bill Bennett would give it to him in two. And then we'd all die in the process to save Bill Bennett's neck. (Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Did Bennett do the Yorktown?

Mr. Stone: We did, it seemed, everything. He was given the worst jobs, you know, because he's the one who could do the best job with them. Bill Bennett went to third grade; he flunked third grade and so he quit school. He had no parents; he never knew a mother or father, and he was raised in a steel mill in Birmingham, Alabama. The workmen gave him some of their meals, you know, and this little infant was raised in a steel mill where they made steel, in Birmingham, Alabama! This was his youth; this was his upbringing. But he's the most spiritually inspired person I ever met in my life. I mean, he would get men to do the impossible and he must have been a great man. I consider him very great. Anyway, he put me in charge, so I was now a boss,

and only beginning my apprenticeship. So nobody knew that I was an apprentice (several people laugh). Except I knew it in my paycheck! Everybody else, you know, got huge pay and I was only getting apprentice pay, which was almost nothing, you know. And yet I was their boss, and it was Bill Bennett who made me do this. The first job that, I remember getting hired, because I wanted to work for him; I heard he was a great human being. I went--this is when I was a helper--I went into the office, and Bill Bennett was tattooed from here, you know, down to the ankles, all total tattooed. I know sometimes his shirt was off, and there wasn't an area of his body that wasn't tattooed. He could go for ten minutes swearing, without repeating (several people laugh). I was this polite young boy, you know, and so I came into the office--it was a little shed by Drydock Number One. Oklahoma wasn't quite empty yet, but I wanted to go work for him, and oh, he was tough, you know, he had muscles and just a fantastic fellow. And he also--Strole--yes, I remember his name now. That was his (unclear). And Strole was also a tough guy who swore all the time. And so I came in and I asked for Mr. Bennett, and he turned around and leaned on this high desk, you know he stands at the desk with the blueprints, "Ohhh, you want Mr. Bennett?" You know, he was teasing me, as if I was sort of effeminate or something. He was ridiculing me, and

there were a lot of tough guys around the office. I didn't know who Bill Bennett was, and finally he said that he was Bill Bennett. He wanted to know (unclear) to whom he would be speaking. He started getting very polite, but it was really sarcasm. But I wanted to work for him. "Oh, you want to work for me. Well, why do you want to work for me?" "Because," I said, "I heard that you were tough but fair." "Oh! Well," he said, "I'll give you a chance." He said, "Your first job--you see that." It was not a uniform but it was a heavy canvas, we have a picture of it here. I know you do; I just saw a little while ago. A sort of jumpsuit.

Unidentified woman: Coveralls.

Mr. Stone: Coveralls, that's what you call them. There, right there. All right. Now, they were a sort of canvas, but you had a hat and everything. The only thing exposed was your face and your hands were free. Pasted all over it were strips of, you know, like plaster; we used to call it plaster for bandages--

Unidentified woman: Adhesive?

Mr. Stone: Adhesive tape. And they were treated so that they would change color if there was carbon monoxide, because human flesh and mud and salt water create carbon monoxide gas. And the hull of the Oklahoma was filled with carbon monoxide gas.

Unidentified woman: Because of the bodies?

Mr. Stone: Yeah. And my job was to go through and open up compartments and then Strole's job was to bring down suckers and blowers and (unclear, several people talking together). And the suckers would suck air out. So, the moment I gave Strole notice, it was down there and the air was cleaned out. Then I would feel around with my hands until I found a skull.

Unidentified woman: Now is this when it was up?

Mr. Stone: This is when it's in drydock.

Unidentified woman: Okay, and what about (unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: Not entirely was the water out, because you open up a compartment and the water would rush out.

Unidentified man: There were some compartments that (unclear). But the ship is now up and over in drydock.

Mr. Stone: I remember going into chief petty officers' cabin; this I'll never forget, because the ship was at a slant. I couldn't believe what I saw. It was the only compartment in the whole ship that was clean, absolutely clean. There wasn't any mud or muck or anything in there. My thingies didn't change but when I got to the bunks--now they weren't slings, you know, they were actually mattresses, with drawers underneath. You know what I mean? They weren't--

Unidentified woman: Weren't hammocks.

Unidentified man: They weren't hammocks.

Mr. Stone: They weren't hammocks; they were beds, with a sideboard kind of high, so they wouldn't roll out. And there were two of them in there, and there in each one was lying a perfect gelatin body with the skull inside the gelatin, and the gelatin was clear. And I remember just staring at them! I couldn't--in other words--

Unidentified man: They never even woke up. They simply died right there in their bunks.

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) why? (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: Compression could kill them; they died right in their bunks. Then the ship turned over and when they pulled it back up, they were still right there.

Mr. Stone: But the worst part of it was that I touched--I was just going to touch this gelatin, and the moment I touched the gelatin, the whole thing collapsed. All of it just (pschewww) as if it were melted, and there was the skeleton, all total, in perfect order.

Unidentified woman: Even the skulls (unclear)?

Mr. Stone: No, no, no. The gelatin was the flesh. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: (Unclear) and you could see through it?

Mr. Stone: You could see through the, yeah, the gelatin. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: How long did you have to do this particular duty before--?

Mr. Stone: Until I had gone through every compartment in the ship.

Unidentified man: Did you prove yourself to Bennett at that point?

Mr. Stone: Yes, I did, and I (unclear) the job done. Oh, I must tell you also something (unclear) in the Westchester. The moment I found a body, I reported it to the Marines. The Marines collected the skull and put it in a bag marked, let's say 24, and the bones were all collected and put in the bag called 24, but they're two bags, you understand. One bag has all the bones of the body; the other bag has only the skull, okay? But the two numbers would keep those bags together, and they were taken by the Marines up onto the--

Unidentified man: Dental records?

Mr. Stone: Yes, dental records is what it's for. But, they were collected up there and out there, they had an honor guard, and the Marine honor guard--they were dressed like they do at Arlington National Cemetery, and they had an area that they'd walk back and forth--most impressive.

Unidentified woman: They had the ceremony on the ship then?

Mr. Stone: No, this went on for weeks. Night and day was this honor guard.

Unidentified man: Did you see the ceremony?

Mr. Stone: No, it went on all the time. It was an honor, because these are American sailors. So, finally I gave the information to Strole that the ship was now clean, all aired out, everything, and also we had to close suckers because the compartments to the bottom

of the door frames, you know, you walked through a foot and a half of muck, and that had to all be cleaned out, hosed down and cleaned out because we're going to start emptying the magazines, of the powder compartments. So I went up and reported to Bennett and he said, "All right." He said, "You've done the first job. You got by." He said, "Now the next job is, I want you to empty all of the powder compartments." And I said, "Well, how do you open the doors?" Because the ship was over, I said, "All these shells are leaning against the doors. I can't open." He said, "That's your problem." (Several people laugh). And so, I went down and went into one of these handling rooms and sat there and asked for somebody to help me. I said, "How do I open doors, you know, of powder rooms and shell rooms and so forth?" I'm in this handling room and I can't figure it out, and I thought 'wait a minute. If the ship was (unclear), then all the shells are over there and the top of the doors are free.' If I can bend the tops back, under pressure, and get in, I can unlock it from the inside and remove the ammunition, see? So, because you can (unclear) these things from the outside. So I figured if I got a twelve by twelve by, say 20 feet long, and put a fifty-ton jack on it here, metal against metal, it's going to shoot out and might kill me. I better put some wood up against the door frame so it'll smash into wood and stick. All this I did myself, and

then I went up and told Bill Bennett that I figured out how to open all of the compartments, and I told him how I'd do it. He said, "Fine." He said, "You get the riggers to get your twelve by twelves down in the handling rooms and everything. You go to it." So I went over to the rigging crew and I said, "Sir, would you please get down into handling room, say number four? Would you get a twelve by twelve by 20 foot long, you know, beam?" And he went on with his work. And I waited almost an hour and I said, "Sir?" I said, "I need that and this is priority." And he ignored me, and you know, two city blocks away was a little shed where Bill Bennett (unclear). He sees me standing there for an hour, and so when Bill Bennett starts walking down in this fashion, you know you're in trouble (unclear). And so he comes up to me and--someday I'll tell you what he said to me (several people laugh)--

Unidentified woman: What did he say?

Mr. Stone: Something as to--"What the hell are you doing standing there with your finger up your ass?" (Several people laugh).

Unidentified man: Hell may have been replaced by another word or two!

Mr. Stone: Yes. Well. Very strong. And I said that I have asked the riggers to put the beam down and I said that they are ignoring me. And he put his hands up and he said, "And how did you ask them, pray tell?" (Several people laugh). And I said, "I said, sir,

would you please get--?" He said, "Ahh, that's no language. If you're going to work with me, you've got to be able to go ten minutes without repeating yourself, and swear worse than I ever even I imagined." And he said, "You start with right now." And I looked at him and I said, "But sir, I have never sworn in my life." He said, "Well, start now!" And so I told off this rigger fellow, and do you know, he dropped everything and got the beam and put it right down. (Several people laugh). And from then on, I could swear as good as Bill Bennett. So, I got all the compartments opened--

Unidentified man: It worked?

Mr. Stone: Yes, that's how I did it, and when that was done, then the repair has to start. In the meantime, all of the side is being burned off while I'm doing all this opening of compartments, and then Bill Bennett said, "Does anybody in the gang know that you're an apprentice?" So I said, "No, sir." He said, "Well, don't tell them. I'm going to make you a supervisor and I'm going to give you forty men and you're to repair the Oklahoma." And I said, "Who are the forty men?" He said, "They are all Leavenworth prisoners."

Unidentified man: The dirty forty. (Several people laugh).

Mr. Stone: And this is where I'm going to be a teacher. So I got them down there, and we had to (unclear) this and we had to (unclear) that,

and we had to make frames and we had to create this and create that, and so I knew, I had a sense, that one fellow was the leader of all these forty men. I had enough sense to know that I have to sell myself with him. Never mind the others, but I have to sell myself with him. And they were lazy; they didn't want to do anything. They weren't going to lift a finger to do anything. I gave everybody their orders, what they're to do, and I came back a little while later and nothing was happening. They're all just sitting there. So, I took the leader and I told him that I wanted him to have a special responsibility, and I was frightened to death because I knew that there was a revolt on my hands, so refusing, you know, to follow my orders. I knew that I would fail or succeed at this moment, so I brought him over and said, "You know, if we do this and do that"--now that was tough to do, you see, and when I took him back, I said, "No." I said, "I don't think that would work." I said, "Why didn't you think it out, and if you think it out," I said, "You will have a special something." And I had already told him how to do it, in such a way that it wouldn't appear that way. So a few hours later he came and he says he has it all figured out, and of course he (unclear, several people talking together for several seconds). It turned out to be a great bunch of men.

Unidentified woman: I think everybody wants to accomplish something (unclear, several people talking together.

Mr. Stone: That was the point, you see, and I praised each one, even though the little decision that he made was very small and most people would ignore it. I'd stop and I'd tell him what a great thing it was that he did. They worked like slaves.

Unidentified woman: After the ship got in good condition, then that's when they started to take it back to the states, right?

Mr. Stone: No, we had to go so far that it becomes watertight and then get it out of drydock, because there was a war on and the drydock was needed. We floated it where we could get on it to work topside in different places.

Unidentified man: Where did you put it, at that point. Where did you put it, in that ten-ten dock, or--?

Mr. Stone: No, no, no. It wasn't on ten-ten dock, but it was over near where the floating drydock was, in that area, where the Nevada tried to escape.

Unidentified man: Okay, you hung her on the side there.

Mr. Stone: Yeah. She was anchored and we went out, you know, in boats and did our jobs.

Unidentified man: How long was she in drydock?

Mr. Stone: She was in drydock for months. Oh, yes.

Unidentified man: And this would have been in what, '43, '44?

Mr. Stone: Yeah, forty--. I don't know just when--?

Unidentified woman: When did they try to take it back to the states?

Mr. Stone: Oh, that was long after I had left.

Unidentified man: What was the intent? To make it operational again?

Mr. Stone: No, she was sold for scrap metal and it was being towed by a tug to California someplace where the wrecking crew would break it down into pieces of metal and melt it up again--.

Unidentified man: They were going to make razor blades out of it, and (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified man: The company that bought it, bought it for something like fifty thousand dollars and they were going to have all that steel, see? They were going to use all of that steel to (unclear, several people talking together). They couldn't sink her in the harbor (unclear, several people talking together).

Unidentified woman: But (unclear) in this book, he said that it didn't hit a storm. (Unclear) claims that the weather was fine and for some reason or other, nobody knows, it sank. (Unclear, several people talking together).

Mr. Stone: But didn't the cable break, between the tow--

Unidentified man: The cable broke; the cable broke but it wasn't a storm. (Unidentified woman talking in background).

Mr. Stone: Oh, I see.

Unidentified man: He says they were towing it toward Bremerton; they were going to take it back to Bremerton. Halfway between Pearl Harbor and Bremerton, all of a sudden the thing began to waiver and they weren't sure--

Unidentified woman: And it took a while for it--

Unidentified man: And so two or three hours later, she started to wobble some more. All of a sudden, she threatened and they didn't know what to do. And all of a sudden they cut the cable and let her sink. She didn't waiver or (unclear) or anything; she sank herself! And the sailors are very happy about it. All the Oklahoma sailors are saying, "We didn't want her to be razor blades." (Several people talking together).

Unidentified man: So, you were just trying to make her watertight, so that she could travel?

Mr. Stone: So they could get it out of the drydock.

Unidentified man: Did you put any concrete in there, or what did you do (unclear)? They must have just welded in some plates or something. You were only concerned with all the bodies off, getting her watertight.

Mr. Stone: Yeah. So for several years, she was over in, you know, in Pearl Harbor. Now, I'm going to have to go home, I think. I have two dogs--

Unidentified man: (Unclear). We can put you up for the night.

Mr. Stone: No, I have to take them for their walk

(Tape quality degrades at this point for several seconds).

Unidentified man: It's a Navy man who is a survivor, for he sank with his ship, too. It was Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. He was on the USS Oklahoma, a battleship in Pearl Harbor. The Japanese sank his ship and he went down with it. He was trapped in there until he was rescued. That's why he's here. This is story. Welcome Quartermaster First Class George DeLong. (Applause).

Mr. DeLong: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the retirement community of Willow Valley, I'm here to tell you my story, and it's a first person singular story tonight, primarily because of the main event, as pointed out by the gentleman that introduced me, is the action at Pearl Harbor. But I'll tell you a little bit more of my background and why I was at Pearl Harbor. It started out, actually, when I graduated from high school in June of 1940. I went to work in the best job in Annville at the time, the best job that I could get without having any college education or anything like that, was to go to work in the Kreider Hosiery Mill. I made women's silk stockings. That was before the war started, you remember. I was a full-fashion knitter, but the truth of the matter is, it was one of the most boring jobs on earth, because all I did was watch a machine go swish-swish-swish-swish, and then after awhile, I got to take the stockings off and

put a new set on. I was so bored with that job, because I thought, there must be more to life than this for me. So one night I was leaving the hosiery mill and I went across the street, and there was the post office. You remember they used to put these Uncle Sam signs in front of the post office. Well, I walked across the street there, and there was a picture of Uncle Sam and some little sailor-sailorette, you know, pointing their finger at me and saying: Join the Navy and see the world! And I said, "That's it! That's my answer; that'll get me out of town." I was so anxious to do something more exciting in life than to just spend my time in a hosiery mill. Well, I went home and talked to my mother. My father had died when I was five years old. He had been gassed in World War One; he died at the age of thirty-two, and I was five years old at the time. So, I ended up having to consider mother, because I had helped the family quite a bit through the period. But she understood, and I talked to her, and I said, "Mother, I do what I can to help you but I just want to do more with my life." And she said, "All right. You go ahead. You join the Navy and--" By the way, she worked in the shoe factory, and I had worked in that factory, too, at one time. She had an adequate income, but that was all. But I sent her a little money when I got in the Navy; not much, because I was only

making twenty-one dollars a month. So, it was rather a tricky thing to do.

When I decided to join the Navy, I went down--came over to Lancaster, actually, and signed up and they sent me to Philadelphia and from there up to Newport, Rhode Island, where I did my basic training. Then I went out to quartermaster school, out in California. There I had an opportunity, in the four months I was there, to learn all about navigation and that sort of thing, and I got to be a quartermaster striker. From there I went up to San Francisco and went aboard what I thought was the queen of the sea at the time, the USS Oklahoma. Actually, she was one of the oldest battleships in the fleet, but I thought she was great. This was a battleship that was back just for a refitting and a little repair. Our base was at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, so I was very happy. I got my sea legs on the way over there, and I found out that life at sea was very good to me. I liked it very much. On the other hand, I liked even better when I went ashore in Honolulu and had a good time. (Unclear) young men then, you know, and there was a lot of fun. I learned a little bit about meeting the girls and that sort of thing, although there weren't too many there; there were more servicemen by far. But I did have a good time. On Saturday night, December 6, I went into town, and I was used to having a pretty good time, you know,

not with the girls necessarily but with the fellows. We'd go in and have a few and that sort of thing. I decided I was getting a little bored with that. I thought I'd find out more about what was going on in this town. So I went for a walk down through the byways that sailors never got to, most of the time. I ended up, I was in the middle of an oriental district, and all of a sudden I saw a big billboard for a movie. I couldn't read what the name of the movie was, because it was either in Japanese or Chinese or something. I decided that might be interesting, so I went and paid up and went in the movie, and I was sitting there, and all of a sudden I looked around and I was the only white uniform in the place. There was nobody else there; they were all Orientals and they were perfectly silent and looking straight ahead. I didn't know whether I was welcome or not. I didn't know whether they were happy I was there or not, but I enjoyed the movie even though I couldn't understand a word of it. That night I went back into town and had a few more and back to the ship.

When we got back there, I ended up going up the ladder--you had to get on the ship, the boat would come alongside, you had to go up the latter and then get on the ship. Then I had to go down to my sleeping compartment; that was four decks down from the main deck. So I weaved my way down there, and as I

came down to the compartment where I was sleeping. It was known as the after steering station. The after steering station was not a place normally where you would have bunks or anything like that. The reason I was stationed down there is because I was one of the lowest men in the ranking on the ship, because I had just come aboard about three or four months before. Anyway, I got down there and I decided, I think I'm going to sleep in in the morning. I walked past the Artley (?) brothers, they were sitting there playing acey-deucey. Now I don't know if you people know what acey-deucey is; it's that game on the other side of the checkerboard, you know, the one with the triangular lines. Acey-deucey was a sailor's game, and they were playing acey-deucey. The Artley brothers, one of them was older and he was a rated man; he was a second class quartermaster. The other Artley was the same rank I was, seaman second. So we went down into our compartment because it was quiet there. It was down so low in the ship, nobody else got there. It ended up that they were having a good time as I came down the ladder. They waved to me, "Good night, DeLong." And I said, "Okay. Good night; I'm going to sleep in in the morning.

So, the next morning, eight o'clock, I finally woke up and after I got awake, I swung my legs out of my bunk and I was climbing

down. All of a sudden, just as my feet hit the deck, I heard the loudspeaker turn on and the boatswain's mate holler, "All hands man your battle stations! Set Condition Zed throughout the ship!" Now Condition Zed, that's where you close all the watertight conditions and everything else, and I go, "Well what do they want to have a drill on Sunday morning for?" I mean, we're grumbling down there in the compartment. (Unclear), "What do they want to have a drill on Sunday morning for? We're not even out at sea; we're in port." All of a sudden, the boatswain's mate must have known what sort of a reaction he was getting below decks, because he grabbed the phone and he started to holler, and he used some pretty salty language to get us moving. All of a sudden we decided we're going to get out of here, and then we remembered that they had set watertight conditions, too. So just as I started up the ladder to go up to the carpenter shop, I heard them slam that door shut and dog it down. Now, dog it down is when they take those handles and close the door so that you can't open it. Just about that time, all of a sudden, we heard this explosion. The ship shuddered, and we heard another one and another one. All of a sudden, we looked around and the ship started to tilt over to the port. We didn't know what was going on, and finally the thing let go and in about five or six minutes, it kept right on going and turning

over. It tipped all the way over, so that it went--the mast, which was sixty feet high, turned over and went down into the bottom of Pearl Harbor, and that was only forty feet deep. So it stuck there in the bottom, and that kept the ship afloat but the bottom's up. In the meantime, I was down there and I didn't know what to do. All of the machinery started crashing across the deck and the lockers were falling over; all kinds of crazy things were happening. So I decided, well I was fairly safe up in my bunk and I started to climb back up again. I got back up there and I was hanging onto my bunk stanchion. That was the very moment that the ship went over the rest of the way, and as it got over I ended up facing head down; my feet were up in the air. Now I realized that all the rest of the guys that had found something like that to hang onto, and apparently they were all still okay, but we realized that something had to be done, because we couldn't get out there by ourselves. Then we heard water rushing into the compartment. Now we had--right in the middle of the compartment the water, by the way, the lights went out as the ship turned over--and we heard this rushing water. Luckily, one of the guys that had got to his battle station was an electrician and he had a flashlight. That was a life saving instrument, that flashlight. He turned it on and there, right in the middle of the compartment, and this was what would have been

the overhead, was now a deck, was a gusher of water coming up there. It looked like a broken-off fire hydrant. The water was rushing into that compartment and we decided, well be better get that stopped. That was the first task we had. We took some of the lockers and took all our clothing out and slammed it in there and tried to hold the water back. We couldn't; it would blow the clothing right out, no matter what we put in there. So all of a sudden, one of the fellows said, "Why don't you get one of those bunk mattresses over there and we'll stuff that in there." We took that bunk mattress--and by the way, this was an air vent that had been there that the water coming through. Under normal circumstances, it was supposed to be shut off when they said to close the watertight condition. Well, the deck had a hole in it bigger than this podium, bigger than the circumference of this podium. When we took that mattress and rolled it up and stuffed it in there, it fit. Now it was a rare thing. If it would have been any longer, we wouldn't have been able to get it in there; shorter, the water would have come out the side. It fit like a cork! The only problem was that we all had to stand around and hold it, because (unclear) the water pressure was trying to push it out of there. Just about that time, the board that the Artley brothers were playing acey-deucey on the night before came floating over that way, and we said, well that would help hold

that in there, but that wouldn't really do the job. They said, "Diehl (?), why don't you--?" Diehl was a young guy; he was seventeen years old, but he was the biggest man in the compartment. So we asked him to sit on top of that thing and hold it down so that we wouldn't all have to stand there and hold it. So he said, "Okay." He got up on there and just about that time, he said, "You'd better get me off of here." He said, "The water's coming up pretty fast." So we realized we had to do something more. There, lying on the deck, nobody had ever seen before, was a big piece of line--a rope--that was about twenty-five yards long. So we took that acey-deucey board and put it on top of the mattress after Diehl got off the thing, and we put the acey-deucey board on there. Then we took that rope and tied it to pipes and electrical conduits--whatever we could find--and made an X right across the top of this hatch that was allowing the water to come in. When we got finished tying it to the fourth thing--we had to tie it to four different places--when we got that finished, we had an X across and all of a sudden, we looked and there was only about one foot of rope left. Now it was just long enough. It was as though--the mattress fit, the rope was just exactly long enough, and there we were. Now we had time to at least reflect on what we had to do next. We got up to the highest point now. We didn't dare get back in

that water where the machinery had rolled around because we were afraid we were going to get that machinery rolling again. If we did that, then we'd all be smashed. So we got up to the highest point we could, and there was a little air pocket up in the one section. We all got up there in that air pocket and then we started to analyze what we could do. Well, one thing the electrician's mate that had the flashlight turned it and we looked all around the compartment knowing that the door that's now below us, that had been up in the carpenter shop was dogged down. We couldn't get out that way. Also, we couldn't get that open; it wouldn't have paid us because it was under water anyway. So we looked at this other door that we had behind us. There was another small compartment back there and we decided, well we didn't know whether one of those explosions had taken place there or not. Now we had a choice, though. That door was dogged down in such a way that it wouldn't have opened unless we did it ourselves from our side. We decided--at that point, we became very democratic--we took a vote. We decided let's open the door because if we don't open the door, the water's going to come up so high, so soon we're going to be drowned anyway. So we decided, and we leaned against the door and opened all the dogs, and the door swung open and there was no water in that compartment. So now, we bought some

time for ourselves. We were trading the salt water that was in our compartment for the fresh air that was in that other one. While it was a small compartment, it gave us a lot of fresh air, because by this time, the other air that we were breathing we had used up most of the oxygen and we had no idea how much longer it would be before somebody would get to us, if they ever did. Anyway, we now had exchanged the salt water for some fresh air, and we got back up into our high perch again and we stayed there. From that point on, there was no going back. We got up in the only safe spot that was left. By that time we were talking about what we should do, and other times we sat there and we couldn't decide what we could possibly do that we hadn't done, and all of a sudden, one of the guys said, "Listen, why don't we start sending out a message, S-O-S, and see if anybody's up there?" And right there, lying on the deck where nobody had ever seen it before, a big twenty-five pound wrench. Now this was just what we needed as an instrument to send the Morse Code. So we started--we took that wrench and we banged out the Morse Code. S-O-S means help and that's standard for the whole world. It's three dots and three dashes and three dots. When we started doing that, we'd bang away and bang away, and we didn't hear any response for a long time. Then after a while, we started hearing somebody. "Oh, oh, oh.

There's somebody answering, somebody answering." We sat back, we stopped sending, we listened, and all of a sudden they came back to us: S-O-S. It was some guys in another compartment; they were also trapped. We thought we made a contact; well we did, but it didn't do us any good. In the meantime, we heard boat propellers outside and that sort of thing. We thought there must be boats outside, and we'd start tapping; hoped they'd hear us. Well, we found out later that they did, and they reported this to some people, and after a while, we don't know which one, which group they heard, but there was quite a few of us tapping out the S-O-S's now. So at that point, I found out later from a fellow that helped come down to get us, that they didn't get a chance to start any salvage work until the next morning. You realize that this was at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, and they only finally started cutting down to us the next morning! So it was a long time before they started coming. In the meantime the water's coming up and the flashlight was burning out, and it wasn't too long until we realized that unless they got there fairly soon, we had it. We weren't sure whether it was going to be a matter of drowning or being asphyxiated with no oxygen. But in the meantime we had time to think. We sat there, and every once in a while I got to thinking about my mother. I thought, well, it's kind of sad, but I

hope she doesn't cry too long. And then, don't think that way because you're going to get out of here. You're going to get out of here. One other thing I thought about: Just when life was getting good; why does it have to happen now, you know? It was just one of those feelings, and other than that, all the other fellows had things that they thought and said. (Unclear).

Gradually we started to chat again, and then we started to bang out some more S-O-S's to make sure they didn't forget we were down there. All of a sudden, we started to hear a different sound. It was a rat-tat-tat sound; it was like a pneumatic drill, but it was steel against steel and it sort of reverberated through the ship. You know what a pneumatic drill is. That's the thing that, when you're trying to sleep on a Saturday morning, somebody digs up your sidewalk. You know, they use one of those drills. They make a lot of noise. But that day, that was music to our ears. We were just delighted to hear this. It meant that somebody was trying to get to us. Now, we didn't know who or where, but when we heard this S-O-S and then after a while, we heard a plate drop, a metal plate drop and slide down inside what they called the double bottoms. Now the double bottom is that space between the inner hull, the main hull of the ship, and the outer hull. The outer hull was called a blister, because it was supposed to protect you from torpedoes. If a

torpedo hit the ship, the outer hull, it would explode and the main inner hull would be intact. Didn't work that morning.

When the ship tilted over, the extra torpedoes that were fired at us hit above and below the blister, so we never had a chance as far as saving the ship is concerned. By the way we always had the feeling, you couldn't sink a battleship; you couldn't capsize a battleship. Now they did that morning, and we found out later that one of the reasons why is we were getting ready for an inspection the next day, an admiral's inspection, and they were planning to open up all the voids and hatches so that they can see in there, to make their inspection. Well, that was the wrong day to have it happen, because now all of a sudden the ship is wide open. The reason we had all that water coming in, in the first place, was through that air conditioning vent, because that's the way the ships got air into them. We didn't have air conditioning as such. The way we got air into the ship is to have it come down through a funnel. They had two funnels in the front of the ship, and the air would get in there and it would come down through the ship and it would circulate that way, and that's how. Unfortunately, the guy that didn't get to his battle station and never closed off that hatch, that's what brought the water into our compartment. Anyway, we were now in a position where we had done everything that we could and we hear these guys

dropping these metal plates that slide down through the double bottom, and all of a sudden we heard the guys shouting, another group was shouting, and we heard, “Hooray, we’re getting out; hooray, we’re getting out.” Now, you talk about mixed emotions. We thought they were coming toward us, and all of a sudden we decided no, they’re not coming to us. Not that we didn’t want those other guys to get out, too, but we had a feeling that all this time we’ve been hopeful, and there’s no hope now. They must have known how we felt because shortly after that, they started drilling again and we heard the rat-tat-tat, and we heard another plate drop down. By that time, we were all waiting and listening to see if they’d be outside and we believed they were, but we weren’t 100 per cent sure because we had a little trap door, a little hatch, that had been on the deck, that was now up at an angle above us. This was a smaller hatch; it was one of those kind of hatches where it’s bolted down with nuts, a nut and bolt. One of the fellows had wisely taken that wrench that was right next to that, and when the ship turned over, he realized that sometime we might have to open up that hatch and he kept that wrench in his hand all that time. So all of a sudden we looked up and there was a little pinpoint of light. Back in 1916, when the ship was first built, a welder missed one little hole, just one little hole, and now the guy that was outside there,

his flashlight beam was coming through. It was just a pinpoint of light, but it looked like a big beam of light because we had been in the dark so long. We just felt that there was no possibility unless we had somebody outside to get us, and now they came and finally got there. We opened up that hatch and as we unbolted the hatch--there was a handle on it, and it was up above us now--but it didn't open so we pulled on it and when we did, the air popped out. Now our feel before was that if we opened that hatch too early, the air would go out and the water would come up faster, which would actually be the case.

However, now is when we were really concerned. All of a sudden, we were oh, boy, now the hatch is open, is the water going to come up? Fortunately, it didn't come up too fast. We don't know to this day whether it was because it took a longer time to bring more water in or whether we were up high enough so that we were just at the water level at that point. We'll never know.

But the thing was that when that hand--a hand suddenly came in there and there was this flashlight outside there--and he hollered, "Don't push. Don't shove. Don't jump. We'll take care of you!" The guy was giving us these instructions from the other side. We held back and he said, "Now come over here, one at a time, the nearest fellow first." And so we said, "Okay." It was

hard to keep back; you really wanted to rush. He knew what he was talking about when he said, "Don't rush." But I was real back and I was, "Oh, I don't know about this." And so we got nervous, but at the same time, the fellow reached down and picked up under the armpits, the first one that was there, and pushed him up and pushed him up to another guy (unclear). Here they had formed a human chain, down through the double bottom, to get to us, and what they had done was cut a hole in the bottom of the ship and came in there, and then to get into other compartments that they had to drill more plates, and that's what we heard dropping down every once in a while. So finally, they took that first fellow, and he goes up and the second and third. I don't know why I remember, but I was the fifth one. It's just--I guess I was so anxious to get out of there that I know how many went out before me and how many were behind me. By the way, there were eight fellows in the compartment. All of us were quartermaster strikers except one and that was the electrician's mate. That was his battle station and he got there, and thank goodness he did, because none of the rest of us had a flashlight. As we got up there, they passed us up through the double bottom and finally we got out on the hull and then we popped up and all of a sudden there it is, we were out in the fresh air.

You must recognize, we're almost numb from shortage of oxygen. But we got up there and we took that first--and we heaved in that first breath--and then we looked around. As we got out there, the boatswain's mate came down with a motor launch, and we walked down over the bottom of the ship and got down into the motor launch and then we saw what had happened to Pearl Harbor. Now you've seen some of these pictures of Pearl Harbor, everything burning and there was oil on the water burning and everything. It was a mess, a real mess. Then for the first time, we found out what had happened to us. This was a day and a half later. It was at four o'clock on Monday afternoon and we were now coming out, and the boatswain's mate told us, "Well, you fellows probably don't know, but the Japanese attacked us and those were torpedoes that hit the ship that you heard the explosions." They didn't hit us with bombs; they hit so many of the other ones with bombs, many of the other ships. We were such a target; we were the forward, outboard battleship, and we were a natural target. We got more hits than any of them. The Arizona, which was another ship that was there behind us, she got hit by bombs because she was inboard. She had another ship that was outboard of her, and she got hit by bombs, one of which was an armor-piercing shell that they put fins on, and it went right down through two or three decks and

got down to the magazine and blew up the magazine. That's what happened to the Arizona, and she is still there. Now the Oklahoma, she's no longer there, but she was there for a couple of years after that because they didn't know how to get her up. But they finally used a crane, a winch, about twenty of them across Ford Island, and big cables. They put it over her and turned her back up again. They did that several years after this occurred.

In the meantime now, we're going over to the hospital ship, the USS Solace. When we got over there, they told us what had happened, just barely. We didn't have any of the details, just the simple facts. We got over there, and as we're going up the ladder to the gangway, there's a medical doctor at the top of the ladder and he's--one of the fellows heard him say he took the brandy; that's medical brandy, now, medical supplies. So he, as we came up there, he said, "Here, fellows." He started to pour a little shot of brandy; he handed it to one guy and he tossed it down, and another guy. I did (unclear) remember this: I was the third one in line there. (Unclear) so I got up there and I thanked the doctor and (unclear). I heard the words of the guy behind me. He really floored me; he said, "Sorry, doctor, I'm a teetotaler." I looked around and I said, "I'm not." I took his, too! I turned around to the doctor and I said, "And this is one

more for the road, doc.” I didn’t use those words, but it was I said, “One more?” He said, “No, no, no, not on an empty stomach. You’ve already had one.” So the rest of the guys came through the line, and they took us below, and then we saw some of the things that happened to some of the other fellows. If you think we had problems, you should see some of those fellows. There were fellows from the Arizona; they were burnt, burnt badly, and some of them, the flesh was charred black. And the other ones, they’d be pink. And you’d feel as though you could take your finger and touch right into the bone. I mean it was just a (unclear). But they gave us a bunk anyway, because they wanted to examine us in the morning when they had time. So the eight of us that came over on that boat were given a bunk for one night. They gave us a shower; let us take a shower because we were covered with oil. We had to get that oil off of us. Then we ended up getting a good night’s rest and breakfast in the morning. Well, when I hit that bunk, I went sound asleep. Now I slept like a baby. I drifted off in a very troubled world, but I was (unclear) trouble because to feel (unclear) after that sort of thing is just unbelievable. So the next morning we decided, well, we’ll go to--we’ll probably get transferred here, and so oh, yes, they transferred us all right. They sent us over to a receiving station and that receiving station said, “Well, you’re

hit. Your next ship is the USS Helena; she's right there at the dock." She had one torpedo hit in the engine room, and that was a break for us, because they had to bring her back to the states to fix the engine room. Well, that gave me a chance to get a little leave, right after Pearl Harbor. But the truth of the matter is that the most interesting things happened along the way, little things. One of our junior officers, (unclear) and we all respected him, he came over and he grabbed us all and he gave us a big hug, and he said, "You fellows are so lucky." We said, ""We're lucky? Yeah, we got out. Yes, we're lucky." He said, "No, no, that isn't what I mean." He said, "You guys are now living on borrowed time." Now he must have read a book or something at the time, but those words still ring in my ear. He said, "You fellows are so lucky because you're all living on borrowed time." And I've been doing that ever since, and enjoying every minute of it. Life has been so good since that particular moment when he made that statement. I can hardly believe that (unclear). Then we were sent over to report to the Helena, and they had all kinds of stories to tell. One of the problems that we had, Artley, the seaman that was with us in that compartment, his older brother that had been playing acey-deucey with him the night before, had gone up to central station, and when we got out, he didn't know where he was. Artley, who was with us,

didn't know where his brother was or what had happened to him. For one week after he was on the Helena, he didn't know, and finally word came that what had happened. He was in central station, his brother was in central station, and when the ship went over, the mast had a big opening, a big tube, that went down to this compartment and all of the fellows tried to scramble up that ladder to get out, and as the ship turned over, the ones that got there just as the ship was hitting the waterline got off, the first two or three jumped off. And then all of a sudden the water shook back in there again and he was forced back in and was drowned in central station. Artley was, of course, they were very close brothers, and it was a real loss to us.

So the stories--I could go on indefinitely what had happened to us on the Helena but that's another story. We went out to Guadalcanal and we had a big battle out there. The Helena, she was a fighting ship. I got transferred off of her just days before she got sunk. I had been aboard her for over a year, fighting all the battles in Guadalcanal. I stretched my story a little tonight, because I don't want to leave the impression that all these things happened in a very short time. It was a long time, and some of the things that happened when we were down below there, we'd discuss them at the reunions, when the fellows go there, you

know. They'd talk about, well, remember this, remember that, you know how it is at a reunion when old sea hands get together. One day, we were down, I believe it was in Baltimore or Norfolk, I guess, at a ship's reunion, and one of the fellows that came to the reunion that time hadn't come for all these years. So this must have been fifty years after the event. This was ten-twelve years ago. Diehl, remember the guy that we sat on top of the thing, he came in there, and there was "Hey, remember when we put you up there?" Yeah, all that sort of thing. He turned around to me and he said, "DeLong," he said, "There's one thing I remember about you." He said, "All the time we were down there, we were quiet most of the time except when we were banging those S-O-S's out and we'd chat once in a while," but he said, "I'll never forget you as long as I live." He said, "Right in the middle of that darkness; you couldn't see a thing"--by the way the electrician's mate's flashlight was burning out by now; we had no idea how much time had gone by, how long we had (unclear) or anything--he said, "Right out of the darkness, total darkness, total silence, you made the statement, 'Fellows, I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but I'm going to have to take a crap.'" Now, we're talking about noise coming out of that compartment. Those guys were "Oh, no you don't! Not in here, no, no, no. Not in here while we're doing this." "Okay, fellows,

I won't, I won't." I lied; I lied. I went off to the side as far as I could get and I--. Later I found there was another guy in the one compartment, the fellows had come out before we did, had the same problem and they made him go back out in the dangerous part of the ship (unclear). But he and I would compare notes at the reunions and we always started telling them, "You guys were going to--." DeLong and I were going to die healthy. We weren't going to go feeling bad. So these other guys, I don't know whether they all lied or not, but they claimed they didn't do that. He and I agreed, well by that time we should have, because we found out it was a day and a half later before we got out.

So these were very little stories like that (unclear). By and large, I think that the satisfaction of surviving. I was nineteen then; I'm seventy-nine now. I think of all the good years I've had since then. To me, it was a gratifying thing. It's why I like to talk about it; I feel so good about it. I've been over here with you fellows about three or four times now, and I appreciate the opportunity because I get to meet such nice people, too, in the meantime. But by and large, I told my story as rapidly as I could because I didn't want to keep you here all night. I understand if I talk to long, you'll walk out on me. (Laughs). So I would love to, if you don't mind, may I have a question and answer period

here? Does anybody have any questions? Did I cover everything?

(Inaudible question). Oh that's right. Thank you. See, she's heard my story so often, she knows when I've missed something. There were somewhere between 400 and 450 people killed, most of them by drowning when the ship turned over. Because I was so low on the ship, it was one of those cases where when that part of the ship turned up it gave us an opportunity to get out. The fellows in the decks in between, the portholes, some of them were open and everything. Water rushed in and they drowned. So, over 400 of them were killed that way. But of the fellows that got out, including that other group that got out before we did and all the rest, there was a total of thirty-two of us. So they always refer to us as the thirty-two that came back, when we have reunions. That's why I feel (unclear) sitting together (unclear). We always got together at the same table. Any of the thirty-two that get to the reunion, we always get together. What was your other question? Did I cover it? Okay. Now, anybody else? Yes.

(Inaudible question). The total complement was around twelve hundred, I think. But a lot of them were ashore. Most of the officers were ashore, and most of the senior enlisted men that were married were ashore, so there were a high percentage, I'd

say there were about 800 on the ship at that particular time that morning. Of those, 400 were killed. It was devastating when those torpedoes hit because, as I say, we were in a forward, outboard position. Now the other ship that was inboard of us, the Maryland, she never even got a single torpedo hit. She got a couple of bomb hits but they were minor compared to what we had. When the ship turned over--she held there for a little while--when she finally turned over, it was because the lines that were between the ships parted. She was hanging there, there was a dead weight on that, and all of a sudden they snapped and that's when she went the rest of the way.

(Inaudible question). Right now, we only know, I know of three that are gone, but we only have contact with about five or six of them anymore, so we don't know exactly how many are still alive. I'd say possibly, the last time we got together, about half of them were still definitely known to be alive. We've all had good long lives for some reason. Yes.

(Inaudible question). There might have been; we don't know. Each person was so silent; there was no open prayer. There was nothing that--I guess they were more concerned about staying alive. Maybe they wanted to ask for help. We never attributed getting out to prayer, the reason being that so many other guys that were killed might have been praying too, but we don't know

that. I only know that we all felt things, felt things very strongly, but as far as prayer is concerned, no, we didn't have any overt prayers. I've read accounts from other ships where other fellows, they all got together and knelt in prayer. That happened; there were some that did and some that didn't. But in our compartment, to my knowledge, I didn't hear any one of them, any more than I did. I had thoughts but I put them together and I always said if other people thought that was going to happen, I hope they did, I hope they did. Any other questions? Yes.

(Inaudible question). Yes, indeed we were. That was a chance thing. By the way, one of those was very close to coming back in, and some of their planes came in and landed, and they were shot down, several of them, by our own men. But the aircraft carriers--the whole war changed because there were three aircraft carriers in the Pacific at the time, two of which were on missions delivering planes out to Wake Island and to the Philippines--Guam, Guam and Wake, and they were resupplying planes out there. A chance thing that happened, too, that ship, she was supposed to be in the day before. She ran into some rough weather and she was delayed for a couple of hours and that brought her in just after the attack was on. Yes.

(Inaudible question). The battleship Nevada, that ship I suppose would be the luckiest of the lot. She--actually, she was back at the tail end of battleship row. Nevada--you said Nevada, not Arizona--Nevada got underway. The thing that happened, she was the last ship in line and the Nevada wasn't hit when the first rounds came--wasn't hit badly. She was hit but she wasn't hit badly. And she happened to have steam up. Now it takes hours to get steam up on a battleship if you don't have your boilers online. But she was in the process of shifting her boilers, so she had both of them on, and she was able to get underway. As a result, she went out in the middle of the channel and of course, then in the second wave of the attack from the Japanese, they all concentrated on her and they hit her with torpedoes and bombs and she was the only one that threatened to get out of the harbor. As a result, they hit her so badly that the captain was afraid she was going to sink right there in the middle of the channel, which meant that for the whole future time in Pearl Harbor, ships couldn't go in and out the channel, if she would have sunk in the middle of the channel. So the captain wisely took her off to the side and beached her, purposely ran her aground so she wouldn't sink in the channel, and saved the day as far as Pearl Harbor is concerned, because from that point on, they couldn't have ships bottled up in there. We were able to repair our ships, and by the

way, another thing that happened. The Japanese made a big mistake when they didn't have the third attack that the pilots wanted to have. The admiral, Nagumo, when they came back from the second attack, they went up there and (unclear) some more, they wanted to attack us again. Had they done that, they would have done such things as wipe out all the tanks, all the fuel tanks in the area; they never touched them. They never touched the repair facilities. Now all these ships that I'm talking about being repaired, many of them were right there in the Navy Yard and that would have been the next target for the Japanese. So since they didn't wipe out those repair facilities, didn't wipe out the oil supply, we were immediately able to start repairing those ships and getting them underway, like the Helena. They put a patch on her, sent her back to the states, and within a few months we were back out at sea again. The same thing was true for most of the other ships. Most of the ships that were harmed at Pearl Harbor eventually got back into the war again. They were the nucleus of the fleet, and still were. So the Arizona, of course, that's a different story. I started to get ahead of your story. The Arizona, the reason she had that bad explosion, and the Japanese pilot that dropped the bomb saw it go into her, it was so devastating that the entire crew--almost the whole crew; there were a few that were blown over the side and a few that

weren't aboard or something like that--they lost one thousand, one hundred and seventy-seven men--one thousand, one hundred and seventy-seven men, almost the whole crew. When you realize it, they only had what, fourteen hundred, something like fourteen, fifteen hundred. So, yes.

(Inaudible question). Oh, that's a good question. I have a nice story for that. (Laughs). They reported about Pearl Harbor, and of course, she wasn't up to date on what was going on. She knew I was aboard the USS Oklahoma and (tape cuts out, ends here).

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