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Interview with

HOUSTON JAMES

May 26, 1983

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Houston James

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Date: May 26, 1983

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Houston James for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 26, 1983, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. James in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of VP-24 on Ford Island during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. James, to begin this interview, 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. James: I was born in Brooklyn, New York, on February 28, 1924, and shortly after that I moved--my family and mother and father and all moved--to a little place in Alabama. Then a very short period of time after that, I moved to the city of Pensacola, Florida, and was raised there up until the age of seventeen, at which time I joined the Navy.

Marcello: What is the extent of your education?

James: I have a degree in publishing and printing out of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, which I gained by going to the school on a GI Bill of Rights.

Marcello: So in other words, when you joined the Navy, you were a high school graduate?

James: No, I had a ninth grade education when I joined the Navy.

Marcello: When was it that you joined the Navy?

James: I joined the Navy on March 7, 1941.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the service in March of 1941?

James: Well, primarily because I was from a very large, extremely poor family, and it gave me an opportunity to feed myself and earn a little bit of money and all the other things that would come about from a young man's dreams of going and seeing the world and that type of thing. As soon as I became legally of age, I joined. I had intentions of joining just as soon as I became of age, and I went in seven days after my seventeenth birthday.

Marcello: So would it be safe to say, then, that economics perhaps was the primary reason for your entering the service?

James: Probably the primary reason.

Marcello: Why did you select the Navy as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?

James: My father had been a Navy man, and I was raised in a Navy town.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you went in at seventeen. At that time did they have the program called the minority cruise?

James: Yes, I participated in that. I was a minority cruise man.

Marcello: Exactly how does that work?

James: Well, if you were under eighteen years of age, between seventeen and eighteen, you joined the Navy, and then they had to release you one day prior to your twenty-first birthday because at that time you were legally a man at twenty-one in those days. So they released you one day before your twenty-first birthday.

Marcello: And at that time, what was the normal Navy enlistment, let's say, for someone who was over eighteen?

James: Six years, I believe it was. Yes, six years.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

James: Norfolk, Virginia.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record, or was it the normal Navy boot camp?

James: No, it was rather an unusual boot camp to me, being a young man seventeen years old, a very early seventeen. An interesting thing about it...when I joined the Navy, I had a little bit of a difficult time getting in because I was 5' 3 3/4" tall and weighed 104 pounds. When I joined the Navy and went to Norfolk, Virginia...I was sworn in in Birmingham, Alabama, on March 7 and then was transported by train that day and arrived at Norfolk

the next day and started the natural routine of going through boot camp like all sailors have to do. I went through the regular routine for approximately three weeks of all the rigors that they put you through and everything. I had a chief petty officer that was running the "boots" through at that time, which they called a platoon leader or something like that, and his name was Thoreaux. So after about three weeks, one day at the lunch break I went up to him and took a pair of long, black-topped shoes that they issued you at that time; and I walked up to him, and I said, "What do you do when you get holes in your shoes?" And he said, "Well, what you do there is, you become the company shoe cobbler." And I said, "All right, sir, what does that entail?" He said, "Twice a day, in the morning when we break from breakfast and all, the guys that need their shoes repaired...you take them up to the cobbler shop and get them repaired and that type thing, and at lunch you do the same thing." And there would be other minor duties that I performed, but the officer said, "The tradition with me is that the first guy who wears out his shoes gets light duty for the rest of his stay." So I happened to slide through boot camp with not going through as many rigors as other platoon members. That's an amusing thing that I always mention when I'm talking about my early experiences in the Navy.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you had not completed your high school education before you went in the Navy. Did that present any difficulties at that time? I know that it certainly did earlier,

and I was wondering if you had any difficulties getting into the Navy at that time because of the fact that you had not graduated from high school.

James: No. You had to pass an examination, and as long as you could pass all of the requirements and everything, there was no drawback. I had no difficulties at all handling that part of it. I didn't have to go back and take any exams over. I took exams of all sorts and descriptions during my tour of duty at Norfolk in boot camp and passed all of them; and rather than being sent out to sea if you...they didn't see anything else to do with you at that time but make you a seaman in the fleet and all if you failed everything, but they still kept you in. But if you scholastically passed certain requirements, then they'd put you off in the areas like sub school or aviation "mech" or aviation metalsmith, signalman, and all of those things--this that, and the other.

So I had been, ironically, drafted to go to sub school in New London, Connecticut. And another interesting fact at that time was that when you went home on "boot" leave, if you were instrumental in getting a person to sign up in the Navy, then you were given an additional day's leave and everything. But the papers had to be signed by the recruiting officer in your city. Well, the recruiting officer got to know me quite well before I joined in the Navy because I hounded him for months about trying to get in and everything. So when I was home on leave,

he said, "Well, I've got two new guys coming up, so I'll just sign your papers saying that you signed them up and that type of thing, and you'll get two more days at home." So he did that.

Therefore, when I reported back two days later off of my normal terms of leave--I got back a couple of days later than everyone else--I had been assigned to sub school, and therefore I missed taking that assignment. So they had to reassign me, and it was a break for me because they reassigned me to the aviation metalsmith school in Pensacola, Florida, where I joined the Navy, so I was going literally back home. And I've been many times kind of grateful for that because, as you well know, the early sub sailors in World War II, which I would have been one of if I'd have gone to sub school, did not fare very well. So I've always liked the thought that I became an aviation metalsmith.

Marcello: How long did boot camp last at that time?

James: I believe it was eight weeks.

Marcello: So they had cut down on boot camp. At one time I know it used to be twelve weeks.

James: Twelve, yes. I went in through an eight-week program. They cut it down because of the surge of people coming in.

Marcello: What was your reaction when you heard that you were going to be assigned to metalsmith school in Pensacola?

James: Oh, I was happy (chuckle) over it because I thought, "Well,



I'm going back home." And I looked at it as another opportunity to further my education. At least I could start to learn a trade, and I was grateful that I was given that opportunity. At least I could put my hands on something and do a little toward furthering my education.

Marcello: How closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs at that time?

James: I would say I had a normal amount of curiosity, you know, reading the papers and listening to the radio at that particular time about the war that was brewing in Germany...not brewing, it was going on in full force in Germany. There was a sense in the military, even as a young man in it, that ultimately we figured we would go, and I had just always had that sense of saying, "Well, someday, somewhere, I'm going to be confronted with this."

Marcello: Talk a little bit about the metalsmith school there in Pensacola.

James: Very interesting, because it gave me an opportunity, like I said, to catch up on furthering my education. I obviously had more math that I had to concern myself with in chemistry type of things and metallurgy and a whole variety of things like that. A lot of stress was placed obviously on the repair of the airplanes that were in vogue at that particular time--1941 and all. It was a very interesting school. I enjoyed it immensely. I really enjoyed it, and I got a lot out of it that I found that I still even use today.

Marcello: In other words, you do feel that you were trained pretty thoroughly at that school?

James: Very thoroughly. Very thoroughly.

Marcello: How long did this school last?

James: As I remember, somewhere between two and three months. Three months, I would say, probably.

Marcello: How much of an opportunity or opportunities did you have to go home while you were there in this school?

James: Oh, quite frequently. It was no restrictions on liberty at night and that type thing. As long as you performed your assigned duties and that type thing, you could go home in the evening if you wanted. I very rarely did because I lived in the barracks with the other class members and that type thing, and not having an awful lot of money to play with in the Navy in 1941, I spent most evenings on the base. But I went home... because of my parents living in Pensacola, I went home almost every weekend, which was just like a fifteen-minute bus ride into where I lived.

Marcello: How much were you making at that time?

James: Twenty-one dollars a month as "boots." An apprentice seaman made \$21 a month. When you became a second class seaman, you made \$36 a month. I think you made second class seaman when you... I can't remember the time, but I think you made second class seaman when you graduated from boot camp. And then I was a second class seaman...second class seaman, aviation metalsmith

school,

Marcello: And how long did you say that school lasted?

James: About three months.

Marcello: Which means that we're up into perhaps mid-summer by the time you get out of that school?

James: Yes.

Marcello: And where do you go from there?

James: Upon graduation from aviation metalsmith school, I was transferred to the Naval Air Station in San Diego, California. Very shortly after graduating, I reported to San Diego.

Marcello: How long did you remain there?

James: I went into the receiving station for just a very short period of time for reassignment, and that was when I was transferred to what was VP-12 at that time, which was stationed at North Island, I believe it is, in San Diego--on the air station. The squadron was stationed at the air station there. They were in preparation, when I joined them, of getting ready to be transferred to Hawaii, so I played a part in preparing the squadron for its tour duty in Hawaii.

We left there shortly after I joined the squadron, and I went over on the USS Wright with all of the ground crew personnel and officers that could not fly over in the airplanes. The airplanes preceded us to Hawaii by a number of days or weeks.

Marcello: So you were only at San Diego, then, a matter of days or a couple of weeks or something like that.

James: Yes, a very short period of time.

Marcello: What kind of planes did VP-12 have?

James: PBY's. PBY-5's.

Marcello: Talk a little bit about the PBY because I think it's one of the more interesting and versatile planes in World War II.

James: Yes, it was. Primarily it was manufactured, incidentally, I think, right in San Diego. I can't remember the exact manufacturer of it, but it was Consolidated or someone like that. But it was primarily designed as a patrol bomber-type airplane. It was to fly out on a leg and patrol over primarily the ocean and look for submarines of any class. That was its primary function, but as you are well aware, during World War II, it performed many things other than a patrol function.

Marcello: I think they used it for mine-laying and photo-reconnaissance and all sorts of other functions.

James: Yes. It was a terrific anti-submarine airplane because it carried depth charges. When they found one, they'd depth-charge it, or they'd bomb it. It was used as a torpedo plane; it was used as a troop carrier; it was used as a hospital ship (chuckle)-- a little bit of everything. It was a workhorse.

Marcello: Evidently, it was a very, very reliable plane, also, despite the fact it was pretty slow.

James: Yes, extremely reliable. Extremely reliable aircraft.

Marcello: When you joined the VP-12...well, you weren't in VP-12 very long there in San Diego, so let's get you to Pearl Harbor.

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

James: Oh, I thought it was terrific. You know, I didn't have too many ideas at all of what it would be like other than what you've seen in movies and everything. I expected to see the hula girls dancing on the beach and everything when we pulled in, and that didn't happen, incidentally. I thought maybe it would. As a young man, I thought maybe there would be something like that, but it didn't happen.

Marcello: So you were looking forward, then, to your assignment at Pearl Harbor.

James. Yes, yes.

Marcello: How long did it take to go from San Diego to Pearl Harbor on board the USS Wright?

James: It took us a considerable long time. I can't remember exactly, but I can relate to what happened there. Back in those days, they were flying the B-17's and the PB4Y's and a various assortment of airplanes that could fly from the West Coast out to Hawaii, and during the predictable time that they were flying, they tried to keep Navy ships at certain points across the Pacific so that in the event one of them went down, they could rush a ship to them and try and save the crew. So we were expecting, as I remember, a flight of B-17's to come over, and we were in about mid-Pacific between Hawaii and the West Coast. We just layed days dead in the water, just drifting and waiting for some

unknown thing that, as a seaman, you wouldn't know about.

"Why are we just laying dead in the water and that type of thing?" And as it turned out, through talking around the ship and all, we found out that what we were doing was waiting for some squadrons of airplanes. So as I remember, the trip took us probably a two- to three-week range. I have it written down somewhere and have it specifically written down what it is, but it was a long trip.

Marcello: That also says something, I think, about the state of aviation at that time, or how much confidence they had in those planes at that time getting across from the West Coast to Honolulu.

James: That was a long flight because a lot of the gear--the working gear--of the airplane that you would normally use for its regular duties would be removed. Guns and things like that that could be taken over on a ship were removed to lighten the load of the airplane, and then in place of all that, they replaced it with a series of auxiliary tanks in the belly of the airplane, which, after you arrived in Hawaii, those came out and the armament went back in.

Marcello: Well, you know, those B-17's that were coming in on December 7 were unarmed,

James: Yes.

Marcello: And I'm sure that's the reason why.

James: Yes. You know, it was such a long flight that you just had to lighten up the load and put extra gas in.

Also, we have to remember, too, is it not true that there was only one commercial flight a week between the West Coast and Honolulu? Wasn't this the Pan American Clipper?

James: Yes, the Pan American Clipper, which landed over in West Loch, I believe, once a week. I think he came in, went out and went all the way to China, and then we'd catch it coming back. As I remember...I don't specifically remember, but it was about once a week we saw that airplane--the China Clipper.

Marcello: And I gather that for a lot of people, that was a pretty big deal. They would make it a point to go wherever they could watch the China Clipper coming in and leaving.

James: Yes, I've seen her a number of times.

Marcello: Okay, when you get to Pearl Harbor, were you assigned directly to Ford Island?

James: Yes. The USS Wright pulled up alongside a pier at Ford Island, and we were transferred off of her and went to our quarters, which incidentally was that big ol' three-decker concrete barracks on Ford Island. That was my assignment. My assignment there immediately upon arriving, being a young seaman second class and an aviation metalsmith striker...the squadron had to furnish a group of men as mess cooks. So I was assigned as a mess cook in that concrete barracks that I mentioned to you earlier.

Marcello: Describe what mess cooking entailed.

James: Mess cooking entailed a whole variety of things. Primarily, you

do nothing about necessarily the preparation of the food except peeling potatoes or doing things other than assigned cook duties. Cooks took care of the preparation of food. You may be peeling potatoes or something, but you were primarily used to serve the food and then clean up the mess hall and that type of thing after each meal, and you did that three times a day.

Marcello: So they were serving family-style there in that large barracks?

James: No, they were not. They were serving a cafeteria line-style. But your primary duties, though, as a mess cook were serving off of the cafeteria line type of thing and then mopping the floor and scrubbing the tables after each one.

Interestingly enough, I had two other assignments while I was there. I became what they called the officer-of-the-day's mess cook because the Navy regulations required that the officer-of-the-day eat in the enlisted men's mess each meal. So he went down and sat right in the center of the mess hall at a private table of his own, and then a seaman like myself would take and go through the mess line and take food out of it the same as I would for myself. I would go up and tell him, for instance, what was happened to be on the menu that day, and he would give me some suggestions of what he wanted. I would then go through the line and bring the food over to his table and serve him, and then when he was through, I'd clean up his table. After that, I would go about my regular duties of helping swab the deck, so to speak, and that type of thing.



Marcello: What was the purpose of having the officer-of-the-day eat in the enlisted men's mess?

James: I think it was Navy regulations. I know it was at that time to insure that the quality of the food,..that somebody in a responsible position in the Navy,..the officer-of-the-day was usually a rather responsible officer, and he's just there to make sure that the food is of the quality and that type of thing.

Marcello: What was your opinion of Navy chow at that time?

James: I loved it. I really did. I never had too many qualms about Navy food. I'd been so hungry prior to joining the Navy that I never had any arguments about it. And that's the truth!

Marcello: Didn't you have beans for breakfast a couple of times?

James: Yes.

Marcello: Was that a standard procedure?

James: That's standard Navy chow. Breakfast is beans with bacon strips on them and that type thing. I don't remember whether it was a daily ritual or not, but it was very frequent. Normally, that didn't bother you because under a lot of Navy routine, and particularly during the war, you know, during World War II, you were up working and about sometimes a couple of hours before breakfast anyway, so you were ready to eat beans when they were served to you, if you liked them.

Marcello: How long did mess cooking last?

James: I was the athletic seaman mess cook during the attack by the

Japanese on December 7. The athletic mess seaman's responsibility at that time was...you mentioned the home-style serving. They didn't have that. But the athletes--the boxers, the basketball players, and that type thing--had an assigned table in the mess hall, and they had a seaman assigned to them, and his responsibility was to bring out the food family-style and then keep replenishing whatever platters or plates or that type of thing was empty.

I loved that duty because it was a tradition at that time that the athletic mess seaman would lay a bowl on payday in the center of the table, and it was customary that the guy was supposed to, for that two weeks of service, give you about a dollar. And so if you had forty or fifty guys, you became almost a chief petty officer in pay class with that two times a month tipping business. I really enjoyed it. But December 7, 1941, ended that career because they quit that on December 7 (chuckle),

Marcello: You mentioned this training table for the athletes. Let me pursue that subject one step further. How important or what role, perhaps would be a better way of putting it, did athletic competition and competition in general play in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

James: Surprisingly, you know, all the battleships had teams. They even competed athletically, and they competed with their bands and everything, and it was a very competitive type of environment

to be in. There was competitiveness for getting a rate.

In the pre-war period it was real competitive. I think they felt that all the athletic training, if you wanted to participate in it, would be nothing but beneficial to the Navy, so they backed all those programs up real well.

Marcello: You mentioned promotion just a moment ago. How slow or fast was promotion in that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

James: Well, I wasn't in long enough to be very much of an authority on it. I can say that it was very competitive, and you were not moved along like you were during World War II. I was a seaman second class on December 7, and I don't think that it was probably two to three weeks later, or some short period of time, that I became a seaman first class and moved along rather rapidly after that.

Marcello: You mentioned this three-story barracks awhile ago, where you stayed. Describe it in more detail. Take us through that barracks and describe what your quarters were like.

James: The lower deck of that barracks...on the 7th and just prior to the 7th, the lower floor was primarily the mess hall plus some administrative-type offices and that type thing. But I'd say probably 75 to 80 percent of the lower floor was a mess hall--a rather large mess hall because they had to take care of a lot of men. The upper two floors, then, were divided into the double-deck steel bunks with mattresses on them and very close together and with a steel locker assigned to each man. That

comprised the upper two floors, and the top floor on each end of that barracks was where you washed your clothes and hung them out on the lines to dry and that type of thing. So fundamentally, it was used just for that.

Marcello: Generally speaking, how would you rate these quarters, that is, you as a person just newly arrived there at Ford Island?

James: They were the usual, typical, Navy quarters that you found in Pensacola and San Diego and wherever you went--your steel bunks with a mattress and that type of thing, and with a steel locker.

Marcello: Did this three-story structure house virtually all the personnel that was assigned to Ford Island, that is, the enlisted personnel?

James: Yes. Probably the vast majority of them were in that barracks because the only other facilities on Ford Island on the 7th was...on the west side of Ford, there was some officers' homes and that type of thing. To the best of my recollection, all of the enlisted personnel were stationed in that barracks, and the BOQ was up on the north end of Ford Island.

Marcello: When did you say you got to Pearl Harbor?

James: I believe it was on October 1, 1941.

Marcello: So you were there about two months, then, before the attack actually occurred?

James: Yes.

Marcello: When you got to Ford Island, what kind of an assignment did you have? What was your function relative to VP-12, which you

were in at that time?

James: Well, like I said, that's when my duties and responsibilities went into the mess hall as a mess cook.

Marcello: Okay, well, after you came out of the mess hall--after you came out of mess cooking--what did you do then?

James: Okay, at that point, then, I was reassigned out of the mess hall back to my squadron as an aviation metalsmith striker, and I started performing those duties. They immediately started a search throughout the squadron for the younger men that were striking for various grades because there was a real dire need at that particular time for aerial gunners and aerial bombardiers and all that. So they went through a series of retesting everyone. And so being an aviation metalsmith assigned to a Navy PBY squadron, shortly after the war started, as I remember, around January or February of 1942, I was sent to aerial gunner's school in Kaneohe Bay and spent time training as an aerial gunner there and then was reassigned back to VP-24 at Ford Island after I completed aerial gunner school.

Marcello: But during that period up to December 7, after you got out of mess cooking, you were performing the functions of a metalsmith striker at that time, is that correct?

James: Yes, that's right.

Marcello: Can you be a little bit more specific? What kind of things would you be doing as a metalsmith striker?

James: Well, you would be a helper to a crew that would have to go

out and repair, say, popped rivets on a PBV or repair metal work or do a variety of assignments like that. In general, we were doing the metal work on airplanes--not the mechanics, the motors and that type of thing. But we were doing a whole variety of metal work.

Marcello: I do know that one of the functions of some of the new people in these units was to...didn't they have to wade out or swim out to these planes and tie something to them? Some sort of floats or something?

James: Yes. That was what they called the landing crew. The PBV's at that period of history landed in the water, and they were actually taken out into the water for their assignment. They flew from the water and got airborne, made their assignment, came back in, and landed on the water. They had to then come up alongside of a beaching ramp, and then there would be an assigned crew that had to take out the two wheels that went to the airplane and connect them physically to the airplane while they were in the water. Then a tractor would then pull it out and up the ramp and bring it over to the hangar that it was assigned to.

Marcello: Since you were a metalsmith striker, you did not participate in that activity.

James: No, I was not a member of a beaching crew, no.

Marcello: What exactly was the function of those PBV's that were in VP-12 at the time you were there?

James: They were primarily assigned for patrol work.

Marcello: Do you know what kind of patrolling they did? Can you describe exactly how their patrol function operated, or weren't you in the squadron long enough to really know anything about that?

James: I know a little bit about it. You know, they would go out prior to dawn in the morning and would be assigned a certain leg, for instance, to patrol a certain area. They'd go out on that leg and then return, and that would normally constitute anywhere from an eight- to a ten-hour or twelve-hour-day patrol.

Marcello: What kind of a range did they have? In other words, about how far out would they go?

James: I'm not real sure about that, I'm not real sure.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any complaints about there not being enough planes or enough personnel to conduct the kind of patrols that they really thought ought to be done or anything of that nature? Or didn't that kind of information filter down to you?

James: Probably at my level, being a seaman, I wouldn't be too involved in whether we could properly patrol an area or something, but in general I would say that there were probably words like that. We knew from daily activities that there was a surge of trying to build up the Pacific Fleet in all aspects--ships and planes and everything. It was just a beehive. Pearl Harbor was a beehive of activity when I arrived there.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you were in VP-12, and somewhere you must have got into VP-24.

James: No, VP-12, as I recall, was the designated number for the squadron while it was in San Diego. When that squadron was transferred to Hawaii, for some reason they changed the designation of that squadron to VP-24.

Marcello: In other words, there was no change in personnel of anything of that nature?

James: No.

Marcello: It was just a matter of changing the number.

James: That's right. It was just an assignment of a VP-24 as opposed to VP-12.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that there was all kinds of activity during that period up until December 7 in terms of men and equipment and so on coming in. How did that affect you and the work that you were doing? In other words, were you getting more PBY's and things of that nature...more personnel?

James: As I remember, we were probably the last PBY squadron to land in Hawaii before the attack. There was VP-21, which, I think, preceded us out there, and some other squadrons. Kaneohe Bay at that time was really being built up as a patrol base. As I remember, they only had maybe one or two squadrons over there prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. But there was activity over there and activity at Ford Island.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, could you, even in your position, detect any changes in the squadron's routine or in your routine, or was it business as usual right down to



December 7?

James: In my own respect, I think it was pretty much business as usual, but I think you might sense from reading the papers and listening to the radio and everything that there was probably going to be war between the United States and Japan rather quickly. But there was nothing that I ever heard of that indicated that Pearl Harbor was in any danger of being bombed. We were primarily thinking of the Philippines and Guam and Wake and places like that that were a little bit closer proximity to Japan than Pearl Harbor was. I don't think there was any real sense of urgency about an attack or anything like that, but there was a beehive of activity because...there must have been a real sense of activity because look at the number of ships and squadrons that participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor. The higher brass in the military certainly was trying to make preparations for something.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese in that pre-Pearl Harbor period, what kind of person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

James: Well, I wasn't able to conjure up very much of an impression of them because the only ones that I had ever literally come in contact with in my life were the native Hawaiians that were of predominantly Japanese ancestry, and my only contacts with them were like buying something in one of their shops in town or eating in one of the restaurants and all of that. I never had any strong

feelings one way or the other about them. They always seemed to be very courteous to me and that type of thing.

Marcello: What was the general scuttlebutt running around relative to the quality of the Japanese Navy?

James: I don't have any recollection of that. As a personal opinion, I thought that if the Japanese Empire declared war on the United States, the war would be over in about two months because we'd devastate them (chuckle). I just had no concept that they would even have the audacity to attack Pearl Harbor. I remember sitting on Ford Island and looking out at rows of battleships and cruisers and destroyers. Then if they just said, "We're gonna declare war on America," then all of the sudden I'd see ships moving out of the harbor, and they'd be gone for maybe a month or two and be back, and the war would be over. That was my own young man's recollection of that.

Marcello: You mentioned Battleship Row awhile ago. Describe what it looked like to you as a young man of seventeen or eighteen.

James: Well, Battleship Row lined up on the east side of Ford Island. My barracks was on the east side of Ford Island--the three-decker barracks that I mentioned earlier to you--and my quarters was on the third deck of that barracks, so I could go to a window and look out and see battleships anytime you wanted to walk over and look out and see them. I could see the whole row of them. Incidentally, the California was in very close proximity to my barracks. She was the number one battleship on Battleship Row

that day. Well, I don't know whether it was number one, but it was the farthest south, which would have been closest to my barracks.

Marcello: Were you rather impressed with those battleships?

James: I think anyone that has ever seen a battleship is impressed with it. I served during World War II on the USS Alabama, and it's a very impressive ship to look at.

Marcello: Did you think that they were sinkable?

James: No, I did not think that they were at that time (chuckle).

Marcello: Without putting words in your mouth, is it safe to say that at that time a great many people still considered the battleship to be the backbone of the fleet as opposed to aircraft carriers?

James: I would say so, yes, because, you know, the aircraft carrier in our concept of thinking back then...I mean...aircraft carriers are tremendously impressive ships in themselves, but our tradition and history and everything, not only in the United States but in England, France, and everybody, always put their stress on the battleship as being the thing. It would take the lead in battle and straighten things up for you.

Marcello: I guess the harbor was a beehive of activity, too, was it not, with ships going in and out during that period?

James: Yes, quite a beehive. They were scuttling in and out of the harbor and performing duties and...what all they were, I don't know, but there was ships coming and going on quite a frequent basis.

Marcello: Things must have been pretty crowded in that harbor.

James: I would say yes. You know, I often wondered how they could cope with the whole thing. How did they feed all those men? You know, every ship had its own mess hall and everything. But when you looked out, it was quite an impressive sight to see just ships everywhere you looked.

Marcello: How did the liberty routine work for you there at Pearl in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

James: Well, as a mess cook, it didn't work very well because you had to take care of three meals a day, and that meant early rising in the morning in preparation for the meal--breakfast--and then lunch and then the evening meal. It wasn't as strenuous as you might think because you always had a certain break. After the mess hall was clean, you could break until, say, eleven o'clock for the noon meal.

But it was interesting enough for other people that were not mess cooks. That was considered "tropical" duty, and Uncle Sam at that time had in force a ruling that if you were assigned to the "tropics" then they'd only work you half a day. And so most of the people in the squadron--the ground crews and administrative people and people that weren't flying airplanes literally--if they didn't have a particular assignment, were granted the day off at noon.

Marcello: Was this done primarily because there was a feeling that perhaps the white man couldn't cope with the heat of the tropics or something along those lines?

James: I think it probably reverted back to when they were down in the military in Panama and those places where the heat of the day is really oppressive--a hundred degrees, high humidity, and working under those conditions. But when you go to Hawaii in eighty-degree temperature and a balmy breeze is blowing and all that, I didn't think it was really necessary there. But I think that was one of the reasons for it.

Marcello: After you got out of your mess cooking routine, how did the liberty routine work for you?

James: Not very well because, see, my mess cooking ended the day of the attack because, see, the mess hall was converted to a sickbay the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor. All the tables were converted into taking care of the wounded and everything, and we went on short rations for quite a long period of time where we didn't even eat in the mess hall.

Marcello: So at that time, then, that is, before the attack, you really didn't have any opportunity to enjoy the sights and activities of Honolulu such as Hotel Street and Canal Street and all that sort of thing.

James: Well, I went on my normal day-off liberty, which would have been, like, Sunday or Saturday of something like that. I had liberties on Honolulu several times prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: What would you do when you went on liberty?

James: Go down to Hotel Street and see the sights like everyone else (chuckle).

and try to eat a meal over in town. Back in those days, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, it was evening liberty--you know, go to the bars and that type of thing.

Marcello: Describe what Hotel Street was like. What did it offer a young sailor?

James: Well, primarily it was like any street in a military town--I'm talking about a Navy or Army base town--where there's a certain group of people that will cater to the military from the standpoint of the tattoo shops, the souvenir buying-type things, the houses of prostitution--that type of thing. Hotel Street, as I could describe it today, would fit that category--souvenir buying, getting pictures taken, and houses of prostitution.

Marcello: So is it safe to say that on weekend, Hotel Street would be filled with white hats?

James: Yes, and particularly if the fleet was in port and in harbor.

Marcello: How did you get from Ford Island into Honolulu? Did you just take a liberty launch?

James: Yes, we'd take a liberty launch from the island, or a ferry, whichever it happened to be. You could take a ferry over, or you could take liberty boat over. If you took the liberty boat over, I think you landed at what they called Ten-Ten Dock or something like that; if you took the ferry over, you went over another way. Most of the guys had to take the bus, though... the bus served primarily the liberty launches. It was just a short ride from Ford Island over to Ten-Ten Dock. You'd catch a bus and go into Honolulu.

Marcello: Did you ever hear of a place in Honolulu called the Black Cat Cafe?

James: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcello: What was the attraction of the Black Cat?

James: I don't recall that I ever went in it, but, you know, it was one of the talked-about places.

Marcello: What I've heard is that it was just across the street from the YMCA, and it was at the YMCA where all of the taxis and that sort of thing stopped, so I guess the Black Cat was the first watering hole.

James: The first place you could go to. The first one you could go to, yes. But it was also the one that would normally be full, so you had to move on down to something else (chuckle). I remember it very well, but I don't remember a specific time of going in it.

Marcello: Was Hotel Street a rowdy place, so to speak, on weekend, or isn't that a good description of it?

James: I don't know whether you'd call it rowdy or not, but there's a certain amount of competitiveness and rowdiness in any young group of men that you put together where there is different interests. I'm talking now about sailors and soldiers and Marines and whatever have you. You're going to have a...under the business of, like you say, going to the Black Cat and having a few drinks and that type thing, there'd be a certain amount of rowdiness, but I never remembered it as being, you know, like

just lining up and down the streets and fist-fighting and that type of thing. You're going to run into that in anyplace, and particularly in a Navy town you'll see it, or military town.

Marcello: Was it pretty well patrolled by the Shore Patrol?

James: Oh, yes. The larger the crowd would get, the more Uncle Sam put the Shore Patrol on duty.

Marcello: Were you of drinking age at that time?

James: No. You were supposed to be twenty-one to drink, but I think you could not drink in California under that age. Me being seventeen years old, in California it was so obvious that I didn't even look like I belonged in the Navy, so there was no question about whether I could drink or not. I was not allowed to drink in California. But for some reason in Hawaii--and that was not a state at that time--if you were a sailor and wore a uniform and all, you could walk in and drink. That's the way they felt about it.

Marcello: How much of a problem would drunkenness be on a Saturday night, for instance? In other words, would there be a lot of drunks coming back to Ford Island, let's say, on a Saturday night?

James: I couldn't really answer that question. I don't remember it as a drinking-type liberty, myself. Number one, financially, I wasn't able to handle a lot of it, anyway. Prior to World War II breaking out, I don't remember a lot of rowdiness and a lot of drinking. There was the normal amount, but I don't remember it as being real, real bad.



Marcello: What time did liberty expire?

James: Back in those days, you know, if you were granted liberty according to your assignments, it expired whenever your next duty was performed. If I was a mess cook, I had to make sure that I was down in the mess hall...let's say, if I was assigned for duty at the Saturday morning mess and I had to be at my duty station at six o'clock, then I had to be there. How I got there was my own business. They didn't tell you that you had to be in at midnight or anything like that. You were free to do as you pleased, as long as you performed your assigned duties.

Marcello: I guess that basically you would go back to Ford Island in the evenings because you probably couldn't afford to stay in a hotel room in Honolulu.

James: No, and there weren't that many hotels. I don't ever remember spending...prior to World War II breaking out, I never remember spending an entire night in Honolulu.

Marcello: We have to remember that this is 1941, and to the best of my recollection, there were only two hotels in Waikiki at that time--the Moana and the Royal Hawaiian.

James: Right, and they were completely taken over by the officers, not the enlisted men. I'd say enlisted men weren't barred, but you weren't very comfortable in either one of them if you were an enlisted man.

Marcello: Did you get any tattoos?

James: Yes.

Marcello: On Hotel Street?

James: Yes.

Marcello: During that period prior to the war?

James: Yes, prior to the war. Well, I think I got one prior to the war and one after the war broke out--a short period after--which I regret, incidentally.

Marcello: You just had to prove that you were "salty."

James: Yes, a real "salty" seventeen-year-old sailor.

Marcello: How much did a tattoo cost?

James: It depended on the time that it took and the size of it. A small one you could get for five dollars or three dollars, if you wanted just a name on--a girlfriend's name or something like that--all the way up to getting a four-masted schooner on your chest that may cost you a hundred dollars (chuckle).

Marcello: Getting a girlfriend's name tattooed would kind of be risky, I guess, wouldn't it?

James: Yes, it could. A lot of men did it, though (chuckle).

Marcello: Especially for a sailor.

James: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, I think this more or less brings us up to the weekend of December 7, 1941. Let's start with that Saturday, December 6. Describe for me in as much detail as you can remember, what your routine was on Saturday, December 6, 1941.

James: Okay, in my particular instance, it was a light duty day because,

as an athletic seaman taking care of the athletic mess, I had Saturdays and Sundays off. So that Saturday I just stayed on the base until late afternoon liberty. I went into Honolulu Saturday evening, and I don't specifically remember what activities or anything I went through on that particular evening. I returned to base at a reasonable hour--eleven or twelve o'clock that evening probably--and went to bed. But fundamentally, I didn't have any real activities to perform other than just lay around and that type thing. I rested that day.

Marcello: Now on December 6, would you still have had a pretty good portion of your pay yet? When did you get paid? The first and the fifteenth?

James: The first and the fifteenth, yes. Yes, I probably would have had money then, particularly under my set of circumstances. I would have had a little bit of money with me at that time.

Marcello: What did you notice taking place in Honolulu that night?

James: I don't have any recollection of that evening, you know, because my routine over there was not very consequential, anyway. I probably went in and had dinner or something like that, and a few drinks, and then returned to the base at some hour. The next day's activities sort of erased the previous things in my mind over the years.

Marcello: You mentioned that you went in and got a meal. From what I've heard other people say, even though the Navy chow was pretty good, it was still kind of nice to have a change.

James: I think that's always...in a military environment, you always looked forward to going and getting in a restaurant where you could sit down and be served food and that type of thing.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful happening back over on Ford Island that evening when you returned?

James: Not that I recall at all?

Marcello: What'd you do when you got back?

James: I went to bed,

Marcello: Which would have been at what time?

James: I would judge around midnight probably...one o'clock in the morning maybe, by the time I got all the way in from Honolulu. I took the boat over to Ford Island and went over to the barracks.

Marcello: Okay, now you mentioned that you did not have the duty the next day,

James: No,

Marcello: Did that mean that you could sleep in if you wished?

James: I slept in on Sunday morning. Yes, that was the good thing about my duty. I didn't have to perform my duties on Saturday and Sunday, and that was a very short period of time.

Marcello: What had you planned to do on that Sunday?

James: I had no specific plans that day at all. Probably just lay around the barracks.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7. Obviously, we want you to go into it in as much detail as you can remember, so I'll let you pick it up from the time you woke up

until all hell broke loose. Describe what occurred to you personally.

James: Okay, like a lot of other people at Pearl Harbor that morning, I was asleep. When the first bomb was dropped, I was sound asleep.

Marcello: You had no intention of going to breakfast?

James: No, no, I'd been out too late to worry about getting up. Being a mess cook, you could go down and get anything just about any time you wanted to, so you didn't have to worry whether you made the mess hall at the prescribed hours. You could always go in--knowing the cooks and everything--and get a little snack if you wanted it. So I was sleeping in, and the noise of bombs going off became quite apparent. Then someone went running down through my deck of the barracks saying, "We're being bombed! We're being bombed! Get out of your bunks!"

Marcello: When you heard the noise initially, did you know that these were bombs, or what did you think those noises were?

James: I had no idea what they were.

Marcello: But the noise did wake you up.

James: Yes, the noise woke me up, but I had no concept of what it was.

Marcello: Were there any vibrations or anything of that nature?

James: Oh, tremendous vibrations. My first thought was that it was... like a lot of other survivors of that day will tell you, their reaction was that it was a maneuvers of some kind, you know, some sort of maneuvers that were maybe a little bit realistic and that

type of thing.

Marcello: Okay, so this person runs down the barracks yelling, I suppose, that the Japanese were attacking.

James: No, I don't recall him saying Japanese. He just said, "We're being bombed!" Because it was very early in the attack. Ford Island and Battleship Row were the first to get hit, so it was a tremendous amount of noise. He just said, "Get out! We're being bombed!" He didn't say it was the Japanese or anything.

So I jumped out of my bunk and slipped on a pair of pants and scuttled out the end of the barracks on the wash rack to see what was going on. I climbed up and peered back toward Battleship Row, and all hell was breaking loose.

Marcello: Describe what you saw.

James: Well, just seemed to me like there was a never-ending stream of airplanes coming down and dropping torpedoes. Very early in the attack, there was a torpedo...first, they bombed Ford Island, and then right after that, they started moving in with the torpedo planes immediately...almost simultaneously. When I looked down, I saw airplanes dropping torpedoes and bombs going off and machine guns strafing--primarily at that point in the attack by them, you know. They would literally strafe and torpedo at the same time, and then they would strafe Ford Island as they came across it after they dropped their torpedoes.

Marcello: Did you see any resistance at that early point being put up by the personnel in the fleet, or was this strictly a Japanese show

at this time?

James: Well, as I remember it, I couldn't tell whether...because there was so much activity going on and so much gun fire and bombs and torpedoes and everything during that early part of the attack, it was hard to really tell who was fighting who. You know, things were happening, but it was extremely difficult for me to tell whether we were putting up very much resistance. But as the day progressed along, and I look back on it now, I'd say that at the very earliest part of the attack that day we put up a minor amount of resistance--you know, looking back on it now. But my moment of looking out at Battleship Row and seeing what was happening, I did not visualize that we were putting up very much resistance. But as time wore on, we did.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that in part the attack was being carried out by torpedo planes, which meant that they would have been flying fairly low. Could you distinguish the pilots and so on in these planes? Were you that close to the action?

James: I wouldn't know. I could not have seen and distinguished that it was a pilot or a Japanese or anything like that. I saw the markings--the rising sun--but that didn't mean anything to me. At the particular time, I didn't know how the Japanese planes were marked. I knew we were being bombed by somebody that obviously didn't like us at that point in time (chuckle).

Marcello: Now at that early point, when you went out on the wash rack, on the balcony, to see what was happening, were there any specific

things that you saw over at Battleship Row at that time that made an impression on you? One particular explosion or one incident or anything of that nature?

James: No one in particular because it was so fast and furious that all I saw was geysers of water going up and all of the sudden things catching on fire and just all hell breaking loose. You know, it appeared to me, even to this day, a little bewildering of how absolutely fast and intensively they planned and executed the attack on Pearl Harbor. It wasn't like...a lot of people would think, "Well, we can fly an airplane over and drop a bomb, and maybe a minute or two later another airplane will be coming over and dropping...they were swarming on Pearl Harbor like a bunch of bees, as I remember it. Just anywhere you looked, there was somebody trying to kill you--dropping bombs on you and everything; I mean, it was just a beehive of airplanes.

Marcello: Approximately how long were you viewing that activity out there on the balcony?

James: A very short period of time because I realized then the strafing that was going on, so I said, "Well, that is no place to be with somebody coming and shooting at you." So I left that wash rack and went in and put a shirt and shoes on and then went down to the bottom deck of the barracks, the first floor of that barracks, and was waiting for somebody to give me some instructions of what to do and everything. There was so much confusion and everything. So I stayed in a little lobby area on the first floor



of that barracks for a very few minutes.

They had started to move women and children in there from the officers' quarters because it was probably the most protected building, because it was made of concrete and everything, on Ford Island. So they started moving women and children in there rather quickly.

Marcello: Evidently, that must have been very quickly.

James: Yes, because, for instance, ladies that may have had administrative duties...civilian personnel...I don't really know whether they were officers' wives or what, but women...and then shortly after that, children started showing up and that type of thing. I stayed there, and I thought...no one gave me any instructions, so I said, "Well, I better go to my hangar."

And so I left during the attack and had to weave my way in through the seaplane hangars and the A and R Building and that type thing to go over to my seaplane squadron hangar, which was over on the south end of Ford Island, which was distance of maybe four blocks from the barracks to the hangar.

Marcello: So unlike the personnel on the ships, you did not have a specific battle station where you were assigned there on Ford Island?

James: No, I did not have a specific battle station like you would have shipboard.

Marcello: Okay, describe your trip, I guess we could call it, from that barracks over to the hangar.

James: It was a very harrowing experience because I thought every one of those airplanes that was coming over Ford Island was personally trying to seek me out; and I was trying to go from building to building by looking back over my shoulder because they were primarily making their attack from the east side of Pearl Harbor in the direction of Ford Island, and so they'd come right over Ford. I was trying to time my runs between these buildings to get down to that hangar between airplanes flying over the top of me, so I had a real scary time going there, thinking that I was personally being strafed and everything. As I remember, I was seventeen years old and scared to death (laughter).

Marcello: In actuality, were you ever strafed that you know of?

James: No, not that I know of. An instance where a bomb went off in a close proximity,..it did not go off. It became a dud but landed on Ford Island, and that happened on my way from the barracks down to the hangar. It turned out that the bomb did not explode and all, and so I was grateful for that.

Marcello: Describe that incident in a little bit more detail. It sounds rather interesting and scary.

James: Well, yes, it was just a case of, you know, hearing a thud and the ground sort of come up in front of you, and that was it. There was no explosion that accompanied it. I had no idea what it was until a later time, and then someone said that that turned out to be a bomb that did not explode or a shell or something

that didn't go off, you know.

Marcello: How far from you did that bomb hit?

James: I would say maybe a hundred or 150 feet, you know, close enough that if it had been a bomb and gone off, I probably wouldn't be here talking to you.

Marcello: And you never did see the plane that dropped the bomb or anything like that?

James: No. That was peculiar. It was hard for me as an individual to say that this airplane did that and all because it seemed to me that everytime I looked up there was more than one (chuckle).

Marcello: About how long did it take you to get from the barracks over to the hangar?

James: A very short period of time because I was running most of the way. I was running and stopping and looking and running to the next building and trying to get behind some sort of a cover. Then I'd look back over and weave and run another hundred feet or so.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had dressed, obviously, upon hearing that bombing was taking place. What did your dress consist of?

James: As I remember, dungarees--the traditional dungaree uniform.

Marcello: Long-sleeved shirt or a short-sleeved shirt? Or a T-shirt?

James: Probably a T-shirt. Probably dungaree pants and a T-shirt and shoes,

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get over to the hangar?

James: Well, it was obviously a beehive because Hangar Six, I believe it was, was burning and blazing, and the airplanes were burning.

Everywhere you looked, airplanes were burning, and the hangar, as I remember--it was Hangar Six--was on fire.

Marcello: How about your hangar?

James: No, we did not sustain any major damage. As I remember it, we may have had some strafing type of things happen to it, but we were not hit directly by a bomb. But we lost all...I think we lost all of our airplanes, though, through the strafing action and bombing from the other bomb fragments and that type thing because the airplanes would have been scattered around on the ramps out in between all of these hangars that I'm describing.

Marcello: Evidently, the Japanese must have used incendiary bullets, then, if they set those planes on fire and so on. Of course, they would have had some fuel aboard obviously.

James: Yes. I would imagine that they were incendiary. You would use that type of ammunition if that was your objective.

Marcello: And which particular hangar were you going to?

James: VP-24's hangar, which I don't remember the number of that hangar today. But it was the last hangar on the south side of Ford Island and close to the landing strip. It would be on the south-east side by the landing strip on Ford Island.

Marcello: So what happens, then, when you get over to the hangar?

James: Well, then I was assigned various duties, and it is hard for me to recall today which one came first because of so much confusion.

Marcello: Things still were not organized over there yet.

James: Very disorganized at this point in time. I was told at one time

to go...they had an ordnance truck there, which was an old Ford-model pickup-type truck back in those days, and myself and another man were told to go down and get ammunition out of a warehouse-type building back up near my barracks. Between the squadron and my barracks was this warehouse-type building.

It was the lull between the first attack and then the high-altitude attack later that I took this truck--myself and another man--and moved up into that area to try and get ammunition. Well, everybody else had the same idea about going to get ammunition, so there wasn't any to be had that was belted, like, for machine guns or clipped for rifles and so on. There was a beehive of activity around that building because it was a storage building for guns and ammunition and a warehouse-type operation. There were people all over breaking out guns and ammunition and this type of thing.

Women and children were brought up to help out. Guns stored in a warehouse in the military are full of what they call cosmoline. You can't take and just grab a gun out of a box and go use it. It has to be cleaned up, and the pistols had to be cleaned, and the ammunition had to be brought out of, say, boxes and belted and that type thing. It was a beehive of activity. I got caught in that for a short period of time by helping break out guns and that type of thing.

**Marcello;** Did you say women and children were enlisted to do this kind of

thing, too?

James: Yes. Anybody that had a pair of hands and could do something, they were brought to the task of trying to perform that duty.

Marcello: And this was over there at that warehouse?

James: Yes. I stayed there a very short period of time and then went back down to the hangar to my squadron. And then someone said...we had received a message at that point in time at the squadron that there was a Japanese pilot that had been shot down...and by this time, incidentally, I'd gotten me a .30-30 rifle with several clips of ammunition and everything, and so did my friend. So we were told to go up on the north end of Ford Island, on the Battleship Row side, and there was a clump of trees up near Battleship Row. There was a downed Japanese pilot, and we were supposed to go up and get him. We were told the general vicinity he was in and everything, so we went up looking for him, and we found him.

Marcello: They sent a couple of seventeen-year-old kids up there to find a Japanese pilot?

James: Right, and we found him.

Marcello: Describe this. This sounds interesting.

James: Well, we found him dead in those bushes, and I'll never know how he met his death. I didn't kill him. Not that I wouldn't have if I'd had the opportunity, but I didn't. We found him dead in this clump of bushes, which is not a very large area to search because Ford Island itself, as you well know, is not a very

big island, anyway.

We put him in the back of this truck and brought him up to the medical unit, which was the dispensary, which was right across from the barracks that I was billeted in. And they had him layed out there at the receiving area on the concret slab, and a Navy doctor, four-stripper doctor, and a chief petty officer came out and examined him and declared him dead and everything.

Marcello: Let's back up and talk a little more about that because this sounds rather interesting. Maybe I have a gruesome streak. I'm not sure. Had he parachuted out and was killed in that manner, or had the plane crashed, or had he been shot or...what happened?

James: I didn't see the activity that caused him to land, but the story that I heard about that particular pilot later on was that he had been shot down and parachuted. And he had landed between, I believe, the Tennessee and Ford Island and was in the process of climbing up onto the beach of Ford Island. The story that I heard is that a Marine on one of the battleships--and I believe it was the Tennessee--had shot and killed him. But they weren't sure, I don't think, from the communication that we got, that he was dead or alive. They just said, "There's someone up there. A pilot has been seen parachuting in that vicinity and go look for him." We went in not like a seventeen-year-old-kid because here's a guy that's out to kill us. So we went in prepared to do battle with a ,30-30 rifle if we had to and all. But the story I heard was that he had parachuted and gotten out of his parachute

and climbed up on the beach at Ford Island and was shot. He didn't have a parachute on when I found him, so I think that story is plausible--that he probably did land in the water, swam a very short distance to shore, and then when he got up on there, somebody shot and killed him.

Marcello: Did you have any qualms about picking him up and throwing him in the truck and taking him back?

James: Yes, I really did. I had an extreme amount of hatred for the man, thinking about all the devastation that he'd wreaked on the fleet and Ford Island and this type of thing. It was pretty obvious that he was dead; I mean, I'm not a doctor, but if a man's dead, you can observe it and determine that rather quickly... but I had a lot of real hatred in me.

Marcello: Describe how you and your buddy put him on that truck.

James: Well, we just lifted him up and put him in the back end of this pickup truck, You know, both of us just reached down and grabbed him and hauled him over and slid him into the back of it.

Marcello: How was he dressed?

James: In a traditional Japanese uniform, as I remember, with the sashes and the leather-type helmet over his head and that type of thing.

Marcello: Okay, so you take him back to the barracks?

James: To the dispensary.

Marcello: You took him to the dispensary.

James: Right.



Marcello: What do you do at that point? What happens then?

James: Well, we unloaded him and put him on a concrete slab there by the dispensary door and all, and a medical officer then came out and looked at him and went through his routine of saying the man is dead, you know. Then at that point in time, we were instructed to take him to mainside Pearl, so we took him down and got in a motor launch, with this Japanese pilot and a coxswain running the motor launch, and proceeded to take him over to, I think, the Ten-Ten Dock area where we used to land for liberty.

Marcello: He hasn't been put in a sack or anything?

James: No,

Marcello: You just still had a body?

James: We just had a body still dressed in a uniform. When we arrived over at the landing area at Pearl Harbor to give him to the proper authorities over there, there was a beehive of activity of small boats that were bringing in the American dead. And I mean they were literally loaded down and all.

There was an officer standing there at the dock with a bullhorn. He happened to see us dragging around out there, and it didn't look like we had very much of anything going on at all, so he said, "Boat so-and-so, what are you doing?" "We have a Japanese pilot to bring over and give to you." And he says, "Well, bring him in here." And when we pulled up alongside the dock, we again removed this man from the boat and took him over.

I'll never forget this because the officer in charge of

bringing all these small boats in and bringing the American dead in was infuriated over the fact that this Japanese pilot was there. I can remember specifically him saying, "Don't put that goddamn son-of-a-bitch over there with those dead!" He said, "Move him over there!" You know, they were stacking them. At that particular time, they were stacking them--the American dead--and when he was told that this was a Japanese pilot, he was like I was. He was just very angry. And he said, "Move him over there by himself!" And then we had performed our duties and got back in the boat and then went back to Ford Island.

Marcello: So you finally got rid of the Japanese pilot.

James; (Chuckle) Right.

Marcello: How long had you had him altogether?

James; Oh, I would guess maybe an hour, you know, going through all the routines of transporting him and then somebody telling you... well, you know, they had to make decisions: "What do we do with him? Now that we got him, what are we going to do with him?" Somebody said, "Well, take him over to Pearl. They're taking everybody else over there. Take him over."

Marcello: Awhile ago, you mentioned that there had been a lull between the two attacks, which we do know was the case, and that the second attack consisted of high-level bombers.

James; Yes.

Marcello: What do you recall from the high-level bombers coming over, and where were you at that time?

James: I was standing probably in the hangar area on Ford Island and watching that.

Marcello: This would have been sometime after you got over to the hangar, but before you went to the warehouse for the ammunition?

James: No, that would have been after the warehouse because, see, that last wave and all...it was quite a lull of time in there. The thing that I remembered about that was the inaccuracy of our gunfire because the squadrons of Japanese high-altitude bombers were coming over and dropping bombs, and our antiaircraft fire and everything...it was amazing to me how some of those guns could be missing those airplanes by two miles (laughter); I mean, I thought we could aim better than that. But I do recall just a barrage of antiaircraft fire going up, and it just scattered all over the sky.

Marcello: Were you simply an observer to all that?

James: I was an observer at that time because I was just really going around trying to find some activity to help somebody out in a situation. When they came over...and as I recall, they were the ones that were instrumental in getting the USS Shaw--the high-altitude bombers and everything--so that famous picture that you see of the USS Shaw going up...I could not have been very far from the guy that took that picture because I just know that I saw the exact same thing and was in the very close proximity to the guy that took the picture. I had to be because, you know, I can identify all the things that are in that picture and everything. But I

don't recall of ever seeing a person taking a picture--you follow me? I was probably one of many people around that general area at the time, but everytime I look at that picture, after these many years, I can remember, you know, seeing that actually happen at the time that it happened.

Marcello: Describe the Shaw blowing up because, like you say, it is one of the most spectacular pictures of that whole event.

James: Well, the nearest you can describe it...it wasn't literally the bomb, as we know today, that did all the devastation. It hit the magazine, and when that magazine went up with all that ammunition in it, she just blew the whole bow right off of her, you know. It was just as the picture describes it--just a ball of fire. If you recall seeing the picture, you see all the streamers of things? Well, that is ammunition that is going off due to heat and that type of thing, but since it doesn't have a back plate there, the projectile is going one way, and the casing is going another, and the ammunition is burning, and that's what created all that havoc there. So it was just a tremendous, loud explosion and then followed by a series of smaller explosions.

Marcello: Over how long a period of time?

James: Not very long. You know, then it just settled into being just a devastating fire.

Marcello: You're seeing all these things, but is there time for any of this to sink in?

James: Parts of it I vividly remember.

Marcello: But I guess at the time...

James: No. I wish I'd have had the foresight at seventeen years old to say, "This is history happening, and I really ought to do something about putting something in order that I may want to talk to you about forty years later," but I wasn't mentally of that thought at that time,

Marcello: Who did seem to be taking charge and giving orders there at the hangar? Anybody?

James: You have your normal chain of command with your officers and chief petty officers and first class petty officers and that type thing. There seemed to be, in a short period of time, a realization of what was going on, and then people were assigned to do--whatever you could be assigned to do--that was most important at that particular time, you know.

Marcello: So the officers and the chiefs and the petty officers did get there in pretty short order, and some at least were there when you arrived?

James: Yes. Yes. My squadron...and since I was not attached to the hangar that day, I cannot verify what activities took place with my squadron that day because I went down from the mess hall and my barracks to my squadron during the attack; but I understand that we had airplanes in the air that day. VP-24 was the alert squadron of the day that day. But as I heard later on in life, these men were not out on a patrol search, but they were flying down off of Maui doing some sort of routine practice of some kind. I've heard that from pilots

and other men that were in my squadron about our activities that day.

Marcello: Just out of curiosity, did you witness the Arizona blowing up or the Oklahoma turning over or any of that sort of thing?

James: I don't think that I witnessed the Arizona like I did the Shaw, but I did know when it happened, and I don't remember physically looking at the time she went up like the Shaw did. But it was a short period of time later that...it was abundantly aware that she had really had something similar...that, incidentally, happened before the Shaw. But we knew that something devastatingly bad happened to her because she was almost instantly engulfed in flames and exploding with things just going off all over the place.

I don't recall again seeing the Oklahoma roll, but if you're participating in something like that, if you actually saw her listing--and she went over rather rapidly--if you saw her listing, you wouldn't stand there and look in amazement and watch all of this happen because you were worrying for your life, you see. So you'd say, "Golly, boy, that's bad!" And then something else would divert your attention off of that particular scene, you know.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that later in the afternoon, you transported this dead Japanese pilot from Ford Island over to the beach. Describe what the condition of the water was like during that trip from Ford Island over to the beach. In other words, was it full of oil and debris and things of that nature?

James: Oh, yes, yes, And the ships were, like you say, capsizing, and oil belched out of them. Looking from Ford Island and going over to the southeast part of Pearl to discharge this Japanese pilot, you looked up and had a good view of Battleship Row, and it looked like the entire Battleship Row was a mass of burning oil and flames and this type of thing. You know, just everywhere you looked, it was just burning, burning, burning. Yes, there was oil and fires and everything.

At the time that we were taking this pilot over, there was a lot of activity in small boats because, see, they were trying to get in up close to the ships to take men off of them and that type of thing, so there was a beehive of activity of what we call motor whaleboats and that type of thing in the harbor and all. Just looking back and seeing that picture in my mind today, I thought, "Well, my God, every battleship was totally...." It looked to me from my perspective that every battleship was totally engulfed in flames. But that may have been due to the fact that you were looking down the whole row, and the first three were burning, you know.

Marcello: Did you have any thoughts or feelings when you saw that at that time?

James: I was just going about my normal duties and trying to perform them and being just terribly upset and that type of thing; I mean, you know, I was just saying, "My God, when is it gonna end?" and that type of thing. You know, "How long is this going to go on?"

Marcello: What does the sky and the air look like? Now you've described the surface of the water, which had all sorts of oil and debris. Was there a lot of smoke and all this sort of thing?

James: Well, yes. As the attack proceeded, because of burning oil, there was just a mass of smoke and everything, but the sky was a beautiful, balmy Hawaiian day--just beautiful weather and everything.

Marcello: A good day for an air raid.

James: (Chuckle) A good day for an air raid. If you wanted a real nice, clear day with a balmy breeze blowing and that type thing, it would have been a good one.

Marcello: What did you do the rest of the afternoon and into that evening when you got back over to Ford Island?

James: Prior to getting into the afternoon's activities on the attack of Pearl Harbor, one more interesting thing that I recall about it is being down near my seaplane hangar again with my squadron. I don't specifically remember what I was doing at that point in time, but I saw some activity going on with some guns being fired at something other than airplanes and had no idea at the time what it was. It was the USS Curtiss firing on what turned out to be a Japanese two-man submarine. I remember standing there in awe looking at this and saying, "Well, my goodness, I wonder what they could possibly be shooting at," because all they had sticking out of the water was a little tiny conning tower.

Marcello: You could see the conning tower?



James: I didn't look up to see the conning tower. I saw shell bursts going off in the harbor which were being created by a ship, and I thought, "Well, I wonder what they are going through." Then as I remember...and I don't remember the destroyer that--it just seemed to me like--came out of nowhere, and she started opening fire and then dropping depth charges. Then at that point in time... I literally at that point saw the sub because she just kind of belched up in the water and then settled down, and that was the end of her.

Marcello: What did the sub look like? What did you see?

James: I didn't see enough of it, and it was like an instant picture because it wasn't a slow motion thing. It was just a series of depth charges and gunfire, and then all of a sudden the destroyer went on by and all. Then it became aware to myself and a group of other people talking around there...I said, "My God, now we've got submarines in the harbor! They've bombed us, and now they are going to send all the Japanese subs in the world in here!" So I got to thinking, "My God, they've really got us now!" That was my recollection of that.

Marcello: So is it safe to say that you and your buddies were scared?

James: You know, when you're in a stress situation sometimes, I don't think literally that you can say it is fear like you normally connote the word fear. I never looked at it...I was scared, but I wasn't, you know, distraught or anything. I was just saying, "Well, my goodness..." You really didn't have time to stop

and sit down and say, "God, am I gonna live or die through this," because you had to keep doing something, and, thank goodness, you had to keep doing something, and then that relieves that tension off of you. That became abundantly aware in some of my later activities during the war. I always felt that if you were busy during a battle or something, you know, you didn't have time to stop and get scared.

Marcello: Okay, let's move into the afternoon and evening of December 7.

What did you do in the late afternoon and early evening?

James: Okay, I went back down then...they told me to go back to my barracks and see what they were doing down there about meals and everything. Well, when I got down to the barracks and walked into the mess hall, it was obvious to me that there wasn't going to be any meals cooked in that building that day because literally every table in that mess hall had been converted into an operating-like table to take care of primarily the burned. The building was literally filled with battleship sailors that had jumped off the battleships and got caught in burning oil. So they were primarily burned people up in there at that time.

Marcello: I guess you didn't want to stick around there too long?

James: Well, I did what I could there, but then I went down to the chief commissary officer and everything, and they had to start preparing food, so he says, "You come with..." This was later on in the afternoon, and he says, "You come with me, and we're going down near Battleship Row and set up a tent mess hall and

start feeding the battleship men that are off those battleships." So we went down there--he and I went down--and someone had started erecting the tent and that type thing, and then he started trying to prepare food. By this time some of the civilian population had filtered into the place, and they had native island women of a sort and boy scouts and that type of thing that they'd gotten over there, and then we started preparing the best kind of meal we could to feed people because they hadn't literally been fed all day long. And so for the rest of that day, I went into that type of activity, where we made sandwiches and this type of thing and fed guys as they came through a line and that type of thing.

Marcello: What kind of sandwiches were you making?

James: I don't recall at this time. You know, my responsibilities was to just bring over things like bread and meat and cheese and whatever we could put our hands on, and then they had the women and the children there--women primarily--making sandwiches. Then the children were taking them--children meaning boy scout-type ages--and dispensing those sandwiches to people that were milling around to get food.

Marcello: Did you still have your weapon?

James: No, I don't think so at that point in time. I don't remember at what point in time that I got rid of my .30-30 rifle, but it was sometime during that afternoon. Some senior petty officer or somebody else came along and exercised his rank and decided that he needed my weapon more than I did or something. I don't

remember at what point in time that I got rid of the weapon, but I didn't have it at that time.

Marcello: How about you personally? Were you hungry?

James: I can't remember whether I was hungry or not. I don't remember that being part of my activities that day, you know.

Marcello: Do you remember anything extraordinary happening that evening? What was going on that evening?

James: Oh, yes! I had gone back down to the squadron that night, and around dusk that evening, I was back down with my squadron, and the USS Enterprise, I think, sent in a squadron of fighter planes to land on Ford Island. I was inside of the hangar and everything, and we'd not had anything for the balance of the day except some... after the Japanese had parted the area, we had spasmodic gunfire from "trigger-happies" that would happen under those set of circumstances. But then all of the sudden, you know, the Enterprise airplanes started coming in, and they wouldn't turn lights on or anything for them to designate the landing area on Ford Island or anything. All the lights in the automobiles and trucks and everything had been bashed out by our own people to keep from having any kind of light at night. The word was passed that if you lit a cigarette outside, somebody would shoot you dead, so they weren't going to give those poor pilots any help. They were flying in around us and trying to pick their way into the landing strip, and they were, as I remember it, in the proximity of Battleship Row.

I don't remember...I heard at the time of the attack that the old USS California decided they were Japs or something, and she opened up on them. When somebody opened up everybody opened up, and then, I mean, the sky just became brilliant with gunfire. I'll never forget that because that was my first experience of seeing a massive amount of gunfire at night. I was in the hangar, and they were digging a trench down alongside of the landing strip on Ford Island and my hangar. There was just a big trench being laid there for a water line or a gas line or something like that. So everybody said, "Well, they're back again!" So most people in my squadron went and dove in the ditch. It was like six or eight feet deep. I dove in it, and not exactly knowing where it was, I literally fell in it instead of crawling down in it. I fell in it and bruised my knees and that type of thing.

I rolled over on my back, and I looked up into the sky out of this narrow slit ditch that I was in, and I see all of these tracers and everything going over. My impression again, having literally experienced that for the first time, I thought, "My God, every one of those are airplanes!" *Instead of being tracer bullets, I thought every one of those thousands of lights was airplanes.* Then it was obvious, as it turned out, that they had such a devastating amount of gunfire put on those guys that there were three of them burning in the air at the same time when they were coming in.

Marcello: Was this normal procedure for the Enterprise to fly off planes before it came in?

James: I don't know. I would say that probably back in those days it would have been normal procedure. Do you follow me?

Marcello: Was it just a way of giving pilots more experience--some additional training--or something like that, or why would it be done?

James: Well, primarily probably to...I really don't know, but I would imagine,,like, later on...I can't answer it, but later on in the war on the battleship, where we had carried three airplanes for reconnaissance and that type thing, when we went into port, we always put our airplanes over to the side and ran them over to a beach or something like that, you know, if you were into a friendly port where there was an area to service them and take care of them and that type of thing. I don't have any idea. It'd be interesting to know why the Enterprise sent them in, other than probably to reinforce the island. And then if she'd gotten blown out of the water herself by a sub or something like that, they wouldn't lose all the airplanes. I don't know to this day why they did, but it was a very spectacular thing and a unfortunate thing because it was a misinterpretation of the circumstances.

Marcello: About how long did this firing last?

James: Not very long because, you know, there wasn't too much to shoot at. Everything that came in either took off and went back to the Enterprise, or they were shot down.

Marcello: Was it less than ten minutes?

James: I don't think that it was less than ten minutes probably because... it would be hard to say because when the kind of activity starts, you know, there will be guys that will shoot at things that aren't even an airplane. Do you follow me? So you really can't tell how long it is because he'll be sitting there manning a .50-caliber machine gun or a group of men will be manning a 5-inch gun battery or something like that, and they think something is in the air, and they'll start blasting away. They were blasting away all night long at anything that moved.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors that were floating around that evening?

James: Oh, many, many. The rumors were just rampant. Paratroopers had landed over here; and the native Hawaiians were on an uprising, and particularly the Japanese native Hawaiians were going to be sabotaging. Everybody was put on night alert and stationed, and everywhere you looked there would be a group of not just one sentry but three or four with machine guns and automatic weapons and everything. You can imagine that there were all sorts of rumors.

Marcello: Did you believe all those rumors?

James: I believed most of what I heard.

Marcello: You really didn't have any reason not to believe them because of what had been done.

James: No, because you'd just lived through this morning experience, and that night and for the next few days, you had a tendency to

believe anything that anybody wanted to tell you.

Marcello: How much sleep did you get that night?

James: Very little. As I remember I had a cat nap because I was on a watch station with a group of men with a .50-caliber machine gun. We cat-napped but there was...you didn't really sleep because you spent the time talking about the experiences during the day, and you literally were not supposed to sleep unless you were told that you could go to sleep by the lead man that was the head of your group. I got very little sleep that evening.

Marcello: And could you hear sporadic gunfire all night?

James: I don't say that it went on all night, but, yes, there would be instances where, you know...I don't know whether it was that night or the next night--probably the first night--where soldiers or Marines on the south side of Ford Island were over there setting up 5-inch guns and everything, and that's a short distance in the harbor from Ford Island over to the land over there, which was a section of West Loch, I think they called it. Well, they were over there working with flashlights and everything, trying to get these gun emplacements set up, and literally the guys on Ford Island--Marines and sailors and what-have-you over there--knew what was the activity was, but they were so nervous about it all. They'd yell over across to them and say, "Turn them damn lights out over there!" And the lights wouldn't go out, so somebody would take a .50-caliber machine gun and rake a blast over them. Do you follow me? And then all of the sudden, there'd be



a bunch of activity and cussing and raising hell going on. "You guys knock over there, dammit! We're trying to set up a gun emplacement over here!" There was that kind of thing, but... fortunately, I don't know to this day...I don't know whether we killed very many of our own comrades that night or not.

Marcello: What did you do in the days following the attack? The days and weeks following the attack.

James: For a few days' time, I worked in that tent mess hall until they were able to clean the other mess hall up and go back to a routine of serving meals. But primarily, I worked the little tent mess hall that had been set up next to Battleship Row. Then I went back down to the main barracks mess hall, and then was told that I was reassigned back to my squadron. Then I went back down there to work.

Marcello: You may have mentioned this, and I didn't catch it. Where did you sleep that night of the 7th? Did you sleep at the hangar or... no, you didn't sleep. You were out on that...I'm sorry...you were out manning that machine gun.

James: The night of the attack?

Marcello: Yes.

James: No, I stayed all night on that station.

Marcello: And where did you then sleep when you finally did get some sleep in the next days and so on?

James: I went back to the barracks.

Marcello: Back to the barracks,

James: Yes.

Marcello: When did you finally leave Pearl?

James: I left Pearl Harbor in the summer of 1941, right after the Battle of Midway. My squadron was broken into a different...a break-up of units. They turned VP-24--a segment of it--into a Black Cat squadron. It went down to Noumea and that type thing, and whatever went down with...the ground crews and the pilots that went down with the Black Cat squadron went on into the South Pacific. The other segment of it, which was comprised primarily of metal-smiths and that type of people, were transferred over to Hedron Eight at Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii. So I went over in the summer of 1942 to Kaneohe Bay and was then made part of what they called Hedron Eight--Headquarters Squadron Eight--which was primarily again a patrol squadron, and then I spent many months at Kaneohe.

Marcello: In those days following the attack, and as you had a chance to perhaps look at things a little bit more objectively, what were your thoughts or your feelings at that point, that is, when you saw the destruction and everything that had been done?

James: Well, as I remember, I just wondered how in the world...you know, things that were significant that went through my mind is, "How are we going to piece all this thing back together and get it in an operating condition?" That meant my own squadron, which was devastated by the loss of its airplanes, and then all the ships that you could see just literally bombed out of existence and knowing that it was going to take a long time to repair them. And I had

a sense of maybe if they've had the audacity to come in and pull this off,..and there was still something left there, and even today I wonder why--like all historians wonder why--the old admiral of the Japanese fleet didn't go along with his senior aviator and come back in and make that afternoon or evening raid, you know, which they talk about later on in history now, about how they didn't get the fuel storage tanks and things like that.

But, you know, it was just a beehive of activities that kept you tremendously busy. We went on short rations, which meant two meals a day, and primarily that consisted, say, of a cheese sandwich and a half of an apple twice a day, see, because they did not know, for instance, whether we were going to have a return of the Japanese fleet or not, and they didn't know how soon the West Coast would be able to resupply us. So we went on short rations and were building up to the best of our ability without stateside help.

Marcello: I know that a lot of the men have mentioned that they had a feeling of anger much more than fear in the aftermath of the attack when they realized what had been done and who had done it and all that sort of thing.

James: Yes, I probably had that same sense or feeling about me. It was not so much fear or anything but a tremendous amount of anger, you know, just thinking, "How in God's name could something like this happen?"

Marcello: I have one last question, Why is it that some forty-plus years

later you are a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association?

James: Well, I joined one of the earlier Pearl Harbor Survivors Associations that was called the Pacific Survivors, and that particular organization was formed, as I recall, sometime in the 1950's. The requirement of that organization was that you had to be in the Pacific Theatre at the day of the attack. That would take in Guam, Wake, and everybody, and I joined it and participated in it for a very short period of time and then bowed out of it. I went to one of their conventions.

But I happened to be reading somewhere in just the last few years about the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. I think it was an article in the Dallas paper, and it listed the national secretary living, I think, in Oregon or something, so I got on the telephone and called him and told him that I was a survivor and that I wanted to probably participate in the organization and everything. So I made plans to go ahead and join, which I did, and I became a life member of it. I paid my dues for a life membership in it and everything.

Probably the overriding reason, though, for me wanting to join is that I had told my wife that many years before I passed on from this earth, I wanted to go back one time, and if that was at all possible, I wanted to take her with me, also, you know. I wanted to visit Ford Island. So the fortieth anniversary coincided with that thing very well in my planning because my wife and I went and spent fifteen days in Hawaii, and five of those days

was at the fortieth anniversary type of thing.

I had been planning this several months prior to the convention, so I said, "If I'm going to go back I want it...." And I had a fear, knowing the military and everything, that being a civilian now, since Ford Island is surrounded by water, it wouldn't be easy to walk over to it or something or get on the base at all, and I didn't know what security was or anything. So I wrote the commanding officer of Pearl Harbor and told him that I had planned on going to Hawaii and that I was bringing my wife with me; and that the last time of my visit to Pearl Harbor was with the Third Fleet at the end of World War II with Admiral Halsey bringing the fleet there and returning to the West Coast; and that I'd not returned since then; and that one of the highlights of that trip would be for me to have the opportunity to visit Ford Island.

Then because I had some other associations later on in the war at Kaneohe, I wrote the commanding officer at Kaneohe and told him the same thing, that I wanted to visit the old Kaneohe Naval Air Station. It's a Marine air station now.

I got letters back from not them directly but their public relations officers, saying everything would be done that would be possible to make my and my wife's trip an enjoyable one. They gave me an escort at both bases and let me do anything and go anywhere I wanted to go. We had a terrific time.

Marcello: How had Ford Island changed?

James: Surprisingly, not as much as I thought it would have because, you know, my old hangar was still there...all the old seaplane hangars. But, you know, I thought of it having gone through the Korean War and Vietnam War and that type thing that it would have been built up five times what it was when I was there, but it wasn't. It was very, very little difference from the time that I was there until now, and it is now not operated as a air station at all. The air station at the fortieth anniversary was used as what aviation people know as a touch and go landing-type thing for practice landings and for small airplanes and all. The hangar is not used today to the best of my knowledge. Most of the windows were broken out of it, and it's kind of in a shattered-up type of condition and everything--at least most of the seaplane hangars and that type of thing that I associated with were. But my old barracks was still standing there and still billeting sailors--submarine sailors today instead of aviation men. It was a sub school.

The amusing thing about it was going up into that barracks after some forty years, literally, later...and I said, "Well, I'm going to go up and look where my old bunk was," you know, but that whole interior of that barracks had been changed from what I knew, with row after row of bunks. It had been broken up into hotel-type rooms now today as opposed to single beds and everything. Literally, it had a hallway like you'd walk down in a room and all. But the exterior of the building looked exactly

as it did back then except the palm trees that were out in front of it today weren't as big as they are now. They were small palm trees then.

Marcello: Okay, well that's probably a pretty good place to end this interview, Mr. James. I want to thank you very much for participating. You've said a lot of very interesting and, I think, important things, and I'm sure that students and scholars are going to find your comments most valuable.

James: Well, I appreciate you taking the time to come by and interview me. It's something that, like you said earlier, I've always wanted to do, but not having writing abilities, I don't know how I'd ever accomplish it. So I'll let you do that job for me, and I appreciate you coming and doing it.

\*Note: Mr. James was aboard the battleship USS Alabama patrolling outside Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, when the Japanese government signed the formal surrender documents aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.