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Interview with
Joseph M. Trest
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Place of Interview: San Antonio, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved:

Joe M. Trest
(Signature)

Date:

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Oral History Collection

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Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Joseph Trest for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 15, 1977, in San Antonio, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Trest in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed at Kaneohe Naval Air Station during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941. This was the same day that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and all the other military installations in the Hawaiian Islands.

Now Mr. Trest, to begin this interview, would you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Trest: Well, I had to stretch my age some to get in the Marine Corps. I come out of the Depression years, out of CCC camps, and they were quite ready to let me go in by advancing my age two years. Now my official record lists

my birthdate as 1920, but really I was born in April, 1922. I went straight in from boot camp at San Diego, California, to Kaneohe Bay.

Marcello: When did you enter the Marine Corps?

Trest: August of 1940.

Marcello: Why did you decide to enter the service in 1940?

Trest: Well, as I said, that was the Depression, and there was just no work for an untrained eighteen-year-old boy. That was the best that I could do.

Marcello: You know, that's a reason that a great many people of your generation give for having entered the service. Times were hard, and jobs could not be found. Even though the service didn't pay very much, there was a certain amount of security there,

Trest: That's right.

Marcello: Why did you select the Marine Corps as opposed to one of the other branches of the services?

Trest: I've wondered about that a lot, and sometimes I think maybe I made a mistake (chuckle). But I don't really know; I really don't.

Marcello: You mentioned that you took your boot camp at San Diego. Is there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record?

Trest: No, I don't think so. It was just the normal boot camp progression, and I went through very easily.

Marcello: How long did it last at that time?

Trest: I think it was eight weeks,

Marcello: Now even though you were only eighteen at the time, how closely were you keeping abreast with world events and current affairs and things of that nature?

Trest: Not very close, not very close.

Marcello: Did you possibly foresee the United States getting into a war very shortly?

Trest: Just by listening to the talk among some of the men and all, we figured--some of them did--that it would eventually come, but we had no idea (chuckle) it'd be there as soon as it did.

Marcello: Okay, so you mentioned that you went from boot camp right to Kaneohe Naval Air Station.

Trest: I went to Pearl Harbor first for a short while and then on to Kaneohe.

Marcello: Where were you at Pearl Harbor?

Trest: At the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: How long did you stay there?

Trest: I think it must have been three or four months.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going to the Hawaiian Islands?

Trest: Well, it was sort of exciting.

Marcello: Why was that?

Trest: Well, it was overseas, and I was pretty well fed up with my past life. I mean, I come from a farm in central Mississippi,

and there wasn't (chuckle) much going on there.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were stationed at the Marine Barracks there between Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field for several months. What did you do while you were there?

Trest: I was a member of the detachment there--Marine detachment. I did general duties around there . . . guard duty. I did some guard duty on the dry dock area there where the Pennsylvania and the Cassin . . . I believe that was the name of that destroyer that was there that was later hit during December 7th inside the dry dock. But, of course, by the time they got hit, I'd moved to Kaneohe Bay.

Marcello: I guess the maintenance of base security was the principal function of the Marines there, was it not?

Trest: Right, right, right. Duty at the big oil tanks over there--tank farm we called it--where they stored the fuel for the fleet; that was quite a large post that we had to walk, patrol.

Marcello: What was the morale like in that pre-Pearl Harbor Marine Corps? Well, I think it was good. Yes, it was good.

Marcello: Why do you think it was good?

Trest: Well, we all got a certain amount of liberty, and we could go out into the town. We drank and we had parties; we had a ball. Discipline wasn't too rough. There was quite a bit of spit-and-polish in the pre-war days, but it wasn't all that rough.

Marcello: What was the food like?

Trest: The food was all right; the food was good.

Marcello: I guess coming out of a farm in Mississippi during the Depression, that Marine Corps food did look pretty good.

Trest: Right, right.

Marcello: How about your quarters? What were they like?

Trest: Quarters there at the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor were in one single, large building. Squad rooms there were like they were most anywhere else. When we got to Kaneohe, we had a different type of barracks. They was more spread out, and I believe we had more room at Kaneohe.

Marcello: When did you move over to Kaneohe?

Trest: I believe I went there in January of '40. I wouldn't be sure about that, but I think it was January of '40.

Marcello: Was there any reason given for moving you from the Marine Barracks over to Kaneohe?

Trest: Except I think to . . . Kaneohe needed personnel there, because they had just opened up a short while before.

Marcello: Describe what Kaneohe looked like from a physical standpoint. It was not a very big base, was it?

Trest: At that time, no. Some of the original . . . or a lot of the original grazing land or pasture land and the papaya orchards was still standing. I ate papaya off of where now the base stands; a good part of where the base now stands was covered with papaya groves . . . the first I'd ever seen and out where we could eat them. I think that's where I learned to eat papayas; they say you have to develop a taste for them, and that's where I did it.

Marcello: What were your barracks like here at Kaneohe?

Trest: Well, they were two-story units and quite long, spread out, spacious, and airy--more so than they were at Pearl Harbor. Modern barracks, I'd say.

Marcello: I gather then that they were quite comfortable quarters.

Trest: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: While we're on the subject of morale, what role or part did athletics play in the life of that pre-Pearl Harbor Marine Corps?

Trest: Not much; not much. You were left pretty much to your own device. Of course, they had a bowling alley, and they had softball, but there was nothing required. I made a trip back to Kaneohe here this past year and saw some of their activities, and it's very superior to what we had then . . . very superior.

Marcello: Would you identify the Marine unit to which you were attached when you got to Kaneohe?

Trest: Well, I think the designation was just the Marine Detachment, Kaneohe Bay.

Marcello: And what was your particular function within that Marine detachment?

Trest: Same as it was at Pearl Harbor--on the various guard posts. We had various posts around that needed manning, and pretty shortly . . . I don't remember if it was before Pearl Harbor, but the Navy built ammunition dumps down on the point of . . . I guess Makalapa Point. That was one of the main watches,

and we had several posts around.

Marcello: Okay, why don't you describe what a typical day might be like for you here at Kaneohe. I'm referring now to a typical workday from the time you got up in the morning until you went to bed at night.

Trest: Well, as I remember it, we got up and had breakfast pretty early. We may have--and I think we did almost every morning--engaged in calisthenics for awhile--go out and jump up and down. You fell out in your khaki trousers and your under-shirt . . . T-shirt, we called it. You did jump up and down, bending exercises for a short while, and then we had breakfast.

Then you most likely went to your post, but there was no workday. If you were scheduled for post duty, you got yourself prepared for that, and you stayed in the barracks there for a call. But there was no work of any kind, you know, except cleaning your barracks--no other duties of any kind except clean your barracks and be prepared for this post whenever it went. If you went on at twelve o'clock, you'd better be ready to go at twelve o'clock. Then you went out; I think it was for four hours. When you come back off of that, you was free in that area.

I don't remember . . . every other day, I think, you got what we called liberty . . . every other day. Liberty fell every afternoon about four o'clock, I guess. When you got

back off of your post, if it was your day for liberty, then you went to town and went to a beer hall. That was what everybody did.

Marcello: We'll come back and talk about your liberty routine a little bit later on. What particular guard post did you walk, or could this vary?

Trest: It was varied--always varied, always varied.

Marcello: Where were some of the places that you pulled guard duty?

Trest: Well, as I said, on the ammunition dumps. And I was in the horse Marines for awhile--very short while--when they were first organized.

Marcello: You might describe the horse Marines, because I think they're kind of an interesting outfit here at Kaneohe.

Trest: Well, yes. Yes, they were. They were a detachment to themselves down on the north end of the runway at the airbase.

Marcello: How did you get in the horse Marines?

Trest: I think I volunteered. Then I got in, and I found that . . . even though I was born and raised on a farm, I never had any experience with horses.

Marcello: All your experience was with mules?

Trest: With a mule and very little of that. But that's all I did have, certainly not riding horses. This posting that you have to do on a saddle, you did it . . . and I never could learn it.

Marcello: What is posting?

- Trest: Posting is a type of riding . . . type of riding. You match your body movements to that of a galloping horse some way or another. You can do it quite well if you . . . but I never could. I don't even like a horse and don't like to ride him, and I shouldn't have volunteered. I didn't stay in there very long on that account,
- Marcello: Why did you volunteer?
- Trest: I really don't know. Variety, variety . . . I guess that's . . .
- Marcello: Why did they have the Marine horse cavalry there at Kaneohe?
- Trest: Well, I've heard some various things. You know, it was organized there before the war. It was the captain of the base, Commander Martin's, idea; he was a horse lover. I think he had a few horses that he kept for his own riding pleasure, and he needed somewhere for these to be kept. He got these from a friend and used the thing as an excuse to put in a horseman patrol to keep his horses and keep a horse environment around him. He loved horses, I think.
- Marcello: Now where would this horse cavalry usually patrol?
- Trest: They patrolled the perimeters of the base itself, and especially after December the 7th . . . I think they played a very important part after December the 7th, because they covered so much ground. They had long patrols that they rode the horses on on the seashore perimeter.
- Marcello: I've heard it said that most of the patrols that the horse cavalry pulled were along the beaches. Evidently, it was

easier for the horses to maneuver in that sand and so on than it would have been for a man on foot.

Trest: Right. When I come back out of the horse patrol, I went to the main gate stations then and stayed on the main gate for the remainder of my time at Kaneohe.

Marcello: Now as time goes on and as one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan were deteriorating, did your routine change any? I'm referring to your training routine or your guard routine and so on.

Trest: No, the guard routine didn't, but we may have entered into what we called skirmishes. That is, we'd go out and practice battle drills or infantry tactics in some sort of formation. I think maybe that might have increased. But as far as any . . . no, no special . . . as far as I know, no special precautions were taken.

Marcello: Did the number of patrols increase any?

Trest: I wouldn't think so; I don't think so.

Marcello: Now as relations between the two countries worsened, how much thought was given to the possibility of sabotage being committed by people of Japanese ancestry on the islands? Was this ever talked about or discussed any?

Trest: No, I don't think . . . not among us at least.

Marcello: Were there very many Japanese who worked on the base?

Trest: Oh, yes, I think so. There were quite a few Japanese.

Marcello: In what capacity did they usually work?

Trest: Public works, see, in the maintenance sections of the base and all. But now the Navy, I think, with their planes, you know, Captain Martin, I understand, was one of the few that come out of this attack with a good record and no marks against him. Because I think now that he anticipated this, because I know that we had PBY ready planes down in this area there with skeleton crews aboard, prepared to take off. Then that did give us a little apprehension. But this was something that . . . they never told us why these ready planes was there, but it did make you think, "Well, why the heck would they be putting ready planes or have planes out there with skeleton crews aboard?" I think they had about six or four to six out there during the attack, and they were the first hit. They hit those first.

Marcello: In your bull sessions, did you and your buddies ever talk about the possibility of the Japanese attacking the Hawaiian Islands?

Trest: Well, I remember once. I can call this conversation back very clearly I had with a sailor who was a chief. So I put a lot of confidence in what he told me, because I couldn't figure anything out about world events at that time. But this chief told me, said . . . we were talking about the eventual conflict which we knew would happen, and he said that "We will utterly destroy that Japanese Navy the first

day. It can't stand up against us." Man, that made me feel real good. I figured that Navy chief knew what he was talking about.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the old China Marines talk about the fighting prowess of the Japanese? In other words, maybe some of them had just returned from China where, of course, the Japanese and the Chinese were fighting.

Trest: Yes, yes. We had some men that did return from China, but I never heard anybody say anything good about Japanese fighting ability. Everything I ever heard was bad. I had to get in combat personally with them later on in Okinawa to find out that that was all a bunch of "bull" . . . that they were excellent fighters.

Marcello: I gather then on the basis of what you said that you felt rather safe and secure there in the Hawaiian Islands if war came.

Trest: Yes, very much so.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit about your liberty routine here at Kaneohe. First, when was payday?

Trest: Oh, my goodness. Now that would absolutely escape me. But it was twice a month, I think--the 1st and the 15th.

Marcello: So would you have had a certain amount of money come the weekend of December 7th if you had been paid on the 1st?

Trest: Yes, I would have been paid the 1st, but . . . well, I still would have had some money left.

Marcello: What was your rank at that time?

Trest: My rank at that time was probably PFC.

Marcello: And how much money were you pulling?

Trest: Oh, gee, less than thirty dollars. Part of that went home to an allotment to my folks, and then I had a little savings account set aside. I lived very cheaply, very cheaply.

Marcello: How did the liberty routine work for you here at Kaneohe?

Trest: I don't remember. I think every other day you got liberty.

Marcello: And when did liberty commence?

Trest: It may have started as early as one o'clock, maybe two o'clock, in the afternoon. I don't think that you could ever . . . But now there was a big difference between the liberty before December 7th and after.

Marcello: I'm sure there was.

Trest: Yes.

Marcello: And I'm referring to the liberty routine before December 7th.

Trest: Before December 7th, yes. Well, we could . . . I don't think then, unless we got special permission . . . well, we could remain out all night and report in by some hour early the next morning, I think. So that's the way it would run; it would run from about two o'clock to the next morning.

Marcello: When you had liberty, where would you normally go?

Trest: Go to Kailua and Kaneohe--the town of Kaneohe across the bay from Kaneohe Air Station--and to Honolulu.

Marcello: How often within a month's time might you get to Honolulu?

Trest: Well, the transportation was such that every time that you got liberty, if you so desired, you could go to Honolulu, but we didn't. But I'd go to Honolulu quite often, quite often. You'd always stop in Kailua nearly about on the way, almost all the time.

Marcello: How far was Kailua?

Trest: Kailua was about five miles outside the gate there.

Marcello: I would gather that it was a pretty hard drive from Kaneohe into Honolulu, because you had to go across the Pali, did you not?

Trest: Right, right. We would go in the inter-island buses, which were very cheap and not very expensive. Even today, I think it costs twenty-five cents to go across.

Marcello: What'd you normally do when you went on liberty?

Trest: Drank, visited all the bars.

Marcello: Did you frequent Hotel Street and Canal Street and those places?

Trest: Yes. River Street.

Marcello: All the usual places that the servicemen frequented during that period.

Trest: Right.

Marcello: The next question that I'm going to ask you is kind of important, and I want you to think carefully about it before you answer. Many people like to say that if the Japanese, or any other enemy for that matter, were going to attack the

military installations, the best time for them to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. What many people assume is that Saturday nights were times of great deal of partying and drinking, and consequently the personnel would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you answer an assumption of that sort?

Trest: I think that would be a pretty good idea. And I think, thinking back, that maybe Saturday night was . . . maybe we could get overnight liberty on a Saturday night. I believe we could. Listen, when we did get liberty, a lot of us wasn't in any shape to do anything.

But I can remember that morning, and I was in fine shape, and all the Marines there were, as far as I know. But, you see, I think maybe that this had to do with married personnel staying off the base, you see, and out of their combat area. Very few of the Marines were married, but those that were, I guess, were at home. I'm sure they could get overnight liberty. Well, I think the idea to attack Sunday morning was a well thought out . . . that's what makes Sony such a success, is that type of thing.

Marcello: Now is it not true that Sundays were also a day of leisure if one did not have the duty? Couldn't you stay in the sack longer and things of this nature?

Trest: I'm not sure about that. I think maybe so, yes. I think we could stay maybe until . . . but I was up; all of us

were up. We had to mount the guard duty to raise the flag and get the base started, you know. So this detail . . . certainly, we'd had reveille and so forth and had breakfast and all, and we were up . . . well up.

Marcello: Okay, I think this brings us then to that morning of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do is to talk about the events of that particular weekend. Let's start with Friday, December 5, 1941. Do you recall what your routine was on Friday, December 5th.

Trest: No, I don't. I can't recall that.

Marcello: How about Saturday? What did you do on Saturday?

Trest: No, I don't even know if I went on liberty the previous Saturday or not.

Marcello: Okay, then I guess this brings us to that morning of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do at this point, Mr. Trest, is to describe in as much detail as you can remember what your routine was on December 7th from the time you got up until the attack actually started.

Trest: Well, my personal part was getting up. Actually, I can't remember having breakfast that morning, but I'm sure I did, and I certainly was dressed. We were one of the first to notice this air attack activity, because these planes that were parked at the ready were parked very close to our barracks.

Marcello: In other words, the Marine barracks were close to the PBY ramps?

Trest: They were close to these planes that were in the water on stand-by. Now there must have been four, five, maybe six, planes there on stand-by. I think that that was the first planes that hit. Then the attack on these planes that were just a short ways from our barracks . . . the Japanese planes had to make dives and maneuvers that brought them right over our barracks in a turning motion, and we saw a big red star underneath. The noise of the motor would rouse anybody out.

Marcello: Okay, let's just back up here a minute. You mentioned that there were several of these PBV's on stand-by. I would assume that this meant that the crews and so on would have been there.

Trest: I understood that they were what they call skeleton crews, not a full crew on board.

Marcello: They would have simply been there at the planes. The planes would not have had the motors revving and things of this nature.

Trest: No, they'd have just been there--yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you get up on Sunday morning, and you're in the barracks. Describe what you heard outside. Let's again pick up the story when you were in the barracks.

Trest: Well, I think it was the roar of the motors, because by the time I got out--and most of us poured out the barracks--the fires were burning. You couldn't actually see the planes afire down there because of the buildings in between, but

smoke and flames was rising up above. But the thing that drew more attention than anything else was the diving of the planes and their having to maneuver in coming over; man, they was just missing our barracks.

Marcello: Did they strafe the barracks at all when they came over?

Trest: No. No, they didn't.

Marcello: How low were these planes?

Trest: Well, they were so low that after they made a couple of passes . . . I don't know why we decided it, but we thought we'd go upstairs and we'd be closer to them and could hit them better. We went upstairs to the upstairs of the barracks and broke some windows out and fired outside at them. It was almost as though you could stand on the barracks and touch that fellow.

Marcello: Did you recognize almost instantly that these were Japanese planes?

Trest: No, no way. We even stood there and watched this rising sun on the bottom of the wing, which could be plainly seen, and arguing among ourselves if it was the Army or not or if maneuvers were in progress of some kind.

Marcello: How long did you watch these planes before you eventually went up onto the second story of the barracks?

Trest: I'd say it was ten or fifteen minutes that we stood there gawking at them, looking.

Marcello: How many planes were there, or how many passes did they make?

Trest: They made several. I wouldn't know. I'd say that they kept passing over until they had these stand-by planes in flames--for ten minutes or more, anyway.

Marcello: Could you see them firing?

Trest: Yes. Oh, yes, when they made these passes on the planes.

Marcello: And they were strictly strafing at this time.

Trest: Strafing at that time.

Marcello: Okay, when or how did you finally decide that these were Japanese or enemy planes and that you needed to do something?

Trest: Well, after we saw the fire, we got the idea that it was for real. I run into the supply area there and checked out a Browning Automatic Rifle and brought it back outside, and fun was poked at me for doing this. I was going to fire at the planes, and some of the men poked fun at me, and I went and put it back up.

Marcello: Nobody else was drawing weapons at this time?

Trest: No, no. I went and put this rifle back up, but almost as soon as I put the rifle back up, everybody decided it was for real. I went back to get my B.A.R., and somebody else had got it, so I had to finish up the battle with a old '03 bolt action rifle.

Marcello: Now were these weapons being issued rather freely? In other words, you didn't have to go through any formality or procedure to draw a weapon.

Trest: No. The reason that I went to this supply place is to get an

automatic weapon. We had our own weapons right with us-- the '03 bolt action rifle; that was readily available. But automatic rifles were not; they generally were kept in the supply area.

Marcello: Okay, so you see these planes strafing, and then you see the fire and so on down at the seaplane ramps and on the water; you rush into the supply room and you draw a B.A.R. Are the rest of the people still outside observing what's going on, or is everybody getting their weapons by this time?

Trest: They're beginning to get excited at that time. Some of them are beginning to . . . but some still didn't draw weapons at that time, thinking it was still some sort of a mock attack.

Marcello: Is anybody giving any orders or directions or anything of this sort?

Trest: No orders whatsoever--very unorganized, everybody acting on his own.

Marcello: Do you have anybody there in authority who could give orders?

Trest: Yes, we have some sergeants there that are supposed to take over and give orders, but they were just about as unorganized. We were pretty hard to handle ourself, because everything was just utter confusion.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do then after you got your Springfield '03 rifle?

Trest: Well, that's when we went upstairs and tried to fire on the . . . and we did fire on the Japanese planes. I can't see why

we couldn't hit them, because it was a wonderful target and they were very slow-moving coming in there and was close to us. I would say we didn't touch them.

Marcello: About how many of you went up on the second floor to start shooting at these Japanese planes?

Trest: Not many. I think maybe less than a dozen went up there. That was pretty much an individual decision to run up there and get at them.

Marcello: And am I to assume that you were firing at will? In other words, there was no organized firing?

Trest: Absolutely firing at will.

Marcello: How many rounds do you figure that you shot while you were up there on the second floor?

Trest: I can't recall that. Not too many because of the broken glass and all, and the windows--the way they opened--restricted the field of fire, and it wasn't nearly as effective as we thought it would be downstairs. We didn't stay up there but a very short while and then come back down.

Marcello: Now all this is taking place during the first attack that occurred here at Kanehoe.

Trest: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: Okay, so what happened after you discovered that firing from the second floor would be ineffective?

Trest: Well, we run back down--and all of this on our own--run back

down. Probably somebody said, "Let's go back down; this is not getting it." We got out into an open place in front of the barracks there, in front of the mess hall area, and began firing on the planes as they made their turns.

Marcello: Again, is everybody firing at will, or have you set up a skirmish line or anything of that sort?

Trest: No, everybody's just firing at random and at will, firing every type of weapon that's possible.

Marcello: What were some of the weapons being fired?

Trest: Well, you had the water-cooled machine guns, which at that time I don't think they'd got those set up . . . maybe so. But they were either set up at that time or shortly thereafter. Water-cooled machine guns, Browning Automatic Rifles, '03 Springfield rifles. Some of the sailors come in then and got in this bunch, and I noticed one of them had a Thompson submachine gun, and some of the Marines had Thompson sub-machine guns.

Marcello: Did you see people firing at them with .45-caliber automatics?

Trest: Pistols, right. Pistols, everything. But that pretty much represented the small . . . well, it did; that was all the small arms that we had.

Marcello: Did the base have any antiaircraft protection?

Trest: As I know, no. No, no antiaircraft weapons at all.

Marcello: Okay, how long were you outside shooting at these planes?

Trest: Well, we stayed outside, of course, the rest of the day--rest

of the attack. But we moved over into a corner of the administration building so that our backs would be protected. Again, as far as I know, this was an individual decision--no orders. We got into the corner of this administration building; it faced out where the attack was being mounted, and we fired at the planes there as they were diving. I spent the rest of the attack in this "V" of the administration building.

Marcello: Now as the record indicates, not all of the air activity was being carried out by strafers. In other words, high-level bombers came over approximately fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes after the strafers had left. Do you remember that high-level attack?

Trest: Oh, yes, very well.

Marcello: Describe it.

Trest: Well, the first group of planes come over, and I don't know if you'd describe them as high-level or not. They were up pretty high, but you could tell there were two-motor planes. I think that I remember seeing nine in formation, but I wouldn't be sure about that.

That is the only place where I saw only one plane damaged, and I could positively say that it was damaged over Kaneohe that day. It was damaged out of that formation. He began smoking right over the . . . man, everything in the base opened up over those. I don't know how they got over,

because at that time we had just about got all of our firepower organized, and we really poured it up there. I don't know how those planes made it, but I don't guess this small caliber antiaircraft fire was too effective. But we did get one smoking, and he went in a southerly direction and disappeared smoking like all get-out.

The other plane that some of us take credit for, I don't think that we shot that down. It come in over that base, and I think it was crippled over Pearl Harbor and would have crashed had we not fired a shot at it. It was in a long, shallow dive, and it never changed from the time that it come over the Pali area and dove right on into the ground. There again, we were really putting the fire into it, too. But it was crippled, or it would have never come in at that area.

Marcello: I'm sure that this did a great deal for your morale at that point.

Trest: Yes, that's right. That cheered us up quite a lot.

Marcello: Well, describe the activities of these high-level bombers as they come over, Could you actually see them dropping their bombs and so on?

Trest: Oh, yes. Yes.

Marcello: Describe this.

Trest: That sort of shook me up when they dropped those and those big bombs fell out of the belly. However, I knew that they

wasn't going to drop close to me, that is, right at me. But when they hit the ground, they made an awful "boom." The people down at the seaplane base was the ones that was catching that.

Marcello: And these were the bombs that eventually destroyed that number one hangar.

Trest: Hangar area, yes, yes. I would think it was.

Marcello: Now were there buildings between you and the hangar area?

Trest: A lot of buildings, a lot of buildings.

Marcello: By this time, do you kind of have a feeling of helplessness?

Trest: Well, I never did.

Marcello: I mean, you know, if you think about it, there's really not too much that you could have done about those high-level bombers.

Trest: Right.

Marcello: You really didn't have anything to fire back that would be effective.

Trest: Right.

Marcello: So when the high-level bombers came over, were you more or less an observer, or were you firing at these bombers like everybody else?

Trest: Oh, no, no! We were firing very heavy at them. The only other weapon . . . if some of the people at the hangars got out some .50-caliber machine guns, that would have been the biggest thing fired at those high-level bombers, because I

don't think there was anything larger than a .50 caliber in operation at that point . . . or maybe all day.

Marcello: The only place that these .50 calibers would have been located would have been on those planes, is that correct?

Trest: Right. Right, right.

Marcello: And, of course, if they pulled those .50-calibers off the planes as some of the sailors did, they really had nothing to mount them on.

Trest: Right. They had nothing to mount them on. Right, nothing to mount them on.

Marcello: Did you ever observe anybody firing with these .50-caliber machine guns?

Trest: No, but I heard them. I heard them. You could tell the difference in sound.

Marcello: So what happened, then, after the high-level bombers had done their job?

Trest: After the high-level bombers had done their job, I think that ended the attack. I'm pretty sure that that ended the attack when the Zeros . . . I mean, I understand they might not have even been Zeros; they were some other type plane, but we called them Zeros anyway. But they may have returned. Of course, everybody spotted planes all day and ships landing troops and all these things. All day we had that going on, but it turned out that it really wasn't so.

But immediately after they . . . at some point there, this thing started to get a little better organized, and

people started . . . our commander got down, and people started getting a little better organized.

Oh, yes, while I was in that place in the thing there, I got a hole shot in my britches leg.

Marcello: You might describe that.

Trest: Well, there was a little sting there, and I found it . . . a little sting that I noticed. But I thought I'd ejected a hot cartridge case and it come up beside my leg. But then just a little while later, I got this hole in the side of my trousers, and I'm sure that that's what did it.

One other Marine there, he was shot in the leg. He was the only Marine, I think, that day to get the Purple Heart--William Little. He was the only one. He got shot through the leg.

Marcello: Now I gather, then, that that bullet that went through your pant leg actually did not hit you.

Trest: Oh, no, it didn't hit me at all--no.

Marcello: Now where were you when this took place?

Trest: I was at the administration building, in the corner of it there.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do then when the attack was over or when the high-level bombers had left, at least?

Trest: Yes, well, actually as far as we were concerned, there wasn't nothing ever over for that day. But by that time, our commanders and all had come down and got everything a

little better organized. So they sent a detachment . . . they commandeered all the cars on the base--civilian and everybody's car--and they took them down and parked them on the runway to prevent Japanese from coming in. I was in the detachment that went down with those automobiles.

Marcello: Approximately how many automobiles did they have on the runway?

Trest: Gee, they had enough there to pretty well cover the runway.

Marcello: Did they scatter them around haphazardly?

Trest: Right, right, right. Scattered them around haphazardly and put Marines and sailors . . . well, that was one of the problems that happened; everybody was firing wildly the rest of that day, and you couldn't tell if the attack was over or not, you know. And they were firing at you, and we had all kinds of fights going on that day.

Marcello: Were you put on a particular guard post?

Trest: Down at the airbase, yes, with those cars. In other words, we were to jump in the car . . . the way I remember it, if they come in, we were to jump in the car. We didn't have enough cars to completely cover that airbase, and that night a Navy plane come in and landed in among those cars. How he made it, I'll never know. But apparently the cars weren't as thick as I thought they were. But we were to jump in this car and ram this plane, see, and, boy, we pretty near did that Navy plane that way. I don't know why we didn't; somebody give us the "okay."

Marcello: Let's just back up here a minute, because I think this is kind of an interesting story that you've just related. How long did it take you to round up those cars?

Trest: I don't remember that.

Marcello: Do you remember where you had to go to get a car?

Trest: I went down there with some other transportation; I didn't take a car down there. I guess I went in one of the cars with somebody else driving. Yes, we had enough personnel. It didn't take long to get those cars spread out there, because a whole batch of Marines and--I don't know--maybe some sailors, too, were assigned the duty to go down and park these cars on the ramp.

Marcello: When did this take place during the day?

Trest: I don't remember when it first took place. I would say that it happened somewhere around noontime.

Marcello: And about how long did it take to complete this process?

Trest: It didn't take long--very quick. It was completed in the afternoon. I'd say by midafternoon it was completely covered with what automobiles that were available.

Marcello: From that point on, then, you were to stay down there at the airbase, and each of you were assigned to a particular vehicle?

Trest: Right.

Marcello: Okay, now describe this plane that came in that night. Describe this particular activity.

Trest: Well, what made everything so wild about it, he came in . . . it was night--after nightfall. Here this plane approached the runway with landing lights on.

Marcello: Did anybody fire at it?

Trest: No, because we thought that if he come in with landing lights, it could possibly . . . and I think we had been warned that there was a Navy plane up. But we weren't sure what that plane was. Of course, we could see that it was just one. He come in with his landing lights, and at that time I was more concerned about him crashing into my car than I was about crashing into him, because, man, he was coming right in on everything there.

Marcello: (Chuckle) In other words, no cars were moving out of his path.

Trest: No way; no way! And I think right today that if hadn't been for the ability of the Navy to land on short landing spaces with that carrier . . . you know, they had a pad down there for practicing carrier landing. Those guys were pretty sharp at that, and he landed that thing in a place there where nobody but a Navy pilot could have put that plane.

Marcello: How close was it to you?

Trest: Oh, right out in front of me. I'd say fifty feet. I was a witness to that whole thing.

Marcello: Did you ever have any words with the pilot when he got out?

Trest: No, no. We went up to the plane, and he got out and was whisked away. He was a pilot, and I did have that pilot's name, but it escapes me completely.

Marcello: He never said anything about all these cars on the runway?

Trest: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Marcello: What'd he say?

Trest: Oh, he was just talking about it and all. It didn't shake him up as bad as I think it got us.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do the rest of the night then? Did you remain there at the airstrip?

Trest: I think I stayed at that airstrip all night.

Marcello: Did you mention that you could hear all sorts of sporadic firing taking place?

Trest: Oh, we got into all types of firing. They had some of these rounds loaded with tracers, you know; every fifth or ninth round was a tracer. That's the first time I'd ever saw a Thompson submachine gun fire tracers. I've seen the .30-caliber machine guns before that, but we didn't use the Thompson all that much, and they had it loaded with tracers. That thing never had much velocity, and it looked like a cannon ball going out through there.

Marcello: Did you personally fire any rounds that night?

Trest: Oh, yes, we fired some rounds. We'd do that to shake people up that were firing . . . just groups were firing everywhere. Well, you got some men there that were aircraft mechanics

and things like that; they didn't know what weapons are. The fact is, I heard one guy say that he was issued a weapon--issued a B.A.R.--and the first thing he did was fire it off right in the room where he was issued the weapon, see. But there were some people down there that would have been better off if they hadn't been issued weapons.

Marcello: I guess it wasn't safe to move around too much.

Trest: Oh, no. No, absolutely not!

Marcello: Were you simply standing right there by the car?

Trest: Yes, right there by the car. We patrolled that area, too, to an extent, because we were expecting landings right away. Because I mean, after all, our defenses was down, and we knew that . . . we were just absolutely convinced of that landing. At that time now, I began to get a little worried about my future. But that was that night that I began to worry about if I'd ever make it through. Because while the attack was going on, I figured, "Well, we're gonna buck this thing," but we didn't. Ships and boats were patrolling all out in there, and to us all of them were Japanese. They should have had some way of identifying themselves better, because if we'd had the caliber weapon necessary, we would have damaged those ships. We shot at some of them, anyway.

Marcello: When you had set up guard posts and so on that evening, were you patrolling in two's or three's or something of this

nature? How did the routine work?

Trest: I think two's. I think we had a pair there on the airstrip. I think two men were assigned a car, and I think the two of us stayed together pretty much the entire night.

Marcello: What'd you talk about?

Trest: Well, one of the things we talked about was the coming landings. All the conversation was on . . . it never left. By that time, like I say, we was pretty worried at that time.

Marcello: I'm sure that you must have heard all sorts of rumors that evening.

Trest: Right. Rumors, that's right. Rumors were just flying.

Marcello: Did you believe all the rumors that you heard?

Trest: You couldn't disregard them--you couldn't.

Marcello: Do you recall what rumors you heard?

Trest: No, except the landings. The landings was, I believe, sort of what I wanted to believe, I guess. The landings was one of the things that stuck in my mind, because they had captured this Japanese in a midget submarine down there on the beach. We knew that was pretty much a fact. We figured that they were bringing in . . . the landing will follow. We talked it over about the landings . . . and thought about capture. But we didn't talk too much on that, because that really gets over your head pretty quick when you're just an enlisted man; you don't know what's going to happen, anyway.

Marcello: What sort of an appetite did you have that day?

Trest: I don't remember eating a thing; I don't remember. If we did eat, I don't see how we could have eaten. Maybe we did. Maybe they come and got us and took us to the mess hall, but I don't think we ate.

Marcello: Did you stay up all night?

Trest: The best I remember, we did. I certainly don't know where I would have slept, except on the runway where we had the cars.

Marcello: You were definitely out at the runway all night.

Trest: Oh, yes. Yes.

Marcello: What'd you do the next day?

Trest: The next day I was still in that vicinity, I'm pretty sure. I stayed there the next day, but I believe the cars were moved the next day.

Marcello: When did you get a chance to survey the damage that was done down at the hangar areas and so on?

Trest: Probably the next day. We were moving in through there some.

Marcello: Do you recall what the damage looked like? In other words, describe it if you can.

Trest: Well, the skeletons . . . if I recall it, I think there were thirty-one PBV's that I couldn't get over. That's a pretty good-sized plane setting up there and burnt. Then those hangars were pretty well damaged. But the aftermath of the thing didn't look nearly as bad as the bombing and all when it was going on.

Marcello: Why was that?

Trest: In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor--I got over there sometime later--it was still worse looking than Kaneohe Bay was. It frightened you to look at that. Kaneohe Bay never did look too bad. But when those planes were burning, man . . . one of those PBY's, I guess he was loaded with fuel, and, man, they made some kind of fire--smoke and fire. I guess it was their shells going off or the Japanese shells; maybe they were shooting incendiary rounds. I don't know. But there was an awful lot of explosions.

Marcello: Yes, evidently they were using incendiary bullets in those first strafing rounds that they made.

Trest: Yes, yes.

Marcello: Did you ever help clear any of the damage and things of this nature, or was that simply left up to the Navy?

Trest: That was left up to the Navy. The Marines were strictly . . . mostly confined to the point, I guess; it's the point down there where the Kaneohe Bay enters the land area there on the point. I guess that's the northeastern section of Makalapa Point.

Marcello: And what did you do down there?

Trest: Well, we patrolled that. We even dug rifle trenches, pits, you know. We made some sort of a fortification down there . . . stayed down there for some time. The fact is, we kept our rifle detachment down there for, I guess, almost . . . I'm

sure this rifle detachment was there in '43 when I left Kaneohe.

Marcello: And were you down there at the point most this time?

Trest: Oh, yes, yes. But not until '43.

Marcello: Yes, I meant you were down there for several days or several weeks following the attack.

Trest: Several days, oh, yes, yes. The majority were, but as the situation lessened, why, we were moved out to various other duties. I moved out to the main gate as a security guard out at the main gate.

Marcello: What was the morale like in the aftermath of the attack?

Trest: Well, it was pretty bad, pretty dull. Because liberty was cancelled; everything was cancelled. You had to stay right there in those rifle areas. Of course, you got out of any spit-and-polish.

Marcello: Now as time goes on and as the days pass, do you think less and less about a coming invasion or a landing by the Japanese?

Trest: Oh, yes, after awhile we know that it has let up, and there will probably will not be an invasion that we feared too much. Oh, yes, well, that relieved us quite a bit. And I think, well, that was . . . whenever that decision was made is the point at which we were transferred out to the various other duties on the base.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Trest, is there anything else relative to the Pearl Harbor attack that we need to talk about?

Trest: No, I think that about covers it as far as I know. I can't think of anything else.

Marcello: Well, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to talk to me. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm sure that scholars are going to find your comments very valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor,

Trest: I hope I can help you.