

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
NUMBER
504

Interview with
RAYMOND S. CANNON
June 6, 1980

Place of Interview; Arlington, Texas

Interviewer; Ronald E. Marcello

Terms of Use: OPEN

Approved:

Raymond S. Cannon
(Signature)

Date:

6-6-80

COPYRIGHT © 1980 THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NORTH TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DENTON

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Coordinator of the Oral History Collection or the University Archivist, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203

Oral History Collection

Raymond S. Cannon

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Arlington, Texas Date: June 6, 1980

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Raymond Cannon for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on June 6, 1980, in Arlington, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Cannon in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was aboard the battleship USS Nevada during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Cannon, 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. Cannon: All right. I was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on February 17, 1922. I was born on the foot of Pike's Peak. My mother and dad owned a timber ranch and cattle ranch. That was during the Depression. I lived there until I was approximately six years old, and then we went to Denver and lived off . . . my dad and my uncle had a cattle ranch, the Dimaond K, out of Denver about thirty miles at that time. I was brought up . . . I

went all through my school years in Denver, Colorado. So I would say I was raised in Denver. I graduated from South High School in 1940.

After graduation there was fifteen of us who decided to join the Navy all together. We took our boot camp in San Diego, California.

Marcello: Let's back up just a minute here and let me fill in with a few additional questions. Do you recall specifically when you joined the Navy in 1940, at least in terms of the month?

Cannon: Let's see. I was sworn in on January 6, 1940.

Marcello: At the time that you entered the service, how closely were you keeping abreast of current events and world affairs and things of that nature?

Cannon: Well, I realized at the time that . . . besides my school covering most of the current events, why, I was keeping abreast of what was going on over in the Atlantic side or over in France and Germany and so on, but I really didn't pay that much attention to what it really meant.

Marcello: I think this is probably true of most people at that time. Most eyes were turned toward Europe rather than toward the Far East, were they not?

Cannon: That's true.

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Navy?

Cannon: Well, to be honest, I wanted to get away from home. When I graduated, why, there was no jobs to be had, and I just

didn't want to be a bum. I didn't want to live off the family; I wanted to be on my own and try to make it. They always said, why, if you joined any service, why, you would either make it or break yourself. That's one of the reasons why I joined the Navy.

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

Cannon: Well, I spent four years in the ROTC in South High School, and I was a platoon leader. In other words, I was a lieutenant in the ROTC. I had one platoon which meant four squads with approximately twelve men in a squad. I just didn't like the way the Army did things, but, of course, (chuckle) I found out the Navy did them the same way, anyway. So I jumped from the frying pan into the fire, to be honest about it.

As soon as I was in, why, then I knew that it was up to me to go ahead and do what I could do to make a man of myself and make my mother and dad proud of me. At least I wouldn't be . . . I don't know what word to use on that. I just didn't want to be a burden to them. I found out real quick that if I'd stayed home I'd been better off in the long run, but at this time I didn't know that, and I joined it. So I thought, "Well, I've got a six-year hitch, and I might as well make the best of it," so I did my best to do what I could do and do it right.

Marcello: You mentioned that you took your boot camp at San Diego. Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that we need to get as part of the record? Or, on the other hand, was it the normal Navy boot camp?

Cannon: Well, it was all strange. To me it was strange because I had to learn all the Navy lingo. Of course, I was used to saying "Yes, sir" to a sergeant that was in charge of our ROTC. Then I found out that with a Navy chief, why, they'd jump on you if you said "Yes, sir" to them. So it was just "Yes, sir" and "No, sir" to the officers, and that was it.

I had the responsibility, when I took fifteen men to San Diego on the train . . . well, I was put in charge of these fifteen men, and, of course, that was a big challenge for me to get all the guys there in one shape. I didn't lose any. Of course, you played poker on the way, and at different stops along the way to pick up passengers or whatever, why, a couple of them would take off and go get a bottle of liquor and so on. They'd finally make it aboard, and when we got there, well, I still had my fifteen men. So I thought that was some accomplishment right there. At the time I was almost eighteen years old, and some of the guys were older than I was. I took it pretty serious.

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

Cannon: Let's see. I think we were there nine months. Yes, nine months and it was a long boot camp. It was hard. It was

a different country. I'd never been to California.

Half our company came down with a fever of some kind. I forget what term they used on it. It was actually the flu, and we were just darn sick. Then we were sick from all the shots that they gave us.

They put us right out on the grinder and started drilling us right away. We had sore shoulders and sore arms. That darn .30-06 got awfully heavy before it was all over with. Of course, then we went through the regular learning of how to tie knots, how to fold our clothes, how to get our initial issue of clothes packed in one seabag, and how to string our hammock up and so on and sleep in it.

In the regular Navy at that time, aboard most ships, except for the Nevada, why, everybody slept in their hammocks. On the Nevada, why, we got spoiled. We slept on regular bunks. That was the only battlewagon that I know of at that time that did have bunks. So I never did really sleep in a hammock, so to speak.

Marcello: Where did you go from boot camp? What happened after you got out of boot camp?

Cannon: Well, they gave us a boot leave which is one week, and I went home for one week. I told Dad and Mother at that time, "All the scuttlebutt is that we will be in a war within the next year or so." As far as I can remember, that's what the conversation led to. I believed it because everybody

felt it, but we didn't know who we were going to go to war with. But we knew it was coming. So I spent most of my time with the girl that I eventually married. I had one nice week at home, and then we went back to boot camp.

We were there for about ten days more, and then we got assigned to our different ships. There was twelve of us that was in my company that got assigned to different ships. There was six of us aboard the Nevada, four aboard the Arizona, three aboard the Utah, one aboard the California. These were the ones that I was acquainted with because they were in my class and my same age. We went all through school together. The other fellows that were in the class were an older bunch of guys. They all went to the battlegroup fleet, also, but I never knew which ships they went to.

Marcello: What was your reaction upon being assigned to a battleship?

Cannon: Well, we were very curious. We were all excited. Oh, I remember one fellow that . . . I don't remember his name, but he got assigned aboard a "tin can" or a destroyer. He was all excited about that.

I'd put in for assignment aboard the aircraft carrier because I wanted to get into aviation. That was my primary purpose; that's what I was interested in. But I didn't make the carrier because they had no allotments at that particular time.

All the ones in our company went to the battlegroup

fleet. As soon as I got aboard, we were interviewed by different division heads. The first one I was interviewed by was the ordnance gang, which at that time was in charge of the 5-inch/.25-calibers, the 16-inch hardware, and all the machine guns and stuff like that. I wasn't really too thrilled about it.

Then I was interviewed by the aviation gang. I told them that I'd had a few flying lessons when I was in high school. I had, like, ten lessons, for instance. I'd learned how to fly an airplane. I know how to control it in flying and taking off. I was trying for a student's license, and I never got to finish it because I didn't stay around long enough.

So eventually, I was sent to torpedo and mine school at Pearl Harbor. That was right at the submarine base there at Pearl Harbor. So I went to the mine school and the torpedo school. I did real good because it was all mechanical work, and I just dug in, and I got a 3.8 on my final score out of a possible 4.0, which is perfect. I got a 3.8 on it. I thought I was doing real good, and I was happy with it. That was a good school.

Marcello: Now did all this occur sometime after you got aboard the Nevada?

Cannon: Yes, it did. Then I got sent back to the Nevada, and then the fleet pulled out. At that time, when the fleet pulled

out within that week . . . well, there was a week there. We were two weeks out to sea, I think it was. I'm not sure but I think we were out two weeks--the whole battle-wagon fleet . . . either two weeks or ten days, I'll put it that way.

In the meantime, I'm still in the ordnance gang, but then I was transferred to the aviation gang. They had not filled their quota, so I went into aviation ordnance, and that's what I was striking for.

In the meantime, they gave me a battle station at a 5-inch/.25-caliber gun. Going back, before I graduated from high school, I was an expert marksman with a .22-caliber gun and also the .30-06 gun. In other words, I finally worked myself up to distinguished rifleman, which you couldn't get any better than that. In other words, I could have shot in the Olympics with anybody because I was that good of a shot. So I was immediately put in. That was my battle station--the 5-inch/.25 as a pointer. When the Japs hit us at Pearl, well, I was at my battle station on the number four battery, 5-inch/.25-caliber.

Marcello: Let's back up again because we're getting a little ahead of our story. Let's go back to the time when you first went aboard the Nevada. Now you were still a "boot."

Cannon: Right.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did a "boot" get upon initially

boarding the Nevada? Do you recall what kind of a reception you received?

Cannon: It wasn't too hot, I'll put it that way (chuckle). It sort of escapes me. I remember coming aboard, saluting the stern where the flag was, and then saluting the officer-of-the-deck. The chief in charge said, "I have six new men." It might have been seven because I've forgotten. We came over on the Lexington. That was the troop transport at the time.

Marcello: So in other words, when you get out of boot camp and you get back off of boot leave, you boarded the Lexington, which provided the transportation to the Hawaiian Islands.

Cannon: Right.

Marcello: In other words, you picked up the Nevada in Pearl Harbor.

Cannon: It was already at Pearl Harbor, right.

Marcello: At the time that you got there, I gather, then, that the Pacific Fleet had been shifted from San Diego, or the West Coast at least, over to the Hawaiian Islands? Its permanent base was now in the Hawaiian Islands.

Cannon: That was true. The original port of the Nevada was Long Beach, California, but then it was shifted to Pearl Harbor. That's where all the battlewagons was stationed out of at the time.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of being stationed in the Hawaiian Islands?

Cannon: I liked them at first. I had a lot of fun there. There were

several of us. We rented a car. Now this was before the Pearl Harbor attack, naturally. We rented a car. We toured the Island of Oahu, and we took in all the sights that we could. I remember I had a 1936 four-door sedan, Ford. I can remember that. It was a real nice car. We toured that whole island in two days. We rented it and toured the island and really took in the sights.

I was only eighteen. At the time, I had my birthday, and by then I was just eighteen, more or less. I really didn't know what the world was all about. I learned a lot when I was at boot camp, but it went over my head because I was still too innocent. So when we could get leave, which was about every third day, why, we'd go ashore. When we was in port, we'd go ashore. I'd take in a show. I was too young to get a drink. So I'd go to the USO and different things like this and was trying to find my little niche in history, you might say. I didn't know what to do with myself because I didn't fit at the time. I was really not old enough.

Marcello: Let me rephrase my question. When you learned that you were going to be aboard the Nevada, which was stationed in the Hawaiian Islands, were you looking forward to going to the Hawaiian Islands?

Cannon: Yes, I was. I was looking forward to it because it was out of the country, and it was . . . well, after all, we'd had

all these posters that said, "Join the Navy and See the World." That's what I expected.

Marcello: So you get to Hawaii; you go aboard the Nevada. Awhile ago I'd asked you about the reception that you had received when you went aboard the Nevada. I think it's quite clear that the so-called "old salts" did consider you a "boot" when you went aboard.

Cannon: Absolutely. Yes.

Marcello: When you first went aboard the Nevada, where were you assigned? Did you immediately go into the deck force, which is where they send most people?

Cannon: No, I went right into the aviation gang. In other words, I didn't go into the deck force. I considered myself awful lucky to get where I did get. The only reason that I got there was because I had fairly good grades from high school, and then on the initial test that was took when I signed the papers to join the Navy, why, I made a good score on all my test papers and things like that. So that put me, I think, just a little bit above the normal "boot" that went into the Navy. In other words, my grades were high enough that they took a second look. The ones that didn't have it, why, they got assigned to the deck force.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do in the aviation gang when you went aboard the Nevada?

Cannon: Well, at first, why, I got acquainted with the pilots and

the radiomen and the aviation chief of our division who was a chief petty officer. I had to learn what my duties were to be, and, of course, why, actually being low man on the totem pole, why, they worked me hard. Every other day I'd have to pull the guns. We had three planes on a battlegon, and every other day, why, I'd pull the guns out of all three planes, take them apart, clean them, put them back in, and make sure they was ready to fire and in good condition--no rust or no nothing. Every three days or every week, why, this was done automatically. I learned how to take apart bombs, put them together, put the fuse in them and so on, and how to set them up for firing and that sort of thing.

Marcello: The planes that you had aboard the Nevada would have been the observation or scout planes, were they not?

Cannon: Right. They were the new float planes. They were the . . . gosh, I don't know the name of them now. We called them the SOC's. They were a low-wing monoplane. They took the place of the bi-wingers that they had about two years before I joined the service. They were the newest thing out. They were made by Sikorsky. I remember that. That's where they got the "SOC" designation. My squadron was VO Squadron Six.

Marcello: What was it?

Cannon: VO Squadron Six.

- Marcello: That's quite a procedure in launching one of those planes off one of those battlewagons.
- Cannon: When we were in port, why, all the planes are on Ford Island, the Naval Air Station, and when we went to sea, why, we didn't have planes aboard. They all took off. Somewhere out to sea, why, we'd go into regular maneuvers to pick up our aircraft. That was the first time I ever seen one come in, be picked up from the sled by the crane, and set back down on the launcher or on the . . . my mind has gone blank. What do you call them?
- Marcello: Like a track that they sit on or something?
- Cannon: Well, there's one sled that they sit on. One of them sets on the sled, and the other two set on the catapult. That's what I'm looking for--catapult. Then they're tied down. That's when we really have to go to work and clean up all the hardware on it. Of course, at that time, why, you didn't carry too much hardware. We carried no bombs, but they would carry a 100-pound bomb under each wing or 100-pound depth charge under each wing. They had two .30-caliber Browning machine guns, one synchronized to shoot through the motor and fire . . . it would only fire when the prop wasn't in its way. Then they had one in the observation seat. The radioman usually was the man that went out on that and used the gun on that, also. Of course, then he could be the radioman and the gunner all at one time.

Marcello: Why was it that those planes were not aboard the ship when it came in or when it went out? Was it simply a part of the training routine of the pilots and so on?

Cannon: Right. In other words, at that time we'd gotten aboard four new pilots, and they were just right out of Pensacola. They didn't know how to take off from the catapult or to land on the water, as far as I knew. They were trained actually to fly off the carrier. Our squadron commander, which was Lieutenant Staley, I believe his name was . . . he was our squadron commander or in charge of . . . he was commander of our wing off of our battlewagon. So he was teaching me. He'd have them fly rear seat, and then he'd take off and show them how to do it. Of course, the radioman wouldn't go with him. It was just a new pilot be sitting in the radio operator's seat, and Lieutenant Staley would be in the regular pilot's seat. They trained them to be catapulted off. That's what we were going through that week or ten days that we were out to sea before the Japs hit us at Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: You mentioned that your initial function was to clean the guns and so on. What we are talking about, in effect, is the fact that those planes were literally shot off that battlewagon. Isn't that correct?

Cannon: Yes, In other words, it would be in the locked position. Incidentally, I've been shot off so many times now that I

can't recall how many times I had been actually flown and shot off that catapult. Anyway, the catapult was like a slingshot at the end of a plunger. You had, I think, a six-edged shell casing, and it was a powder charge. At that time, when you hit that powder charge, you were doing about forty knots. You hit the powder charge, and then you were doing about seventy-five to eighty knots, and you were heading into the wind so you'd have enough wind in there to keep from dropping or losing it into the water, into the "drink." Of course, we did have a couple of failures on that because they were new pilots.

That's what they were training for. They were trying to learn to be shot off in a catapult. That's a hard job to learn to do that. When the ship would swing into the wind, why, it'd go broadside into the wind, and then it'd be shot off the catapult. It'd be moved out, and the plane would be shot off into the wind. The next one would be dropped on the same catapult, and it would go off and so on. We could get three planes off in about twenty-five minutes. Each time, why, the battlewagon had to go through the complete maneuver of getting back into the wind again because it took a certain length of time to set it down on the sled and bolt it down and rev it up and make sure the engines and the magnetos were working and everything was up to full speed. They got the "Okay" signal, why, then the chief

of the catapult gave the signal, and that was "all she wrote." It was up to the pilot then.

Marcello: The reason I asked you the details of this operation is because it's a part of the Navy that's no longer around. Helicopters have replaced the float planes.

Cannon: Right.

Marcello: What were your living quarters like aboard the Nevada? Describe them.

Cannon: Well, aviation gang was the second deck down. We were in the fantail. In our living quarters, like I say, we had the regular bunks, and so it wasn't too awfully crowded in a sense. We had plenty of room for our bunks and our lockers. The band also had part of that same compartment. So the band and the aviation gang all had the same compartment--all enlisted men stayed right there in that one compartment. If you look at the fantail of a battleship, why, it's the stern and the catapult's right above you and so on. Then you have one ladder going up the main deck, and that was the main deck where the catapults were and where your planes were at and so on.

As I recall, why, I was about two . . . well, with regard to the ladder that went up to the topside, I was two bunks from being able to go straight up the ladder.

Marcello: I would assume, as is true on most ships, that quarters were rather crowded and cramped aboard the Nevada.

Cannon: Well, I don't know how to answer that because, not being aboard another ship except for the Lexington coming over, why, I didn't find them that way. I have been aboard a ship that was crowded, yes. But at this particular time, to my memory we had plenty of room. The bunks were three-high, and we had our lockers right across from us in line from wherever our bunk was.

I happened to have a top bunk, and I was lucky because the fan was hitting me, and I could get a lot of fresh air. How I got that top bunk, I don't know. That was a prestige item (chuckle). Then if I got seasick or something, why, the two shipmates down below me would catch everything (chuckle) if I got seasick, but I never did. That's the way it turned out.

Marcello: What was the chow like aboard the Nevada in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Cannon: Lousy.

Marcello: The Nevada was not a good feeder,

Cannon: No. They had too many . . . most of your capital ships like the carriers and the battlewagons, cruisers--all the bigger ships--had too many people to feed. All your food was cooked by steam, and I was just not used to eating that. You'd have beans in the morning with something else, and you'd have baked beans in the afternoon, and you'd have bean soup at night. So when it was time for beans, why, you'd

have them three times a day. That didn't go over so well with me, either. The chow was edible; I mean, you didn't get sick on it. It was clean and edible, but I just didn't like it, period. So how I lived, I don't know, because there was so many things I didn't like. I think it was the same way with everybody until they got used to it. Then you'd gripe because you didn't have enough. Well, at that time, I griped because I didn't like what I was getting. When you did have meat, why, it was one greasy pork chop. I don't think they knew what beef was. They had a lot of lamb, a lot of pork chops or a lot of pork. It seemed like everytime that we went out to sea or something, why, you would always have something greasy like a pork chop or a lamb chop. It was more than a lamb chop; it was actually a sheep. It was big and . . . it was just lousy, period. I couldn't take it. I didn't get fat on it, that's for sure.

Marcello: Did you pull mess cook duty?

Cannon: I never did.

Marcello: How was the chow served aboard the Nevada? Was it cafeteria-style or family-style?

Cannon: It was cafeteria-style. You'd grab a tray and go through the line, sit down at a table and eat. Then you'd go down and give it two swishes in the barrel and stack it and put it in the steam line. It'd go through the steam cleaner, and it'd be cleaned by hot steam. That's all you ever seen of

it until the next chow.

Marcello: What part did sports and athletic competition play aboard the Nevada, particularly when you were in port?

Cannon: Well, this was a fun part for me. When we were out to sea before the war started, why, some of our planes would take off, and we'd have a lot of gunnery practice. Always we were firing at the sleeve that was towed by another plane-- a tow target. The planes would go up and see how many rounds they could shoot into the sleeve. There was always money bet on which plane and which pilot and which gunner would get the most rounds into the target.

Well, when we were in port, I was shooting. They knew I was a good shot because when I went through boot camp, I made a perfect score. I made a perfect 200 in boot camp. That was shooting a heavy rifle. The chief and the Marine sergeant at the firing range just couldn't believe that I could shoot that well. I said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do." I said, "You throw a fifty-cent piece in the air, and I'll shoot it out of the air for you." They said, "Well, I don't believe it." I said, "Well, do it. Go ahead." He said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I'll throw a dollar. That's bigger." I said, "Okay." We had plenty of range because we were firing out to sea where our firing range was. So this guy--I think it was the Marine--threw the dollar up in the air, and before it was three feet off the ground,

why, I'd shot it and spun it about 200 yards out in the open range. He went out, and I had a .30-06 hole right through the middle of it. Well, I learned to shoot this way on the ranch. My uncle taught me how to shoot. This was in my record when I went aboard ship.

So the competition between ships was the gunnery records that each ship had. In other words, the Tennessee had the best record of them all, then the Nevada, the California, and, I believe, the Arizona and then the Pennsylvania and . . . I don't remember. In that order they had the best gunners aboard ship. That was the 5-inch, the .50-calibers, and the 16-inch. Of course, at that particular time my battle station was . . . if I wasn't flying, I was on the 5-inch/.25, and that was my battle station.

Getting back to the fun part about it, well, we had these pools, and we'd all put in one or two dollars or five dollars--whatever time of month it was and according to how much money you had--into the pot. So if we was going out on a gunnery run or gunnery practice . . . Lieutenant Staley would always have one when we got to sea. He'd have one at least twice a week. They had gunnery practice on the airplanes, and then sometimes he would tow the target, and the ship would fire its guns, also. That's the way they got their scores on the antiaircraft.

I went up with an ensign, and it was my first time up

with him on gunnery run. I never had flown with him before, and I didn't know . . . I cannot recall his name, but he was just a brand-new . . . he was a good pilot, but he was younger than I was. I don't think he even had to shave yet, and I was just starting to shave. He was a very good pilot. We went out on a run, and it was for regular observation. We were looking for anything--submarines, other ships, what-have-you. They learned to do this. This was six or seven months, I guess, before Pearl Harbor. We went on a run.

We had one of our own submarines out there. Of course, the "tin cans," destroyers, picked it up on their sonar. So then we'd have battle stations. They'd call us to battle stations. The planes would be shot off from the catapult. In the meantime, why, then we'd go out and hunt for that submarine if we could see him. After all that was over with, why, we'd tow it back in. Of course, we didn't worry about radio silence because we were not in a war. So we'd just radio back in if we spotted him at coordinates so-and-so, longitude this, and whatever course he was on. If we had actually spotted him, why, then we get so many credits, you might say. Then they knew that we were doing our job when we found that guy and reported him in. Of course, the "tin cans" knew where he was at all the time, but we didn't. We was up about 2,000 feet, and we could see his shadow in the

water if it wasn't too rough. We learned to pick up submarines and different details underwater at a hundred-foot level, and, like I say, if it wasn't too rough, why, we could pick him up by the shadow of the sub.

So this one time we went out to sea strictly for gunnery. We took off in the planes. I flew with this ensign. I had a habit with every pilot I flew with . . . sometimes I'd get "chewed out." I called him "Skipper" when I was aboard. When I was flying with him, I said, "'Skipper,' why, we're on course so-and-so." He'd check his log, and I'd check mine, and we'd chat back and forth on the intercoms. I'd just call him "Skipper" instead of calling him Lieutenant Staley or whatever his name was. I'd say, "'Skipper,' we're so many degrees off, or we're doing this, or right down below us is a submarine," or whatever.

So I said, "'Skipper,' when we go in on this thing, you take your pass and make a hard right. I got \$10 bet on this thing that I get more shots into this sleeve than anybody else, and that includes you." He said, "Oh, okay." So he did that. He made his pass, and he fired. I was watching his tracers go, and he made four or five hits at least, I know. Then he made a wing-over. As he made the wing-over, why, I come right by there, and I put about a burst of .50-calibers in it. Damn near all of them went into that sleeve.

So after about almost an hour or three-quarters of an hour of this, why, the tow target came by and chopped and dropped the sleeve, and then the ship would come along and pick it up. Well, then they'd bring in this sleeve, which was about thirty or forty feet long and about six or seven feet in diameter. The bullets were painted on the tips with red, green, brown, orange, whatever color that they had, and it was wet paint. So when it entered the sleeve, why, it'd leave the color in the bullet hole. So I had, like, thirty-eight rounds in my initial run, and everybody else who had made the same run on there had maybe ten or twelve or thereabouts. In other words, of all the ones that went up there that day, I had the most in the fleet. I'm not bragging. It was just one of those lucky deals that he pulled or rolled the ship to the starboard side, and I got in a good, long burst, and most of them went home.

Marcello: Is this a sort of activity that earns the ship the coveted "E"?

Cannon: Yes, it is. That's where the 5-inch guns and 16-inch guns would get their "E" and so on. That was the way they did it.

Marcello: Again, I originally asked you about the role that athletic competition and so on played in the activities of the fleet, and we've just kind of discussed the competition relative to getting one of the "E's", which, of course, stands for efficiency. How about athletic competition? How important

was it in the life of the fleet at that time?

Cannon: Well, I remember three softball games. In one softball game, we played one of the other battlewagons. We was tied up at the . . . we was in port. We was tied up at our regular docking place right beside Ford Island. Of course, our airplanes were on Ford Island. We went ashore at Ford.

They had two softball fields there. I remember playing softball three different times there. The last time that I played, why, I slid into second base and jammed my ankle against the base and sprung it (chuckle)--sprained my ankle. It hurt like hell. I remember somebody coming and picking me up and putting my foot into . . . actually it turned out to be a beer party, but we was playing softball, anyway. They stuck my ankle right down inside the cooler with all the ice and the beer and everything to keep the swelling down. Then when I got back aboard ship, they strapped it up, and that was the last time we played any softball.

Marcello: Was there a lot of competition--ship against ship, whether it involved baseball or basketball or boxing or rowing or things of that nature?

Cannon: Yes. I think they had a lot of boxing. I didn't enter it because I weighed 136 pounds or some such. I remember they did have a boxing team, but to me it really didn't hit me that we had a good boxing team.

We had a good rifle team, and that was all I was interested in, was the rifle team. Then once in awhile, we'd play softball. That's the only two things that really stuck in my mind because when I was on the rifle team, we shot against every other battlewagon's rifle teams. At that time, why, that was the only thing that I can say. I was really good at, was the rifle team.

Marcello: How important was the band aboard a battleship?

Cannon: Believe it or not, I used to play a clarinet, saxophone, and bass clarinet when I was in high school. So I liked the music. Of course, the band played the "Star-Spangled Banner" at night or whenever it was supposed to, and it played "Taps" and so on. Then they'd also have a dance band or something like that, but only officers and their girlfriends or wives could participate while the rest of us sat around on the gun turrets and stuff like that and watched them dance on board ship. That only happened once. I know it made me very angry at the time because you could not get involved in this type of thing with the officers.

Marcello: But was every ship proud of its band?

Cannon: I think so.

Marcello: In other words, was there a lot of competition among the bands of the various battleships and so on? Periodically, when you were ashore, didn't they hold something called the "Battle of the Bands" maybe on a Saturday night or something

like that? Do you recall that?

Cannon: I think they had this at . . . yes, it sticks in my mind-- something on that--but I can't be specific because . . . I'm trying to think of this recreation place on the island.

Marcello: Was it Bloch Arena?

Cannon: That sounds like it. I think that sounds like it, yes. It was near the shore. The beach came along there, and they had a bandstand up in the middle of it. Then one of the bands from one of the ships would have a concert that night, or they'd have a dance that night. They'd bring in the USO gals, which were all native gals, and they'd have a band concert. They did this every weekend. I'd say every Saturday they'd have this, and one of the ship's bands would play for this.

I only went to one of them, and I got drunk on sake. I never seen it all the way through, so I don't know. When I woke up the next morning, I was on the beach (chuckle). I do remember that somewhere along the line that they did do this. Now how involved they were against each other, I don't remember.

Marcello: How did the liberty routine work aboard the Nevada when it was in port?

Cannon: Well, I think I got liberty every third day if I'm not mistaken. I believe that's what it was. It was either every other day or every third day. It wasn't often enough, I know that.

You had a starboard and a port side, and they got liberty; and then if you were in a certain section, why, you'd get a liberty on that starboard side, or you'd get liberty on that port side. It was according to which section you were in and what watch you were in--if you had the port watch or the starboard watch. That was the way it was set up.

Marcello: What were the possibilities of getting overnight liberty?

Cannon: At that time, none whatsoever.

Marcello: In other words, you had to be back at midnight, did you not . . .

Cannon: That's right.

Marcello: . . . unless you had some permanent residence or someplace to stay ashore.

Cannon: That's right, unless you were married or something of this nature--you had your wife there at the base.

Marcello: What did you do when you personally went on liberty?

Cannon: Well, let's see. Personally, myself, I went to the USO dances. I'm trying to think of the building that they had them in there at Pearl Harbor. It was right next to the king's palace. They had the statue of the king sitting outside. That's the building that got so ate away by termites and so on. It was right down the street half a block down from that king's palace, and they had a USO dance there. They had it every Saturday night. If I had liberty on that Saturday night, that's where I would go personally because, like I say, I didn't know what the world was all about yet.

I was just out for having fun. That was the only place I could go because I didn't have no forged liberty pass that gave my age as twenty-one. I wasn't twenty-one.

Marcello: The drinking age was twenty-one?

Cannon: Yes, so I couldn't get a drink to save my life.

Marcello: How much time did you spend down on Hotel Street or Canal Street and places of that nature?

Cannon: Well, at that time, if you want to be frank about it, why, I had been there. I never went up to any of the "Houses" in the red light district or messed around with any of the girls because, to be honest about it, I was scared. I didn't know what it was all about. I've never been with a girl that way, that's all. That's the brute truth about it.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, could you detect any changes in your routine, especially in your training routine? On the other hand, was it business as usual right up until December 7th?

Cannon: I hesitate to say. At the time, the last two weeks before Pearl Harbor, before the Japs hit us, we were going to battle stations more often. We'd have it in the morning and in the afternoon and late in the evening. We'd have it three times a day when the fleet was out. At least our ship would. What the other battlegons were doing, I don't know. We were having battle stations or general quarters more often

than we'd had previously. We were all griping about it because we didn't know what was going on. We didn't know what was behind it all. We just figured it was training-- that we were training. That's the way we felt about it.

Marcello: And where was your battle station at that time?

Cannon: On 5-inch/.25.

Marcello: Which particular 5-inch/.25? I think you'd mentioned it earlier.

Cannon: Number four gun.

Marcello: Which would've been located where?

Cannon: Well, facing the bow, it would be located on the left-hand side of the ship.

Marcello: Are there any other changes in your routine that you could detect?

Cannon: Well, at that particular time . . . all right, say, we were at sea, and we were about, oh, say, two hundred nautical miles from Pearl Harbor. At that time it was fairly normal to do what we were doing. I was then in full swing. I was flying steady everyday, and so I was getting a little bit more money. I was getting flight pay. I was getting a little bit more money than the regular seaman was, which was about thirty dollars, and that looked like a thousand dollars.

Well, finally, all that added up to is that I had such a good gunnery record that Lieutenant Staley appointed me

as his official gunner and radio operator. So I flew with Lieutenant Staley or our squadron commander.

Marcello: Was it because of your gunnery record that you were able to fly? I was going to ask awhile ago how you got the privilege of flying. Was it strictly due to your gunnery record?

Cannon: Yes, that's right. I was firing on the ship's rifle team, and we won every match that I was in. Every match that we was in, I won it . . . or I wouldn't say I won it, but I'd say the team won it, which is four men. We were firing against some of the best riflemen on the Marines and some of the best riflemen from the Army and also off our own ships.

Marcello: Was the ship sailing under blackout conditions during this period prior to Pearl Harbor?

Cannon: No, I don't believe so.

Marcello: I have one or two more general questions. When you and your buddies sat around in bull sessions, did you ever discuss the possibility of a Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate? This, of course, was something that you could possibly read about in the newspapers if you were interested in current events at that time.

Cannon: As far as I can tell, we were worried about the Germans. We were worried about the Atlantic side. We had no idea about

what was going on with the Japanese.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese, what kind of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Cannon: Oh, gosh.

Marcello: At that time, prior to Pearl Harbor.

Cannon: I never really thought about it. They were just "gooks." We were used to seeing them on the island, and they were just Japanese. Of course, we'd go down and buy fruits and vegetables and stuff like that from the Japs. We called them "Japs" when I was at home, when I was a kid, a small boy. They had a truck farm, and they raised all that kind of stuff. Well, we'd go down . . . you know, they were just like anybody else. We'd just go out there and buy what they had for sale.

Marcello: This brings us up to that weekend of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do at this point is to discuss in as much detail as you can remember your activities during that weekend of December 7, 1941. Let me start off with a general question, first of all. When did the Nevada come in? I guess what I'm asking is, had it been out on a training exercise?

Cannon: Yes, we had been out for, like I say, a week or ten days. Now this is as close as I can remember. I'll say it was a week. I think it was a little longer than that, but I'll say a week. So we were on our way back in . . . and we

usually had an anchor pool. So many people would put a dollar in the anchor pool. When we dropped the hook, or the anchor, when that anchor hit the water, that's who won the pool. Say it hit the water at 12:01; well, the guy that had 12:01 won \$500 or \$200, according to what was in the pool. So this was the big thing. Everytime we'd come into port and drop the hook, there was always an anchor pool going on. There's always gambling of some kind, and this was one of them. I never had that much money where I could spend to enter this pool because usually it costs five bucks, and I didn't have it.

Anyway, I remember one guy in the aviation gang, and he was over me. He was a first class aviation ordnanceman. He won the anchor pool that particular day. We came in on Saturday . . . no, we dropped anchor somewhere around one or two o'clock in the afternoon on Friday.

Marcello: Was this routine procedure? In other words, if anybody were observing the actions of the fleet, would they soon discern that the Nevada usually went out on the same day everytime and returned on the same day everytime?

Cannon: Not necessarily. We tied up in the same place everytime. Some of the battlewagons would go out one day, and then two more would go out and so on until they were all out. We were all in just one group together, but we never all went and steamed out at the same time, no. We all got out

a hundred miles or some such, and then we went through our maneuvers as a fleet at that particular time. They never knew for sure when we were going to come in. Every battlewagon that came in tied up at the same dock everytime it came in--never a change in that. In other words, the Arizona and the Nevada always were on the last two docks, and we were always behind the Arizona. I don't know why, but we were. Then the Tennessee and the Pennsylvania and the California and all the rest of the battlewagons tied up two abreast. But the Arizona and the Nevada always were tied up one behind the other. Then the Utah, which was on the other side of Ford Island, tied up by itself, but it was classed as a target ship. It was a target ship, is what it was. It pulled targets. It pulled sleds for the 16-inch gun and so on. It was strictly a target ship. It did not always tie up at that same place because that's where the carriers usually tied up, was on the other side of the island. It was tied up where the Lexington was supposed to be. The Lexington at that time was still about 200 or 300 miles out to sea and coming toward Pearl Harbor.

Marcello: So you come in on a Friday. Is that correct?

Cannon: I believe so.

Marcello: Describe what your routine was that Friday and Saturday. When did you have liberty?

Cannon: I got liberty that Saturday afternoon. First of all, we

came in early enough on Friday. Then we had to get all our quarters . . . all of our whites . . . of course, we had an inspection. We was going to have inspection on Saturday morning around 0900. So we made sure that all our shoes . . . well, we had special shoes, special whites, special everything for inspection. That's the only time we wore them. So we were all ready for inspection as far as each individual man. We had to get the ship ready; we had to get everything shipshape. All the brass was shined; all the red lead was down on the battleship linoleum. Everything was just shining. We had to get that all done before inspection the next day. So that was on a Saturday. Liberty started at 0100 that afternoon. Then at twelve o'clock, of course, we had to be aboard ship.

We were all set. We came in and went through our normal routine of getting the ship ready for inspection. This was every Saturday. We had an inspection every Saturday. Even if we were out to sea, we had an inspection--a minor one but an inspection. This was a routine that was never broken until after the war started. So then we came in. We got all inspected and everything.

They let the starboard side go ashore. Three of my friends went ashore, and one of the guys from the Utah went ashore, and we all met over there at the same place. He was old enough, and he went over and bought some liquor.

So we walked down to Waikiki Beach, sat down on the beach. We had one bottle or one fifth of . . . I forget what kind.

I know I got pretty drunk because I never had really drank that much. I tasted liquor. I'd had beer and things, but I'd never had any hard liquor. It just knocked me for a row of tin cans. I'd only had two drinks of it, and I didn't know what hit me.

Anyway, then we finally headed back toward the ship. Of course, he got on the motor launch that took him to the Utah, and the other three of us fell onto the ladder and went aboard our own ship.

Marcello: How were you feeling by this time?

Cannon: I finally got sick to my stomach and lost everything, so I was feeling pretty decent then. But between that stinking bus and driving ten or fifteen miles from Pearl Harbor out to the Navy Yard, why, I got sick. So they stopped the bus, and I got off, and I got rid of it and got back on. I stuck my head out the window and got a lot of air, and I felt pretty good when I got back aboard ship. It was still kind of rough sailing (chuckle) in trying to get back on time. It took us about ten minutes on the big liberty launch to get over to where our ship was tied up.

In the meantime, I'd had a whole bunch of Christmas presents that I'd bought for my mother and my dad and for the girl that I ended up marrying. I'd been saving my

money for a couple of months, and I'd spent about thirty dollars or some such. I bought Christmas presents, and I had them all in a sack. I made sure that I didn't lose those, so I got back aboard ship with my Christmas presents.

Marcello: This brings us into that morning of December 7, 1941, and what I want you to do is to describe the events, as best you can remember them, as they unfolded during that morning.

Cannon: Well, reveille had taken place. I went to the head and got cleaned up. Right away I went to the head to get a shower.

Marcello: Sunday was a day of leisure, however, was it not, if you didn't have the duty? You didn't necessarily have to get up at any particular time.

Cannon: That's right. I went ahead and got in the chow line and came back. The reason I went early and came back was because I was picked to go ashore again on Sunday. In other words, they gave me an extra day's shore leave. So I was sitting down in front of my bunk, and I opened my locker. I was sitting there, and I was looking at the presents. I thought, "Well, I've got to wrap these and get them sent off so they can get back to the States in time for Christmas." I was deciding which one I was going to wrap first--my girl's, my mother's, or my dad's. Of course, they'd all go in the same one, and then I had my two sisters. So I had a bunch of stuff there that I could afford, which came to about \$40. It was pretty hard to come by in them days.

Anyway, I was trying to decide which one to wrap, and about that time, why, the band had went up to play when they raised the flag at eight o'clock. They went up to play the National Anthem. They'd went up and made the first two or three . . . made one stanza. They almost got half of it down, and about that time they just quit. That bass drum came rolling down the ladder. I thought, "For God's sake! What is going on?" The guy was right behind it. He says, "The Japs are coming!" We said, "Bull shit!" We didn't believe it.

About that time, why, another guy from the band came down--he was a saxophone player--and the rest of them came down, and they said, "No lie, Ken! No lie, Ken! The Japs are coming! They're hitting us!"

About that time the ship shook, and a split second later, why, battle stations sounded or general quarters sounded. By then, we were so trained that when that gong went off and that boatswain's pipe went off and said, "All hands, man your battle stations," BAM, you went.

Marcello: When you say that the ship shook and then battle stations sounded, did it shake from the effects from that first torpedo that hit it?

Cannon: That's right. We got hit. I learned later that this was when we first got hit. So when general quarters sounded, why, I started going up to the main deck and all the way up

to the boat deck. I went to the ladders to get to my battle station, which was on the number four gun.

First, before this happened, though, I went up this ladder, and I stuck my head above the ladder and up through the hatch. About that time, why, I seen this plane come in low and over our stern. About approximately three to four feet in front of me, it strafed and left a trail of bullet holes. Of course, the deck was wooden, and the splinters came in behind it. I thought, "My God! They weren't lying!" I went back down, and I said, "Man, this is it!" I seen that big "meatball" on a plane when it banked. Then I heard some guns firing, but our ship hadn't started firing yet.

So immediately I ran up to the second deck. I went up through the ladders and got on the boat deck and went right to my gun. About that time, why, everybody converged on their guns.

The loaders slammed the shells home, and I was on target. I pulled the trigger, and nothing happened. All hell broke loose. Every gun was the same. Nobody could fire. Well, on our ship, all the firing pins and the firing mechanisms were not in the guns. They were not attached. They were in the ready locker behind it. The gun captain says, "Eject that shell!" So we ejected the shell, and I turned around and I grabbed this bolt or the firing pin, which is about approximately a foot length and about three inches in diameter

or thereabouts. It had an electrical connection on it. I shoved that home--made one twist and put it on and closed the bolt. I says, "Let's fire!" Then I can remember getting ready to fire. Our guns were trained over toward the south end. I believe it was the south end where the waves of Japs were coming in, but there was none in my particular range at that moment.

Then I see the torpedo plane come in low across the water. Then I see him drop a torpedo, and it just missed us. It went underneath our fantail but missed us. I got on the plane, fired the gun, and there was just one big burst. We called it "cutting the fuse." In other words, we cut the fuse for 1,000 yards. I hit him direct on, and there was just a puff of smoke and a bunch of flames and fire, and that was it. That was the first one I knocked down.

Marcello: What was the reaction when this plane went down? What was the reaction of the gun crew?

Cannon: Well, (chuckle) I was elated in a sense, I think, but I was scared. I kept yelling at the gun captain, "Feed that ammunition!" That's all I wanted to do, was fire.

I seen some coming up like this (gesture), and they were dive-bombers. We had a half-shield in front of us, and I pointed up there for the gun captain. I pointed my gun up, and then the trainer got over there. I got on the plane,

and I followed him off like this (gesture). The fuses were set for about 3,000 yards. Of course, I had my trigger closed. I was just cranking up there and following him. I was giving him about, oh, I think, 500 to 1,000 yards' lead--shooting in front of him. We shot three times, and the third shell hit this one dive-bomber that I was training on, and we knocked him out before he got his bomb dropped.

Then there were two more right behind, and the bombs fell. One of them fell short, but the second plane . . . there was four bombs and the fifth one hit the Arizona ahead of us or hit our bow--I'm not sure which--but there was enough fire and everything coming up from our bow or their stern at that time. I think it hit the Arizona, but it wasn't the one that did the damage. It wasn't the one that sunk it, but it helped.

Marcello: In the meantime, had the torpedo that hit the Nevada done any damage? In other words, was the Nevada listing at all?

Cannon: No. It hit our blisters. Our blisters are about as wide as this room. They're about fifteen foot wide, and usually they're either full of saltwater or oil. They're used as a ballast. Well, between the outside of that blister and the hull of the ship, you have fifteen inches of armor. So that torpedo had hit into the blister and blowed a hole into the side of one tank of the blister. Of course, that was leaking oil out, but that's all. That was all the damage

we received at that particular time.

Marcello: Up until this time, has the Nevada caught any bombs?

Cannon: We had one--one hit. That was on the port side, boat deck. It came down and hit the aft end of the bridge, exploded on the boat deck, and exploded a 5-inch ready box.

Marcello: How close were you to this incident?

Cannon: Oh, twenty-five feet, I suppose . . . maybe thirty.

Marcello: What effect did that bomb hit have upon your particular gun position?

Cannon: Well, one of the men that took the shells out of the ready box got a flash burn from the exploding of the 5-inch shells. When that bomb exploded, why, all those 5-inch shells exploded at the same time. It was one big flash, you might say. He got burnt pretty bad on the back because he only had a T-shirt on. It burned all his arms and his legs because we were in white shorts. Of course, we looked around and saw it, but they already had a fire-fighting party on that trying to put out the fire. They were getting that down, and we went right back to what we were trying to do in the first place.

Then it was sort of one wave or one plane after another. We were firing at it. By then all guns had opened up that could open up.

Marcello: I guess by the time that the high-level bombers come over, the air is so full of smoke and burning oil and that sort of

thing that for a period in there you were unmolested by the high-level bombers.

Cannon: That's right. At that time, the smoke was coming back. By then the Arizona had been hit; she was already on the bottom. The flames and the smoke was so bad--and the wind was drifting it back over us--that they really couldn't see us.

Then the next thing I can remember . . . and I suppose we had twenty-five rounds in the ready box. We fired those twenty-five rounds plus another twenty-five rounds that I can remember of.

One of our guys was an aviation mechanic, and his battle station was on the bow--to cut the bow lines and so on. His battle station was up forward on the bow. He got strafed. He got strafed by one of the Japanese fighters or by Japanese planes. That chopped his legs up pretty badly. They did get the bow lines cut, and the ship backed down, and we headed out in the channel.

Marcello: Now this in itself is incredible, is it not, because at this time, I believe the Nevada only had one boiler lit. It normally takes two-and-a-half hours to get up steam on normal conditions.

Cannon: That's right.

Marcello: And according to my records, it took the Nevada about forty-five minutes to get out of there from the time the attack took place.

Cannon: That's right.

Marcello: What do you remember from the Arizona blowing? Can you recall any of the after-effects of the Arizona blowing, that is, the after-effects that it may have had on the Nevada?

Cannon: Shock waves, yes. We had a tremendous shock wave like somebody just put a giant hand against our gun and moved it. In other words, we felt that heat and that tremendous . . .

Marcello: Concussion?

Cannon: Concussion, right. The fact is, on the number one gun, it blew some of the guys right off of their gun mount. It was so strong that it blew them right down. Of course, the ones not hurt got back up and started firing or was ready to fire. A lot of people that were on the bridge and on the bow, they got burnt from the Arizona blowing up--from the initial shock and the initial blast of heat and fire that erupted from the explosion.

Marcello: I would assume that the fire on the water is coming toward the Nevada, is it not?

Cannon: Yes, there was oil burning all over. I can remember that.

Marcello: And this is a thick, black smoke, is it not?

Cannon: Oh, yes. Well, the nearest thing it smells like is blacktop that they put on roads nowadays. It ain't that thick, but that's what it smells like. That's what your fuel oil smells like. It's a little thinner than that, but that's the smell.

that you get off of it.

Marcello: So the Nevada is backing out and trying to get out of that harbor. You pass the blazing wreck of the Arizona. What happens at this point? The Japanese planes converge on the Nevada, do they not?

Cannon: Yes. Everything that was up there then converged on us. I do not know how many bombs hit us or how many torpedoes hit us, but I would say at least three or maybe four torpedoes and several bombs. We were about halfway up the channel, and we were getting more steam up because we were starting to go faster and faster as the turbines caught steam and pushed her out.

By then, I was firing straight up at dive-bombers that were coming down at us. Our guns were pointed right straight up, and we were firing at dive-bombers that were coming right at us. Some of the others were pointed at some of the torpedo planes that were coming out here (gesture).

Then I remember hitting one more. Then we reloaded and then . . . blank. That was it. Now I learned later that the ship continued on. All of our gun crew . . . we had a bomb hit us directly, oh, within five feet of where our gun was and just tore it up by the root. In other words, firing control mechanisms, electrical cables, and so on were just ripped up like you'd pull a sheet of paper off of a pad. It just ripped a big hole in the thing, and the gun,

the crew, and everything went over the side. At that time, why, this is all I can remember at that particular moment.

The next thing I knew, why, I came to. We had no life jackets, but we did have . . . they had passed out gas masks. They had a helmet. I didn't have the helmet on, but I had the gas mask strung around my shoulder, and I pulled it off because it was more weight.

Marcello: You're in the water now.

Cannon: I'm in the water, yes. How long I was there, I do not know. I remember passing out. I remember I was pushing my hands, trying to keep the water and the oil from burning me and catching me on fire. I was trying to swim ashore, which was two or three blocks to the south of me, or I think that was the direction. Anyway, that's where the Naval hospital was, and that's where I was going for. Of course, I didn't know at that time, but that's where they bombed. Anyway, I was pushing the water and making waves and trying to keep the burning oil off of me.

Marcello: Were you being burned in the meantime?

Cannon: Yes, I was, but not badly enough to disable me in any way at the time, but it was hot and fiery, and I can remember doing this kicking like a frog or a seal or something, trying to push the water away from me.

The next thing I knew, I came to again, and I was hanging on a barrel. Now they used these fifty-five gallon

drum or barrels as buoys in the water to show you the channel. They'd have one of those, and then there was a regular buoy that had a bell on it or a light on it. I was hanging on to this thing for dear life. I don't know how I got to that. I was still doing this (gesture) because all that water at that time was just blazing with fuel oil burning on top of the water. It was thick. I mean, it wasn't just a little pool here and there; I mean, it was solid stuff. A lot of lives were lost because they got burned up in that, and they just choked to death or drowned in the heavy oil and so on.

Then I remember somebody says, "Here's a man! He's still alive!" They picked me up and put me in a motor launch.

The next thing I knew, I woke up in the hospital. This nurse and another sailor was cleaning me off with alcohol and something else or something to get the oil off of my skin. I can remember asking where I was, what happened, and so on. All these other things that I've been telling you about had sort of been pushed all aside because here I was, in this white, big ward, and there was a lot of people in there in a lot worse shape than I was. The ones that they could do something for, they were doing; and the ones that they couldn't, why, they were just trying to make them comfortable.

Marcello: At this stage, how badly were you hurting, that is, in terms

of pain and so on?

Cannon: Well, I had several shrapnel wounds in my buttocks.

Marcello: This was evidently from the bomb that exploded.

Cannon: Right. My right arm and shoulder were burnt a little bit from the oil. But the shrapnel wounds in my fanny really hurt me. They'd apparently given me a shot for it because I was on my stomach. They turned me over, and then they was cleaning all that off and then putting medication on it. I said, "Oh, God, that hurts!" They were cleaning it off with alcohol or something. The wounds were not very big, but when they clean them, why, I just let out a yell, and then they gave me a shot. Then I calmed down, and they finally got me cleaned up.

Marcello: So how long did you remain in the hospital then?

Cannon: Oh, two days maybe.

Marcello: And which hospital were you in?

Cannon: I was in a Navy hospital there. It was a big one. It was just a Navy hospital. Anyway, they had Navy nurses and Navy corpsmen in there, so I guess (chuckle) it was the Navy hospital. Come to think of it, I don't really know.

Marcello: Did you have a restless two days in that hospital?

Cannon: No. They took care of me pretty well. After that first day, I didn't hurt too much. They had salve on this, and then they had me laying on my stomach, so I'd stay off my fanny and keep it in the air. They had that bandaged up pretty

well. They seemed to keep me sedated the first day especially and that night.

The next day or whenever . . . which I don't recall which day it was. I could have been in there five days and not really know, to be honest. I think the second day I was in there, I said, "What ship are you from?" He said, "Arizona." I said, "Oh, God!" He says, "Yeah." I don't remember much after that either because I was in and out. I think mostly my trouble was shell shock or concussion. That was what really did the damage.

Marcello: Did you have a ringing in your ears or your head or anything of that nature from that explosion?

Cannon: Well, yes, I think I did, but I didn't realize what it was. My head felt like I'd been on a big drunk. I had a big headache, in other words. I couldn't get over that the Japanese would attack without our even actually being at war with the Japs. I didn't realize that we were in war until after I got back.

One of the doctors came in . . . now this was a couple of days right afterwards. One of the doctors came in, and he looked at me. He said, "Oh, this is Seaman Cannon, right? He was on the Nevada." He asked me this, and I said, "Yes, sir, I was on the Nevada." He said, "Well, how do you feel?" I said, "Well, I'd like to get back to my ship." He said, "Well, your ship is sunk." I said, "No! Hell, we went to sea."

I thought it was gone. He said, "No, it's at the end of the channel up here--sunk." Well, what they did, they'd beached it. Of course, I didn't know that, but he told me. I said, "Well, how many ships did we lose?" I had all kinds of questions. He was very abrupt with me, but yet he answered a few questions. He said, "Well, stick your head out and look out the window, and then you will see." Then I stuck my head out the window, and all I seen was Battle-ship Row up in flames. They were all burning.

Marcello: Still burning?

Cannon: Oh, yes.

Marcello: This is two or three days later.

Cannon: Oh, yes, yes. Well, they got fires out on the Tennessee and one of the other inboard battlewagons that didn't get hit so bad. They weren't burning so bad, but the outer row was sitting on the bottom--most of them. The only thing that was holding them afloat was because they was tied together with the battlewagon that was right next to them. So the ones that were on the outside caught all the hell, or the ships that were all alone.

Marcello: So did you ultimately get back to the Nevada?

Cannon: Well, when we were in port, our normal station . . . the aviation gang would normally go to Ford Island where all our airplanes . . . we'd go over there to have them serviced, or if they need new props, we put them on or put new guns

in or what-have-you.

So he asked me what the reason I was in, and I told him. He says, "All right. Can you walk?" I said, "Yes, sir, I think so." So they gave me some clean clothes and a hat, a pair of dungarees, and a shirt. He said, "Well, we got a whaleboat, and we'll take you over to Ford Island." So there was about four or five more fellows or sailors going with me, and we all went to Ford Island. That's where I went.

When I got there, why, the first thing I did . . . when we pulled alongside the dock, why, there was Lieutenant Staley. It was a happy reunion because he thought I was gone. Quite a few were gone. Well, the guy that got strafed in the aviation gang, he did lose both his legs, but he didn't lose his life. We lost one other guy in the aviation gang. We were in the same class together all through school and so on. What happened to him, he got in that bomb blast that came down through and hit our bridge. He happened to be in that blast, and it tore him apart.

Anyway, when we got ashore, the first one I seen was Lieutenant Staley. God, I ran up to him like he was my father! I was so glad to see him! I says, "Where's the rest of our guys?" He said, "Well, most of them are up at the barracks." I said, "What do you mean, most of them?" He said, "Well, we've lost a couple, and we all thought you

were gone, too. Did you see any of our guys over there at all?" I said, "No, not that I could remember." He asked me where I'd been. I said, "Well, at that hospital over there on the hill." That's all I could say because I didn't remember the name of it. I'm still not sure whether it was a Naval hospital or not, but they were Navy nurses there and Navy corpsmen. That's all I could say about it. I don't remember the name of the hospital unit that was there. I have no idea.

Then we took up normal routine. Of course, all our planes were blowed to bits; all of our hangars were blowed to bits. So we went into a routine of standing watch every night, and they'd assign watches to us. There was a few planes that didn't get strafed or hadn't got blown up. Well, we'd man one of the .30-caliber machine guns, and we'd point it to our best advantage. We'd turn the plane around so we could . . . for any incoming planes, why, we could get a shot at them. We did this for about three or four days.

Then about two weeks later somewhere--I'll say two weeks--they got the Nevada pumped out. They were getting her fixed up, but the Tennessee was getting ready to go back to the States. So among all the aviation gang on the Nevada, they asked if there was any volunteers that wanted to transfer to the Tennessee. She was going back to the States and going into dry dock and be fitted and so on. Like the old saying

goes, "Never volunteer." Well, I did and that was a sad mistake.

Anyway, I volunteered. I was in the same aviation gang. Lieutenant Staley was on, so I figured it was all right. So we came back to the States. On the way back to the States, why, then it was just normal routine of general quarters every morning and every evening and blackouts all the way back. We was escorted by a couple of "tin cans" and doing a pretty good job of making our way and getting there.

Marcello: Well, this is probably a good place to end this interview, Mr. Cannon. I want to thank you very much for having taken time to speak with me this evening. You said a lot of interesting and important things, and I'm sure that historians will find your comments most valuable when they use them to research and study Pearl Harbor.

Cannon: Well, I worked up a good sweat.