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Interview with  
ISAAC BREEDLOVE  
April 26, 1986

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas  
Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello  
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Oral History Collection

Isaac D. Breedlove

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello      Date of Interview: April 26, 1986

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Isaac D. Breedlove for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 26, 1986, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Breedlove in order to get his reminiscences and experiences while he was at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack there and at the other military installations in the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941. Mr. Breedlove was a member of Company I, 35th Infantry, 25th Division.

Mr. Breedlove, 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. Breedlove: I was born on February 1, 1920, in Sylacauga, Alabama.

Dr. Marcello: Tell a little bit about your education.

Mr. Breedlove: My formal education ended at about the eighth grade. I finished after I got out of the Army, at the age of twenty-five.

Marcello: When did you enter the service?

Breedlove: May 6, 1937, at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the service at that time?

Breedlove: In those days there was no work; and I came from a broken home, and I wasn't getting three meals a day a lot of times. I was here in Louisiana at the time, and then I went back to Alabama. I found out that a friend of mine had joined the Army, so I joined the Army.

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

Breedlove: I guess it was just the power of suggestion. When this friend of mine joined the Army, I joined the Army.

Marcello: Economic reasons are given by a lot of people of your generation for having entered the service. That was, of course, during the time of the Great Depression, and like you say, the Army offered three square meals a day and a roof over your head. The pay wasn't very good, but it was still something.

Breedlove: The pay was very good. I stayed twenty-five months in Panama and got paid \$560.

Marcello: \$560.

Breedlove: For twenty-five months at Fort Clayton, Panama Canal Zone.

Marcello: Where did you take your basic training?

Breedlove: Fort Clayton, Canal Zone.

Marcello: Was that unusual to send people there for basic training?

Breedlove: On those days the Army had no basic training center. We had Panama, Alaska, Hawaii, Philippines, and China. In China you had to have previous service. At these other bases, what they would do is that they'd enlist a bunch of men, put them on a ship, and send them there. Then they'd take all those men and detail them noncoms to give them their training. That continued up until about the time that they started drafting people in the Army. Before that the Army had no basic training center.

Marcello: How did you end up in Panama? Were you simply sent there, or was that where you wanted to go?

Breedlove: I enlisted for Panama. We was put on a train in Anniston, Alabama, to Charleston, South Carolina. I went aboard the U.S. Army Transport Chateau-Thierry and went to the Panama Canal. We transited the Canal, and I got off at Balboa on the Pacific side. I stayed there twenty-five months.

Marcello: Why did you want to go to Panama?

Breedlove: I guess because at the time they was getting a bunch of people to send there. Like I said, when I had been told this friend had enlisted in the Army and was going to Panama, I enlisted in the Army to go to Panama. I was seventeen years old.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in your training there at Fort Clayton that you think that we need to get as part of the record, or was it the more or less the normal

Army training?

Breedlove: It was a normal Army training. The only problem I had was them trying to teach me to march. I was raising my feet too high (chuckle), like these kids do in these school bands. That was the only problem I had.

Marcello: How long did the training last approximately?

Breedlove: Five weeks.

Marcello: Describe how you eventually got to the Hawaiian Islands.

Breedlove: I stayed in Panama for twenty-five months. I left Panama in April, 1939. I came up to San Francisco and was discharged. I wanted to go to Alaska. I was only nineteen years old, and I had to have parental consent to reenlist. I sent the papers to them, and they knew that if they did sign them, I wasn't coming back. So they didn't send the papers. I came back across the country to the Shreveport area, and I tried to reenlist, but there was no openings there. I got some papers in Monroe, and then I went back to Shreveport. I rode a freight train to Sylacauga, and then I went up to Anniston, to Fort McClellan, and reenlisted. At the time I wanted to go to the Philippine Islands. There was no opening there. Actually, there were no openings at all in the Army, but having had previous service, they gave me a special assignment to the Hawaiian Islands.

Marcello: Let me back up a second. You mentioned earlier that when you were in San Francisco, the Army didn't want to send

your papers home because they didn't think you'd come back.

Breedlove: I got the papers to send to my mother, and she wouldn't sign them because she knew that if she did, I had in mind then going to Alaska.

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: I came from a broken home. I was never around her, anyway.

Marcello: How long was your initial enlistment?

Breedlove: The first enlistment was twenty-five months...

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: ...from 1937 to 1939. Then sometime in the fall of 1939, I reenlisted. We was put on a troop train again in Anniston, Alabama. I went back to Charleston, South Carolina, and went aboard the U.S. Army Transport Republic. We went to Panama and transited the Canal. I stopped there and visited some people that I knew. Then we went up to San Francisco. We disembarked, and we went over to Angel Island for a few days and then went back aboard ship. Then we went on to Honolulu.

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

Breedlove: I liked it. To me the Army was going to be my life. It was the only thing I knew. And I liked it. I had all intentions of staying.

Marcello: When you got to the Hawaiian Islands, did you go directly to Schofield Barracks at that point?

Breedlove: I went to the Hawaiian Islands when I reenlisted. I had a

choice of ordnance and quartermaster. I chose the Quartermaster Corps with no intention of staying in it. I was assigned to Fort Armstrong. It's in downtown Honolulu. I stayed down there approximately three months. Somewhere-- I think it was around January, 1940--I transferred to Schofield.

Marcello: You mentioned that you went into the Quartermaster Corps, but you had no intention of staying. Why did you decide to go in it if you had no intention of staying?

Breedlove: As I said, I got a special assignment to reenlist, and I had a choice of quartermaster or ordnance. That was the only thing that was open. I just took the first one I thought of with the intention...to me, if you wasn't in the infantry, if you wasn't in a line outfit, you wasn't in the Army.

Marcello: So when the first opportunity came to get in a line outfit, that's when you transferred to Schofield Barracks.

Breedlove: Right. I stayed there at Fort Armstrong awhile. They had me working at a warehouse. I didn't like that. I asked the warrant officer if I could have a day off. I told him what I wanted to do. He said, "Well, I think you'd make a good infantryman." I transferred, and I went to Schofield. I first went to I Company, 27th Infantry; they agreed to take me. Then I changed my mind and went to I Company, 35th Infantry. I talked to the company commander and told him



I had prior service, and then he agreed. The quartermaster agreed because I wasn't much good to them.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about Schofield Barracks. As I recall, it was perhaps the largest Army installation in the world at that time, wasn't it?

Breedlove: I think it was. It was the last of the square divisions. That consisted of four infantry regiments--19th, 21st, 27th, and 35th--and I think there was three regiments of artillery with 75-millimeter howitzers, and there was one with 155-millimeter howitzers (the old "Long Tom").

Marcello: Describe what your living quarters were like there at Schofield Barracks.

Breedlove: In the barracks there was two floors. The whole thing was open--just one big auditorium. There in Panama we had double bunks. At Schofield we had single bunks. The bunks were lined up in rows. There was the bathroom, shower, and all that. The squad room was cleaned and mopped daily. When you walked in, it looked more like motel--the way it was kept--than it did a place for troops. Everything had to be just right.

Marcello: These living quarters were referred to as quadrangles, isn't that correct?

Breedlove: No, the quadrangles...you had four buildings like this (gesture). You had the 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion, and the fourth section of the quad was Headquarters. On each

corner, there was an entrance to the quadrangle, and where Headquarters was, the fourth building, you had to the sallyport or the entrance. That's where the regiment headquarters, etc., was.

Marcello: So those were not, then, where you actually lived and slept and so on.

Breedlove: In the barracks, yes.

Marcello: Right. But the barracks were a part of one of the quadrangles.

Breedlove: Right. We had four quads, 27th Infantry, 35th Infantry, 19th Infantry, and 21st Infantry. But on the other end, there wasn't quads. It was more open.

Marcello: What kind of people did you get in the Army there at Schofield during the pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Breedlove: Well, it had a lot of rural people. Of course, there were a lot of people from the East Coast. They wasn't rural. As far as education, it was high school or below. The people themselves--to get along with so far as their cleanliness and their personality--was basically good.

Marcello: Why did most people enter the service?

Breedlove: Like I say, there was a lot of them in those days that was there for financial reasons--no work during the Depression. We hadn't come out of the Depression until World War II. Of course, that's what got us out of it.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, you eventually ended up in Company I, 35th Infantry, 25th Division. What kind of work were you

doing within the company?

Breedlove: Of course, we went to the grade of private, then a short while after that to private first class, then to corporal, and finally to squad leader. From that you went to sergeant of a heavy weapons platoon. The heavy weapons platoon consisted of three mortars and three light machine guns.

Marcello: So that was your general progression, then, in the company.

Breedlove: In that company at the time, yes.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, this was a regular line company.

Breedlove: Right.

Marcello: It was designed to do the usual sort of work that an infantry outfit would do.

Breedlove: Right. Your assignment in battle was either on the front line, or you was back of the front line in reserve where you could be shifted around to any weak point or wherever you wanted to make a great effort or wherever you were getting hit hard and they needed reinforcements.

Marcello: As one gets closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, could you detect any changes in your training routine?

Breedlove: We went into more training of handling civilian uprisings.

Marcello: In other words, you were concerned about sabotage on the part of Japanese living on the islands?

Breedlove: Right. In June, 1941, we went on an alert. They had lost track of the Japanese Navy. We were issued live ammunition

and helmets--first time since World War I. General Short interpreted the intelligence that he got from Washington as meaning that he must watch out for local uprisings. They was worried about the Japanese, first and second generation, because they were predominant on the island.

Marcello: What did you specifically do in your outfit relative to preparing for possibility of sabotage?

Breedlove: When we went on alert, we started doing more riot duty, riot training, and handling mobs, which was a minor part of our training up to that time. We had guard positions on strategic bridges, highways, etc. I was on a bridge. I had a detail on a bridge which was designated as Bridge 42. It was right next to Pearl City.

The local Japanese and Filipinos did a lot of gardening --truck gardening. Near us, across the highway, across Kamehaneha Highway, the Filipinos had some stuff. Next to us there was a beautiful vegetable garden. Like any bunch of guys, we had all we wanted to eat, but we'd go at night and steal their vegetables.

This one night, one guy saw a woman watching him out of a building there, so he wanted to talk to her. He went up and knocked on the door, and she didn't come to the door. A man came to the door. It kind of startled him. He asked the man for a match, and the man gave him a match. He was a Japanese. After the war started, they picked those people up.

In the back of the house, they had a chicken coop. It must have been thirty or forty feet long and about ten or so feet high, and I don't remember how wide. It was completely enclosed with wire with some type of vines growing on it. What it was, they had their radio antenna in the chicken wire. Obviously, they were transmitting, but we didn't know that at the time.

Marcello: Is it safe to say--and correct me if I'm wrong--that most of your training from June onward, then, was to prevent or guard against sabotage?

Breedlove: Right, right.

Marcello: In other words, that became more important than the usual sorts of military things that a line company would be doing?

Breedlove: Right.

Marcello: That's an interesting point.

Breedlove: Right, right. Well, you see, I don't remember when it was, but sometime between June and the time the war started, we had a critique (which we had frequently). There was an FBI agent who told us that they knew all the Japanese spies on the island. What the Japanese would do, they would put these people in the reserves, army or navy reserves. If you captured them, they were prisoners-of-war as opposed to a spy to be shot. He told us, then, if anything happened before they had time to do anything, they would round them up and put them on Ford Island. That's the island in Pearl Harbor.

They had them in what amounted to a concentration camp. As far as I know--we were too busy after it started--there was no sabotage. They rounded those people up. Our regimental barber was a major in the Japanese Army. We had a little place--I think they called it Lilihu--on the edge of Schofield Barracks where we used to go quite a bit and drink Japanese beer.

Marcello: It wasn't Wahiawa was it?

Breedlove: No, Wahiawa was on the other side. We would drink this Japanese beer. Then when the war started, they picked this man up because he had a transmitter in his basement.

Marcello: That's kind of interesting that the whole shift...that this shift occurred in your training from doing what a line company would normally do to this anti-sabotage type of work.

Breedlove: You'll ask the question, "If you were on the alert, why'd you get caught?" We were on the alert for a local uprising, and all the planes were put on the apron in the field where you could defend them from the ground. They didn't come from the ground (chuckle).

Marcello: When you thought of an individual Japanese during that time before Pearl Harbor, what sort of an individual did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Breedlove: Well, I didn't think much of them, only the fact that they were meek little people. If you would meet a bunch of young ones as one man alone, you might get beat up--the

local people. Other than that, I didn't give them much thought.

Marcello: Let me ask you a few more questions relative to life at Schofield Barracks. What role did sports and athletics play in the life of the Army there at Schofield Barracks at that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Breedlove: It was everything. There was so much rivalry and so much competition, and a lot of it even would come down through the commanding officer. He must have the best boxing team in the regiment, or the regimental commander must have the best boxing team, football team, track team. To induce people to go out for these sports, they was rewarded a lot with rates.

Marcello: What sort of resentment did this cause?

Breedlove: To me, there was none. I was promoted very soon after I got there. I was a noncommissioned officer most of the time I was in the Army. It didn't bother me. That did not mean that you could not be a noncommissioned officer unless you did that, that is, if you wasn't a boxer or whatever. But they got preference.

Marcello: You mentioned boxing. Boxing was a very, very big sport in the Army during that period, wasn't it?

Breedlove: It was. They had a boxing bowl there that (chuckle) was bigger than a lot in this country. It was like Madison Square Garden.

Marcello: And the so-called smokers were well attended?

Breedlove: Right, right. The times that you come to it, it had a man fighting. If your company had a good man fighting, the company might line up and march in company strength to the match. But football was the main thing.

Marcello: Football was even more important than boxing?

Breedlove: Football in Schofield Barracks--I don't know about the rest of the Army--was the roughest ball played in the world.

Marcello: How widespread was gambling on the post during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Breedlove: As far as I'm concerned, it was nominal. There might have been games going on someplace that I knew nothing about. I always took the position that I didn't want you to tell me what a good time you had on my money, so I didn't gamble. In the barracks there might be what they called a penny-ante game--just for fun. They might even be playing for matchsticks.

Marcello: How active was loan-sharking in the service during that period?

Breedlove: Almost every company had one or two guys that would loan money. It was frowned on. They would loan \$5 for \$6 returned--20 percent.

Marcello: The so-called "20 percent men."

Breedlove: Right. Every company had them. The guys wouldn't necessarily borrow money from a man in their own company; it might be another man. At payday this guy would come by with his



little notepad looking for his money, scratching it off.

There was quite a bit of that.

Marcello: What was the Army's policy toward gambling and loan-sharking?

Breedlove: In most cases, if it was reported...they knew it was going on, but so long as it caused no problems, they did nothing about it. But if someone complained, I've know of sergeants getting reduced to privates, etc., for loan-sharking. Again, that depended on the company commander's personality. If he didn't like it, well, then he would do something about it. But so long as there was no complaint...they knew it was going on. The guy would just borrow \$5, go down to Honolulu, get a few drinks, and that was it.

Marcello: What sort of entertainment was there for the troops on the base itself?

Breedlove: Other than sports, there was about four or five theaters, and there was a lot of beer gardens.

Marcello: How much was beer at that time?

Breedlove: It was 10¢ to 15¢.

Marcello: For a bottle?

Breedlove: A bottle. Some beer we got from the West Coast was 15¢, and the local beer was 10¢.

Marcello: Was that Primo?

Breedlove: Primo, right. At most of these beer gardens, you could get a salami sandwich or a small hamburger for a nickel. When you'd go to the beer garden, they didn't handle money. You'd

buy tickets at the gate. We'd go in, and we'd buy a string of tickets long as your arm. You'd put them on the table, and you'd never touch them. The waiters was Filipinos or Japanese or whatever. When the bottles were empty, they brought another round and picked up whatever tickets they needed. A lot of times, we'd go in the beer garden at noon and stay there until they closed at 11:30 that night. You'd just drink and talk.

Marcello: You could go in the beer garden as early as noon?

Breedlove: After recall, unless you had duty in the afternoon. You could go and do whatever you wanted to.

Marcello: For the most part, were you on tropical work hours there at Schofield Barracks?

Breedlove: Right.

Marcello: When you talk about recall, what is this?

Breedlove: The troops are training, and they're recalled to the barracks at, I think, 11:30. If you was in sound of the bugle--the bugle would blow Recall--you'd go back to the barracks. Everybody was dismissed. Then you'd take a bath, eat lunch, and if you wasn't on some special detail, you was through for the rest of the day.

Marcello: That was pretty good duty there.

Breedlove: Oh, yes.

Marcello: What would you do off base? What was the forms of recreation off base?

Breedlove: Just plainly put, the bars and the whorehouses.

Marcello: Where would you normally go for those activities?

Breedlove: Honolulu.

Marcello: Is it not true that prostitution was legal in Honolulu during that period?

Breedlove: Yes, it was. These girls in those houses were physically checked monthly by Army doctors. Anyone found to have any type of disease had no contact until it was cleared up.

Marcello: What significance does the little town close by have, and I'm referring to Wahiawa? Was there anything to do over there?

Breedlove: No, not other than just...at one time there was a skating rink there. It had some bars, and there was one cathouse there.

Marcello: How often would you be able to go into Honolulu?

Breedlove: That depended on how much money you had. They used the old limosine-type taxis with a pop-up seat. It was 50¢ to go to Honolulu and 50¢ to come back. Anytime after recall until reveille the next morning, you could do what you pleased. We had no bed check.

Marcello: I do know that one started out at \$21 a month. What were you making at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, since you were a non-com by then?

Breedlove: I made \$42.

Marcello: You made \$42 a month.

Breedlove: Yes, \$42 a month. And I was a rich man (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to those days immediately prior to the attack. Let's talk about that weekend of December 7, 1941. Do you recall what you were doing on that Friday and Saturday prior to December 7?

Breedlove: At the time I was a drill instructor. I had been detailed to train men. Some guys had just come over there, and some had been discharged. They couldn't send Selective Service people overseas. Some was discharged, and then some from the Selective Service came over to the Regular Army, and they were sent there. I was training those, and I had them at Waianae doing antiaircraft work. We had a plane, and we'd tow a sleeve behind it, and we'd fire at the sleeve. We very seldom hit it.

Marcello: So this was kind of like a form of advanced training for these people.

Breedlove: Right.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, these people had originally come through the Army in the Selective Service, and then when their year was up, they had reenlisted in the Army.

Breedlove: No. They were discharged from the Selective Service because they wanted to go overseas...wanted to go to the Hawaiian Islands. They came over, and we ran them back through.

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: As far as the night before the attack...Waianae was on the west side of the island. We'd been drinking white port wine

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just about all night, and the next morning, when this whole thing happened, I had a gallon of white port wine that I buried out there in the sand. As far as I know, it's still there.

Marcello: Why did you go to Waianae as opposed to some other place on that Saturday?

Breedlove: I was on duty.

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: We'd had this class of recruits. We were there giving them antiaircraft training. We were due to be there until sometime the following week.

Marcello: Where were you drinking this port wine?

Breedlove: I don't know. Some little native joint along the beach there.

Marcello: So were you staying over at Waianae, too, or were you coming back into Schofield Barracks?

Breedlove: The men stayed over there, and I went back to Schofield.

Marcello: What time did you get back to Schofield that night?

Breedlove: I have no idea.

Marcello: What sort of shape were you in?

Breedlove: I wasn't feeling too bad, I don't believe (chuckle).

Marcello: Let me ask you this, and I probably should have asked you this earlier. Normally, on a Saturday night, how much drinking would be going on, let's say, either off the base or on the base?

Breedlove: Well, that again would depend on your financial situation.

As far as the beer garden, that was an ongoing thing. As far as a lot of drunkenness, there wasn't a lot. There was some drunkenness. But we'd go into the beer garden... a bunch of guys would go and sit down and just drink and talk. You might be there for hours and hours just drinking and talking.

Marcello: How about among the officers?

Breedlove: I'm not sure. They had the officers' club on the other end of the post, and they went there quite a bit. The only time I was ever there was as a color guard in the general's daughter's wedding, but that was a couple of years before the attack. I don't remember ever seeing an officer drunk. No doubt they did, but I never seen it.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Were there very many people on the base that night of December 6?

Breedlove: There was very few people who stayed off the base at night. The only way you stayed off is if you got a three-day pass or something like this. We had some men that were probably in town, but basically the places closed around 11:00, and they'd get a taxi and go home. A few would go to the YMCA and stay, and as far as any staying with women, there would be very few.

Marcello: Would you be able to hear people straggling back into the barracks at all hours on a Saturday night?

Breedlove: Yes, but not as excessive as you would think.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, and I want you to go into as much detail as you can remember concerning activities. I'll let you pick up the story at this point.

Breedlove: That morning, as was customary on Sunday morning, we would have fried eggs for breakfast. I don't remember the breakfasts otherwise. We'd come on the outside, and we'd line up and come through the kitchen, take the eggs off the grill. We'd go into the mess hall, and in those days the Army fed family-style. Everything was put on the table.

Wheeler Field was about...I doubt if it was a thousand yards away from us. Of course, it was an Army pursuit plane base, what you'd call then a fighter plane. We heard all these planes diving and their motors straining. They were making a lot of noise. Then we heard the explosions, and, of course, we had no idea what was going on.

Marcello: When you heard all this activity over there at Wheeler Field, what did you do? Did you go to the windows to look or anything of that nature?

Breedlove: Myself, I was outside.

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: And, of course, we looked in the direction of the noise, and we could see these planes just keep piling in there one after another.

Marcello: Were there obstructions between you and the field itself?

Breedlove: Right. There were trees, and there was one two-story barrack of the other quadrangle that was between us and them. We'd see them coming over. They wasn't very high when they'd make their bomb runs--the dive-bombing. When we realized what was going on...they would pull out of their dive after they released their bombs, and then they would come over us strafing.

Marcello: Describe this.

Breedlove: Some of these planes was coming at you, and you heard this machine gun. You saw grass digging up in the ground on the quadrangle ahead of you. Then you realized something was bad wrong. We went in, and the supply sergeant, in our case, wasn't there. At night our arms was kept in a rack, locked. We kept very little ammunition at the barracks. The only ammo we had was for training. It was lead, and it had a low powder content for the projectile. We broke into the supply room, we got ammunition, and we went outside, and we started firing.

Marcello: Was there any hesitation about breaking into the supply room?

Breedlove: No, no, no. We just did it.

Marcello: Up to this point, did you know these were Japanese planes, or did you simply know that these were planes that shouldn't have been there?

Breedlove: We assumed they were because after the first ones went over strafing, we could see this rising sun. That's not what we



called it, but you don't want that on the tape.

Marcello: You called it the "flaming red asshole," didn't you (chuckle).

Breedlove: Yes. Yes, that's exactly what we called it. We saw that, and we already knew we were having a problem with Japan. We set up a heavy .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun on the barracks.

Marcello: You set it up on the roof?

Breedlove: On the roof. We had a planning training officer there, Major Bush; he was an old man. In those days ratings didn't come fast. When you got to be a major, you was an old man. He made us take the machine gun down. He was so confused that he didn't know what was going on, either. We had to take the machine gun down off the barracks and quit firing.

There was one guy who was firing a Browning Automatic Rifle, and he hit a plane. It had come over, and as it was leaving, he hit it. The thing left us going in the direction of Kole Kole pass--smoking. Incidentally, in 1981, I found out what happened to it. It crashed there.

Marcello: Okay, let me just back up here a second and get these things in some order because I have a few questions to ask. You mention that you break into the ordnance shack, and you get ammunition. Did you form some sort of a line out there to fire at these planes as they come in, or was every man just firing by himself?

Breedlove: You were just standing there firing at random--just a group of men firing at random.

Marcello: What were you using? Springfield rifles?

Breedlove: No, we was using the M-1.

Marcello: Oh, you did have the M-1 at that time.

Breedlove: We had the M-1 by that time. We had had the M-1 rifle, I guess, maybe a year. We had turned in the Springfield and took the M-1.

Marcello: How long were you doing that firing?

Breedlove: It seemed like about two days, but it was about five minutes (chuckle).

Marcello: About how many rounds do you think you expended?

Breedlove: I don't know. I reloaded several times, and each clip held eight rounds.

Marcello: Were most of these planes firing at personnel on the ground or at buildings as they came over, or were they simply coming over after having made their passes at Wheeler Field?

Breedlove: They made their bounding run on Wheeler, and they came out of their run, and they went from one end of Schofield Barracks to another at a very low altitude, strafing.

Marcello: How low would you estimate these planes were flying?

Breedlove: They wasn't over a hundred yards.

Marcello: Off the ground.

Breedlove: Right.

Marcello: Could you distinguish the pilots?

Breedlove: I don't recall seeing an individual. Most of the time, we were directly under them...

Marcello: I see.

Breedlove: ...and all you saw was the bottom of the fuselage.

Marcello: Okay, so you're firing for about five minutes at these planes. What happens at that point?

Breedlove: Afterwards?

Marcello: Yes.

Breedlove: After that then...let's see. I think they sounded an alert. The company assembled. Of course, everything was just spontaneous. It sounds funny after an attack to sound an alert. After sounding the alert, every man returned to his own company, and he got his full field gear, which you always had certain equipment for full field gear. You kept it on top of your locker, and you were ready to go. You never used it for anything except that. Everyone got into their full field gear, and then a short time after that, we left Schofield.

Every company had certain places, defensive areas--some on the beach, some in the mountains. You had primary and your secondary defensive areas. We went on the beach near Waianae, and I Company was held in reserve. The other companies went on the beach. They dug little holes in the sand and set up their machine guns. One belt of ammunition was good for five minutes. That was the condition we were

in for the biggest part of the first day.

Marcello: So your particular unit, then, did not get involved in any anti-sabotage alert and so on.

Breedlove: Well, no. Some companies went on the beach. We were back a little ways from the beach. We went under martial law. We were assigned certain areas to patrol. We had a total blackout. I had a squad and a weapons carrier. If there were certain areas where lights were reported, we went and got them out. After a few trips like that, we didn't tell them to turn them out; we shot them out.

There was a few Japanese clubhouses and things like that. We'd shoot the door open and go in. What we were looking for was names in these clubs, where we could get their leaders--whether they were hostile or whether they wasn't. In this one incident, a Filipino reported a Japanese in a building near the cane field around midnight. This lieutenant took me and my patrol, and we went down around 9:00 at night instead of at 12:00 when they purportedly were having their meetings. We deployed around their building, put two men on each window with hand grenades. The officer and I went to the door, and we shot the lock open. The guys on the windows had orders that if anything moved inside, each one was to lob their grenades in the window and get down out of the way. We got in the place, and it was empty. Of course, we was three hours ahead of time, anyway. I went

back that night at midnight when they was supposed to be having their meeting, but, of course, if they were going to have it, they wouldn't then. I always thought the officer was kind of scared to go at the right time.

Marcello: When you say these were Japanese clubhouses, what sort of clubs would these be? Social clubs or what?

Breedlove: I suppose they were. I'm really not familiar with that.

I know one night one of our patrols reported lights offshore. It was on a very small peninsula, and we went on a truck. About the last half of a mile, we walked in, and we deployed and watched and watched and could see the lights there. We finally decided that the waves were breaking against the rocks, and it was phosphorous. So we all happily went home.

Marcello: What were some of the rumors that were floating around that night of December 7?

Breedlove: That they had dropped paratroopers. And there was rumors that in the cane field, the local people were cutting arrows pointing in a certain direction. This was a very stupid rumor because from 500 feet up you could see the whole island. That was very stupid. There was nothing of that. There was supposed to have been paratroopers landing and gliders coming in. As a defense against that, on all the open fields, they erected poles and things like that. On any airstrip, they put oil drums--staggered them all over. If anything

would come in, of course, they would pile up on that.

Marcello: Did you believe these rumors?

Breedlove: At first you didn't know what to believe. You was a little skeptical of anything. We had jokes about everything from Japanese submarines to lister bags. A lister bag was a bag with a little faucet on, and you kept your water in it.

Marcello: Actually, the attack on Schofield itself didn't last but about fifteen or twenty minutes, did it?

Breedlove: It didn't last very long.

Marcello: Like you mentioned, they were mainly strafing after they had done their damage at Wheeler Field.

Breedlove: That's right. Well, you see, this Japanese officer...I'm not going to remember his name, but I read his book. Of course, I've read everything that's ever been written about that war out there. On that initial strike, they first hit Wheeler Field, and then next they hit Hickam Field. He didn't specify that sequence. Their first objective was to knock out the air force. They knocked out Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Bellows Field. Of course, they hit Ford Island, which was a naval air station; Ewa, which was Marines; Kaneohe, which was a naval air station with mostly float planes, PBY's and stuff of that nature.

Marcello: What'd you guys talk about that night when you were in reserve out there in the beach area?

Breedlove: Gosh, I don't remember, other than just the normal bull.

Marcello: How safe was it to walk around?

Breedlove: Well, it was relatively safe there, but you must remember that I was a few hundred yards off the beach. On the beach anything that was above ground at night you shot at it.

Marcello: Could you hear firing going on all night?

Breedlove: Very seldom. This outfit was Regular Army with hard-disciplined troops. There was some places where there was a lot of sporadic firing, but not in my area.

Marcello: Did you have much of an appetite that day?

Breedlove: I don't remember that. I probably didn't.

Marcello: Were you fed out in the field?

Breedlove: At this moment I don't even remember eating. I just know we came from Schofield, came over Kole Kole Pass, down through the naval ammunition dump, and went in our preassigned defensive areas.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of other people say that they became extremely thirsty under those kinds of stress conditions. Did you notice if that was a symptom that affected you?

Breedlove: If it was, I don't recall it. I probably wasn't aware of it. I had been in the Army so long, and these things had been pounded into us. Of course, we hadn't confronted a situation like that. It was pounded into us so long to react. Don't think; react. If you take time to think, you're dead. You don't think about a situation; you react to it.

Marcello: What did you do the next day and in the day that followed?

Breedlove: The next few days, of course, like I said, we was in reserve. Well, one thing is that near this naval ammunition dump there was two buildings that Japanese people lived in. We moved those people out and completely destroyed the buildings. We took the buildings down. We lived then in underground bunkers, as long as they was watching us; otherwise, we got on top and slept on top of the ground.

Marcello: So did you not move back into the barracks, themselves, for several days?

Breedlove: No. On January 2, I left Honolulu. Well, a Lieutenant Strock came up to me one time. He was fresh out of West Point and a very good man. He asked me how I'd like to be in a landing craft going into hostile territory. I told him, "I wouldn't mind it." A few days later, he comes and says, "Well, you got your wish. You're going on a secret mission." I didn't wish to go on a secret mission (chuckle). We left Honolulu on January 6, on an inner island steamer. There was twenty-five men from the 19th Infantry, 27th Infantry, 35th Infantry, and the 21st. We had one old French 75-millimeter on this inner island steamer. That was our armament. We went to Canton Island and down to the Phoenix group. We were to build up a defense of the island until reinforcements arrived. Eight hundred miles away there was 200,000 Japanese in the Marshall Islands. That was one of the



bases when they were ferrying planes to MacArthur. They would come in to Hickam Field; they would either go to Palmyra or Christmas; they'd go to Canton Island, go to Spiritu Santo, Hebrides, New Caledonia, and then on in. They were building an airstrip on Canton Island. We went down there to set up a defense. We stayed there three months. The Connecticut National Guard relieved us, and we went back to the islands, back to Oahu. We never went back to Schofield.

Marcello: Is that right?

Breedlove: I remember one time months and months later, we was relieved off the beach, and when we went back, we were supposed to be going back for rest. We stayed a few days, and then we started taking more training. After I got back from Canton Island, I went on beach positions--took over two gun positions between Pearl Harbor and Barber's Point.

Marcello: I guess that life in the Army after December 7 was a whole lot different than life in the Army before December 7.

Breedlove: Life in the Army before that was good. It was real good. But to me, as opposed to people that was drafted in, that was my home. That's all I knew. Wherever that company was, I was at home. It didn't bother me at all.

Marcello: I guess there were no more half-days.

Breedlove: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. That was all over.

Marcello: Did you make the Army a career?

Breedlove: No. I stayed in eight years, and when I left we were on

Luzon in the Philippines. We was fighting Yamashita. He was trying to get his troops up on the north end of the island to evacuate them. He was fighting one hell of a beautiful rear guard action. By the time we'd knock out one roadblock, he'd have another one for us. Just on the spur of the moment, I asked for a furlough. I'd never had a furlough. By that time, I'd been in the Pacific five years and eight months. I was a first three-grader, and there was no way you could get back on rotation; they wasn't going to let us go. They needed noncoms. By that time I wasn't in I Company; I was in a cannon company. I had a platoon of M-7's. What it was was 105-millimeter howitzers on M-7 tanks--directs fire support. I came back, went aboard ship in Lingayen Gulf, and forty-one days later, I was in Seattle, Washington. I went to South Louisiana visiting, ran into this gal, and I've been there ever since.

Marcello: Well, that's probably a pretty good place to end this interview. Mr. Breedlove, I want to thank you very much for having participated in our project. You've said a lot of very interesting and important things, and I'm certain historians are going to find your comments most valuable when they use them.

Breedlove: There's one more thing. I served on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Canton, Espiritu Santo, New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Tulagi, Vella Lavella, Manus, and Luzon.

Marcello: So you saw quite a bit of action after December 7.

Breedlove: Yes. After that we went to New Caledonia. We rendezvoused with a convoy, and we went into Guadalcanal. We relieved the 2nd Marine Division. We did the mop up. There was a lot of action going on then. From there we went to Vella Lavella on that beachhead and then back to New Zealand for three months. We came back to New Caledonia and then went back by Guadalcanal and made a practice landing and then went up through the South China Sea to Luzon. We then made a beachhead at Lingayen Gulf. We fought our way down the plains. We got near Clark Field, and we turned north--fighting Yamashita.

Marcello: Unfortunately, this particular project is just concerned with your experiences at Pearl Harbor.

Breedlove: I know.

Marcello: It's always kind of frustrating because you guys had so many experiences and so on after Pearl Harbor. Maybe one of these days, if we ever complete the Pearl Harbor Project, we can record these other experiences on tape.