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Interview with
Jack W. Robinson
April 23, 1978

Place of Interview: San Antonio, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Jack W. Robinson
(Signature)

Date: April 23, 1978

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Oral History Collection

Jack W. Robinson

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: San Antonio, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Jack W. Robinson for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 23, 1978, in San Antonio, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Robinson in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was stationed aboard the battleship USS Maryland during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Now Mr. Robinson, to begin this interview, just very briefly tell me a little bit about yourself. In other words, when were you born, where were you born, your education--things of that nature. Just be brief and general.

Mr. Robinson: I was born in Centerville, Texas, on October 28, 1917. And my father was a tenant farmer at the time. He came up through being first a sharecropper and a tenant farmer, and finally he became a landowner himself. He came up step-by-step. I joined the Navy during the Depression because there was very little work for a boy

anyplace at that time. So after finishing high school and going to college at Sam Houston State University for a year-and-a-half, I decided to join the Navy and travel and see the world.

Marcello: You know, economics is the reason that a great many people in your particular generation give for having entered the service. Times were tough, and jobs were hard to come by, and money was scarce. The service didn't pay too much, but there was a certain amount of security in being in at the time.

Robinson: Yes, that was the other reason I went in. Not only for the travel, but as you say, there was a certain amount of security--clothing, food, and health benefits--and all those things were taken care of.

Marcello: When did you enter the service?

Robinson: I signed up on January 7, 1938. That's when I actually began my active duty. Of course, I'd been recruited in December or November of the previous year.

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

Robinson: Oh, the desire to travel, primarily. I'd heard that slogan, "Join the Navy and See the World," and I guess that was the main reason.

Marcello: Where did you take your boot camp?

Robinson: At San Diego, California.

Marcello: Now I would assume that when you went through in 1938, you probably were still taking the boot camp for the full duration at that time.

Robinson: Yes, we were.

Marcello: I guess it was later on, as the national emergency arose, that they cut back on the number of weeks that one spent in boot camp.

Robinson: That is right, yes.

Marcello: Was there anything eventful that happened in boot camp that you think we need to get as part of the record?

Robinson: Well, the company I was in was 38-1, and we were an honor company. At that time there were very few honor companies in San Diego Naval Training Center, so we were justly proud of that.

Marcello: What sort of special privileges did that give you, having been an honor company?

Robinson: Oh, just a pat on the back more or less and a few words of praise. That's about the extent of it. We may have had an extra liberty, but I don't remember.

Marcello: Now with a year-and-a-half of college, your education level was probably considerably higher than most of the people that went in the Navy at that time. Was that the case?

Robinson: It was probably true on the average, but it would surprise

you just how many people there were in the division I was in--that was the fire control division--that had been trained in college a year, and some had two years even.

Marcello: Now when you say the fire control division, you're referring to your division aboard the Maryland?

Robinson: Yes.

Marcello: How hard was it to get into the Navy at that time?

Robinson: Well, I thought it was pretty hard. I didn't think I'd get in because I was, I think, about 136 pounds, pretty thin, and I went to Houston, Texas, and saw these other recruits, and they were great, big football player types. I felt like I didn't have a chance. But we had to take the aptitude test, and I think I made 95 or something like that out of a possible score of 100, and they took me right in.

Marcello: Now when you left boot camp, did you go directly aboard the Maryland?

Robinson: No, we were sent first to Long Beach, California, to go aboard the old Utah. We had to wait there until the fleet came back from maneuvers in the Hawaiian area. This was in April, I believe it was, when we were up in the Long Beach area aboard the Utah.

Marcello: What did you think about the idea of going aboard a battleship?

Robinson: Well, I kind of . . . at that time we'd been brainwashed that the battleship was the best, that it had the highest standards

of cleanliness, discipline, and so forth and so on. So I was real thrilled to go aboard a battleship.

Marcello: Were you simply assigned to the Maryland, or was that voluntary duty as such?

Robinson: I was just simply assigned to the Maryland.

Marcello: Now at that time, was the Maryland operating out of Pearl Harbor, or was it still back at San Diego or Long Beach?

Robinson: It was in Long Beach. That's where all the battleships practically were--at Long Beach--at that time. A couple of the carriers--Lexington and the Saratoga--were also there.

Marcello: When was it that the Maryland more or less moved to Pearl Harbor on a permanent basis?

Robinson: Let's see now . . . we went on fleet maneuvers, I guess, in 19 . . . let's see, the attack was 1941. In 1941, I believe, we went on fleet maneuvers and never came back; we just stayed in Hawaii.

Marcello: Did the people in authority ever tell you why you were being more or less permanently based in Pearl Harbor rather than Long Beach or San Diego?

Robinson: No, they never did.

Marcello: What sort of a reception did you get when you went aboard the Maryland? After all, you were still more or less a "boot" so far as the "old salts" aboard there were concerned.

Robinson: Well, we were put in a kind of a casual division. In other

words, we were unassigned, and they checked over our records and everything. I don't remember how long--it was just a matter of days though--and then they assigned me to the F Division, fire control division.

Marcello: Did you ever serve at all in the deck force?

Robinson: The F Division was made up of two parts. Part of them were fire controlmen, and they were technicians responsible for controlling the fire from the guns, both the surface guns and antiaircraft guiders; and the other part was the deck force. We had to take care of the deck on the side where the garbage was kept, and one of our jobs in the deck force was to empty the garbage every day when the garbage scow would come along.

Marcello: So you were part of the deck force then.

Robinson: Yes, I worked in the deck force until they got a chance to look me over and everything, and then they decided that I would make a fire control striker, they called it. I was then assigned to the fire control division, with the designation as a fire control striker.

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

Robinson: Well, I was real thrilled at first, because, as I say, being brought up on a farm, I had never traveled any at all except for one brief period when I'd run away from

home and went out to California and Arizona and had been gone about six months. So this was a real big experience for me, just going to San Diego and then going to Hawaii.

Marcello: Did you have visions of a tropical paradise and things of that sort?

Robinson: Yes, I did. I read too many books, I think, on just how it was, so it was different from what I thought it would be. But the climate was just as nice as I had visualized it as being.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the on-the-job training that you received aboard the Maryland. Now at first when you went aboard, you did mention that you were put in the deck force, as is just about every "boot" who goes aboard one of those ships. Did you ever get involved in a process called holystoning the deck?

Robinson: Yes, we had teakwood decks on the battleship Maryland, and every Friday we'd have to have these holystones which are just about half the size of a large brick, and they'd worn a little hole in them where a stick would go. Then you'd slide these stones up and down the deck until you had all the stains and everything removed, and you'd wash it down with salt water.

Marcello: Now when you originally started holystoning that deck, was

it done more or less on a dry deck or had they watered it first?

Robinson: They'd put down water first and wet it.

Marcello: Was this salt water, also?

Robinson: Yes, salt water.

Marcello: Did that salt water make that deck sparkle or come up white or something like that?

Robinson: It seemed to bleach the wood and made it real pretty.

Marcello: The reason I bring up the process of holystoning is because I'm sure it's a part of the Navy that's no longer in existence.

Robinson: That's right. Even before I left the Maryland, on account of the fire hazard and everything, they removed the teakwood decks.

Marcello: How long did you stay in that deck force altogether?

Robinson: I don't know . . . I know I didn't stay too long, but I did make seaman first class in ten months. At that time I remember the division officer didn't want me to go up to seaman first class even, because there were some people in the deck force that'd been seaman second class almost four years. But I was determined to advance as fast as I could.

Marcello: Why did you decide to go into the fire control division as opposed to staying in the deck force?

Robinson: I didn't really have much choice for it. They just looked at our test scores, and if you had a certain test score, you were eligible for the fire control division. Evidently,

gunnery was pretty strong on the ship, and they kind of had first choice on the recruits that came aboard.

Marcello: Okay, you mentioned that you were assigned to the fire control division. Describe the on-the-job training that you received here. I think we need to talk about this because you were probably in this division when the attack actually occurred. Describe what your on-the-job training was like here in the fire control division.

Robinson: Well, my first job was kind of inauspicious, because they assigned me to the main battery fire control division. We were split into three sections. We had the main battery which was the 16-inch guns, and we had the secondary batteries which were 5-inch .54-caliber guns, and we had the antiaircraft batteries which was eight 5-inch .25-caliber guns plus machine guns and things. I was assigned to the main battery, and we had a plotting room. It was one or two decks below our living quarters, and they had a large place where they kept computers--range-keeper, they called them in those days--and all the other apparatus. Then on one side they had a little work room and a coffee mess. So my first job was to learn how to make coffee (chuckle). I'd never drunk coffee until I went to the Navy.

Marcello: So far as the actual firing of the gun was concerned, I assume that you started literally at the very bottom of

the ship in the magazine room or the powder room.

Robinson: Well, we never got into that part, because we were actually being trained to maintain the fire control equipment. But after my coffee-making job, then I started . . . when we went to the Navy Yard, we would have to take out all the equipment and clean it good, then wash the bearings with alcohol and lubricate them, put them back in. We had to run these daily fire control tests. They would set up a problem, and if your mechanism was working properly, well, then you would get a certain solution; but if that solution didn't come out, well, then you had to find out what the trouble was; and once you found the cause, well, you had to remedy it.

Marcello: Okay, so you ultimately do advance, I gather, to more responsible positions within that turret as time goes on.

Robinson: Yes.

Marcello: Now by the time of the attack, what was your particular function in the turret?

Robinson: I was a fire controlman second class. I would have been a fire controlman first class, but when it came up for re-enlistment time, they wanted me to re-enlist and be first class. They would have sent me to fire control school in Washington, D.C. But I'd saved up about \$1,000, and I was trying to go back to San Houston to finish my education,

and I was trying to get out. Of course, when December 7th occurred, well, I had gotten rid of most of my clothes, except what I needed until January 6th, because I was planning to leave the Navy at that time.

Marcello: Now what precisely was your function in the gun at the time of the Japanese attack? You mentioned that you were a second class at that time.

Robinson: Yes, I wasn't on a gun. I was on what they call a director that controls the fire of the gun. We actually did the firing from a remote station away from the gun. At the time, I was what they called a range-finder operator and antiaircraft spotter. But as part of the fire control problem, we had to get the range or distance to the planes, and then when we would start firing at the planes, well, we used a burst-type projectile. It would make a great big smoke burst. Seeing that it was to the left, well, I'd have to plot a spot so many mills to the right; or if it was below the target, then I'd have to plot a spot up so many feet or if it was above the target, I'd have to adjust downward. So primarily my job was to get the range for the fire control problem and apply the necessary corrections to make sure that we were hitting the target.

Marcello: Well, now if you were firing at airplanes, you were probably not in the 16-inch battery at that time.

Robinson: No, we were in the 5-inch .25-caliber battery. The way it was set up was that they had four 5-inch .25-caliber guns on the starboard side of the ship, and they had four on the port side of the ship. Then way up high on the ship, they had what they called the sky control, and that's where we were stationed. We had a starboard antiaircraft director or Mark I director, and it had a Mark 19 range-keeper in it. It controlled the starboard guns. Then they had one on the other side that controlled the port side guns. And both of these directors were in charge of the sky control officer. At that time, I think his name was Fred Bennett. And, of course, he was overall under the control of the gunnery officer who was down below in what they called the gunnery control tower.

Marcello: Now where was this particular place located?

Robinson: It would be . . . first, you'd have your navigational bridge, and then you'd have the signal bridge above that. Then we'd have to go on up above the signal bridge, so we were about the highest location on the ship, unless you went up in the cage mast where they had controls for the main batteries and for the secondary batteries.

Marcello: As you look back upon that training you received in fire control at that time, how would you rate that training? Was it excellent? Good? Fair? Poor?

Robinson: As far as I was concerned, it was some of the best training

that I've ever seen in the Navy, with the exception of when we went to war. Then we did get very high-caliber personnel overall. At first, they were not very well-trained, but after the war went on and on and on and with no transfers or anything--I think after the war had been going on for awhile--those people were trained just as well as we had been or better. At that time, well, when the war started, every man in my director could practically take care of every other job in the director.

Marcello: What were your quarters like aboard the Maryland when you first went aboard?

Robinson: Well, when I went aboard, of course, all the decks were covered with red linoleum. On one side of the sleeping quarters, they had a long closed-in space that they called . . . let's see, what did they call that? Oh, they called it the hammock locker. We slept in hammocks, had to swing them from the overhead of the ship. In the morning when they awakened you, you had to get up and fold up your hammock and everything and store it in the hammock locker. If you made third class in our division, well, you were entitled to a cot--one of these folding cots. So that was a big step up from low status then--you got to sleep in a cot and didn't have to sleep in a hammock.

Marcello: I assume you didn't care too much about the idea of sleeping

in a hammock.

Robinson: Well, at first, I didn't at all because when you got up in a hammock, you felt like you were going to fall out everytime you turned; but after awhile, I guess your body adjusts. The only thing I didn't like about it is that it's impossible to stretch it out taut enough where you don't have some curvature to your back, which I didn't like too well.

Marcello: Now had you slept in hammocks in boot camp?

Robinson: Yes, we had. So we knew what they were like.

Marcello: How high is that hammock swinging above the deck when you used it in your quarters there in the Maryland?

Robinson: It was probably six feet where it was anchored, but then you had to have a little space where you can crawl in because you had the overhead beams and everything. If you didn't have a little bit of sway, well, there just wasn't room where you can get in and out of your hammock. There was probably about five feet underneath the hammock, because people could stoop a little bit and walk clear through the decks.

Marcello: What kind of gear did you have to store your belongings in?

Robinson: We had small lockers, metal lockers. They were usually close to where we hung our hammocks, or swung our hammocks, and you had to pack your gear in pretty tightly to get

everything in.

Marcello: And I suspect they probably had a sea bag locker, too, did they not, where you could store your sea bags?

Robinson: Yes, they did.

Marcello: Now how about your eating spaces. Were they right there in the quarters, also, or was there a separate room for that?

Robinson: Well, when I first went aboard they were right in the quarters, and one of the jobs that you had to do in this particular division was that you had to be a mess cook. That entails setting up tables which were normally stored on the overhead. You'd let them down for mealtimes. You had about five containers that they called tureens, and when mess was ready to start, you had to set up the tables with the silverware and plates and everything, and then you'd take the tureens and go up and they'd serve the hot food into them. You'd bring them down and serve the people who were in the mess. Usually, you had to take care of about twenty people or two tables. That lasted at least three months.

Marcello: Did you enjoy or like serving as a mess cook?

Robinson: I really didn't mind it that much, but that was a job that was looked down on. Generally, people didn't like to serve, but at the time I was trying to pay off a debt to my dad. I had had an appendicitis operation just before coming into the Navy, and I was trying to pay him the hospital bill back,

and we would average about ten dollars a month in tips from the other members of the mess.

Marcello: I've heard this was the case. In other words, whenever payday came, the people that the mess cooks were serving would tip the mess cooks if that particular mess cook had done a good job.

Robinson: Yes, that was true. You got a mess captain with every two tables, and if you were doing a pretty good job, well, he'd kind of insist that the rest of them kick in something on payday to give the mess cook.

Marcello: Also, I think the mess cooks got extra liberty, too, did they not, when the ship was in?

Robinson: Yes, they usually did give us extra liberty. We had a little different status on our liberty cards than the rest of the crew.

Marcello: Did you volunteer for additional mess cooking duty, or was three months all you wanted?

Robinson: Three months was all I wanted; I didn't volunteer for anymore, because I was interested in getting ahead as much as possible, and mess cooking was kind of a dead end if you had stayed in it.

Marcello: Awhile ago we were talking about the mess tables being hung from the overhead, and also the fact that you were swinging a hammock. Am I to assume, therefore, that the quarters

aboard the Maryland were more or less crowded or somewhat cramped?

Robinson: Well, when they had the hammocks and everything put up, they did look cramped, but actually when everything was stowed during the day and put up, there was a very spacious look about the compartment. With the red linoleum decks polished and gleaming, this was very nice, but after the war had started, this was a fire hazard, too. They stripped them off and just had the bare decks, and they went into a cafeteria-type system of eating rather than the type of system that we had when we were aboard.

Marcello: And you called this red linoleum?

Robinson: Just red linoleum. It was very thick and very easy to walk on and everything.

Marcello: What was the food like aboard the Maryland during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Robinson: Well, having been brought up on a farm where we ate everything put in front of us, I thought it was good. Some people complained about the food, but to me it was excellent.

Marcello: Did you pick up any extra weight?

Robinson: Yes, I did. As I said, I weighed 136 pounds when I went in the Navy, and when I left boot camp, I probably weighed 140. I more or less stabilized around a 145, until I made chief petty officer later on.

Marcello: What part did sports and athletic competition play in the life of that pre-Pearl Harbor Navy?

Robinson: Well, nearly everyone was engaged in some type of sports. It could be the F Division with a team, maybe be a softball team. It was kind of like intramurals, I guess, in colleges and universities. Each division would have their own sports team. You would even have your own rowboat team, and that is the thing I hated more than anything else--rowing on one of these rowboat teams. They had these smokers, too, they called them, for different members who would box. Of course, they would have one from the F Division representing someone against another division--kind of an intramural sort of thing.

Marcello: I gather that most of these athletic events were fairly well-attended by the ship's crew.

Robinson: Oh, yes. Everyone had their favorites, and they would be betting on them and yelling for the one they wanted to win and things of this nature.

Marcello: And is it not true that just about every ship was proud of its band, if it had one?

Robinson: Yes. We had a very good band, and, of course, our theme song was "Maryland Our Maryland." They would get out, especially when we were at sea, and we'd have a little concert back on what we called the fantail, the rear part or

stern part of the ship.

Marcello: All in all, how would you describe the morale aboard the Maryland in that period prior to December 7, 1941.

Robinson: Exceptionally high, very high. It was completely different from what the morale was after World War II started. It was as different as day and night, in fact.

Marcello: To what do you attribute the high morale of the pre-World War II period?

Robinson: Well, I think mainly it was because they had a more stable type of life, like we would stay in Long Beach for a certain period of time, and then we would go out on maneuvers. Then it would be another period of the year when we'd go out on gunnery trials and exercises. People usually knew a year in advance what they were going to do--what they would be doing a year from then--and they could make plans and so forth and so on. After the war, of course, it was a day-to-day sort of thing; you never knew what was going to happen.

Marcello: Also, I'm sure the fact that all of you were volunteers in that pre-war period had something to do with the high morale.

Robinson: Undoubtedly, because all of them came in because they wanted to come in, and that makes a big difference.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about a typical training exercise that the Maryland would engage in after it got to Pearl Harbor. In other words, when would the Maryland go out? How long would

it stay out? What would it do when it went out? When would it come back in? I've asked you a series of about four questions there, so let's back up a minute. Normally, in the daily training routine, when would the Maryland leave Pearl?

Robinson: Well, normally we operated about in three different places after we were down there for awhile and after, I guess, the emergency was coming on. We would anchor off Lahaina Roads, which is on the island of Maui. That would be one group. Then there would be one group that would anchor off of the Port of Honolulu. And then there would be one group that would be in Pearl Harbor. But just before the war started, Admiral Richardson was relieved, and when Admiral Kimmel came aboard, well, he kind of broke that up and brought most of the ships into Pearl Harbor, instead of having them split up into three units.

Marcello: Why do you think they were brought into Pearl Harbor, rather than left at those three various anchorages? Again, was there any reason that was given for this procedure?

Robinson: From the scuttlebutt that passed--scuttlebutt was kind of a rumor that always went through the crew--they said that some of the higher ranking people were complaining because they weren't in port for any shore leave hardly, because it would be only every third cycle that they would get . . .

well, they did send boats in from the anchorage off Honolulu, so I don't know. But that's what we heard; that was the rumor. They wanted to have more time with the family.

Marcello: I have also heard the story that the local merchants were complaining, because it was bad for business to have those divisions broken into three parts.

Robinson: I'm sure that in terms of economics they depended on the fleet a great deal. I'm positive this was a factor, and it may have been the main factor.

Marcello: And when normally would the Maryland go out on one of these training exercises?

Robinson: Normally, we would go out on a Monday, and then we would probably stay out between one to three weeks, depending whether it was under Admiral Richardson or under Admiral Kimmel. The type of exercises that we were engaged in mostly were actually surface exercises rather than anti-aircraft. We did have some anti-aircraft exercises, but it seemed to be the idea among a lot of people at that time that if we did go to war, it would be a stand-off between surface fleets. They didn't think about the airplane as being as important as it turned out to be.

Marcello: This is an important comment that you have just made, and we could probably carry it one step farther and say the

Maryland had many, many more antiaircraft guns aboard it after Pearl Harbor than it did prior to Pearl Harbor.

Robinson: Yes, after Pearl Harbor, we went into Bremerton Naval Shipyard, and they stacked a lot more guns on it.

Marcello: Now as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate, and as we get closer and closer to December 7, 1941, did your training routine change any?

Robinson: Well, I can't recall whether it did or not, because it seems like we were pretty busy training--some type of training all the time.

Marcello: Did you seem to have more general quarters drills, for example?

Robinson: I believe we probably did have more. I know we had more general quarters drills in the Hawaiian area than we did when we were back in the Long Beach area.

Marcello: Now normally when would the Maryland come in off one of these training exercises?

Robinson: They would usually try to get in . . . whether they were coming into Honolulu or coming into Pearl Harbor, they would usually try to get in by Friday afternoon. Then that way they would have a weekend in port.

Marcello: Let me ask you this. Did it take very much of a genius to be able to detect a certain pattern as to when these ships would be leaving and when one could expect them to

be in?

Robinson: No, it didn't. It was pretty much on a regular routine setup. We were given some liberty when we were anchored off Lahaina Roads. We would go in. In fact, I remember the old big banyan tree and everything and getting inebriated on beer (chuckle).

Marcello: You talk about the big banyan tree. I think I know what you're talking about, but maybe from the standpoint of the future scholars using this work, you might want to talk about the big banyan tree.

Robinson: Well, there's an enormous banyan tree right in the town of Lahaina, which had been an old whaling port back in the whaling days. They claimed that was one of the larger banyan trees in the world. A banyan tree, as you know, as the branches go out, it will drop roots from the branch, and then they will take root. So you just have a big cluster, almost, of one big tree with all little trees surrounding it. That was a favorite place for people to go out and lie down on the grass and rest or drink a beer and so on and so forth.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk a little bit more about the liberty routine that you would engage in after you were tied up in Pearl Harbor. How did the liberty routine work aboard the Maryland?

- Robinson: As far as the crew was concerned--that was me--we had port and starboard liberty, and on the day of Pearl Harbor, that was my day to have liberty. In fact, I was getting ready to go on liberty when the attack occurred.
- Marcello: In other words, when the Maryland came into port, half the crew would have liberty on Saturday, and half would have liberty on Sunday.
- Robinson: Right, yes.
- Marcello: And these were all "Cinderella" liberties, were they not? Didn't you have to be back at twelve o'clock?
- Robinson: Yes, we had to be back by midnight, yes. I remember a short time before Pearl Harbor occurred, well, they had quite a few dependants over in the islands. I was getting ready to go back, and this woman run out of a house and said, "Someone's in the house!" I guess her husband was out at sea, and I was afraid I was going to be late getting back at twelve o'clock. I was a little alarmed because I had to take her over to the landlord, and the landlord came over here and investigated. I don't know what they found out.
- Marcello: In other words, the only people that could stay over, that is, have overnight liberty, would be those that had a permanent address ashore.
- Robinson: I believe so. I know that on the night before Pearl Harbor, our sky control officer, Lieutenant Bennett, was ashore over

night, but he had to be back before eight o'clock the next morning on Sunday.

Marcello: What did you normally do when you went on liberty in Pearl or Honolulu?

Robinson: Well, actually, I was indoctrinated into the YMCA, the armed forces YMCA, right after I went into the Navy, because San Pedro and Long Beach both had quite a few social activities, and they had recreational activities, like the women would--Navy wives particularly--would come over and play bridge with the sailors and things like that. So I would normally go to the armed forces YMCA in downtown Honolulu and go see a movie. I wasn't much of a boozer or a drinker, but I would drink beer once in awhile. Mostly, I would say I just hung around the YMCA and went sightseeing and visited the museums and things of this nature.

Marcello: Well, you mentioned that at the time that you thought you were going to get out of the Navy that you had saved around \$1,000, and I'm sure part of that was due to the fact that you did perhaps make the YMCA your point of recreation when you went ashore.

Robinson: Yes, that was one of the things. I tried to engage in activities that were recreational and yet didn't cost a whole lot.

Marcello: And I gather that downtown Honolulu was wall-to-wall bodies

when all the fleet was stationed there.

Robinson: It was. It was real bad. It was still wide open as far as prostitution in that particular period of time, so some of the streets would be just practically solid with houses of prostitution.

Marcello: Okay, I think this more or less brings us up to those days immediately prior to the attack. Now as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate, did you or your buddies in your scuttlebutt ever talk about the possibility of war with Japan and more specifically about an attack at Pearl Harbor?

Robinson: Well, I know we didn't talk about the attack at Pearl Harbor, but we must have talked some about a possible Japanese attack, because I remember the morning of the attack, and I've thought about this several times. As soon as I realized we were under attack, there was no doubt in my mind but that we were being attacked by the Japanese. So there must have been some talk about it; otherwise, I wouldn't have felt it so strongly.

Marcello: Did you ever hear any of the "old salts" aboard the Maryland talk about the Japanese. I'm referring to maybe some of those people that had served on the Asiatic Station.

Robinson: No, I never paid too much attention to what they said. I had applied to go to China a couple of times, because they

told some pretty good sea stories about how life was like out there. But the fire control officer never would approve my transfer to China.

Marcello: I gather those Asiatic sailors were a breed all to themselves.

Robinson: They were. They could tell some real tales. Like, some of them would talk about . . . they would marry Chinese wives. At that time, I guess, for about eight dollars they just would actually buy them from their parents, and some would really fall in love with them. And one of them told me that he was in love with this girl he'd lived with a long time. He was going to bring her back to the States, but he said that at that time there was a lot of bias as far as color. He said that the closer he got to the States, the darker she became. Finally, when he arrived in Honolulu, he bought her a ticket and sent her back home to her family.

Marcello: And I gather most of those Asiatic sailors were tattooed from head to toe, were they not?

Robinson: Yes, they were. You could tell an Asiatic sailor almost by the way they talked and the way they dressed and so forth and so on.

Marcello: When you thought of an individual Japanese during this pre-Pearl Harbor period, what sort of an individual did you conjure up in your mind?

Robinson: I thought that they were a type of person that would be more

or less harmless, that if we did get in a war we'd be able to win the war in a few days and return home. I really didn't think that they were too much of a threat.

Marcello: I'm sure that this was the opinion that was held by most of the crew aboard the Maryland.

Robinson: Yes, I think this would be the predominant view of most of them. If the Japanese were foolish enough to attack us, well, they'd be wishing they hadn't right away.

Marcello: There was a lot of overconfidence aboard the Maryland.

Robinson: Yes, there was.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us up to that weekend of December 7, 1941. What I want you to do at this point, Mr. Robinson, is to go into as much detail as you can remember concerning your experiences on that particular weekend. First, when did the Maryland come in?

Robinson: I don't remember what day we had come in. I know we were in on Saturday during the day. Whether we were in all week or not, I don't remember at all.

Marcello: Where did you tie up?

Robinson: We were tied up along one of the . . . it wasn't a pier actually.

Marcello: They called them a quay or something.

Robinson: Right, kind of like a quay. They were more like a great big buoy, except it was actually anchored into the bottom of

the harbor. And they would have two of those, and you would have a place for the stern of the ship and a place for the bow of the ship to tie up. And then they would have a ladder going over to Ford Island, because these things were right by Ford Island, the Naval air station there.

Marcello: Now do you remember what ship you were tied up with that particular weekend?

Robinson: Yes. The Oklahoma was tied up outboard of us--another battleship.

Marcello: Which was ultimately something that, of course, saved the Maryland on December 7th.

Robinson: Right. If it hadn't been for the Oklahoma being outboard of us, we would have received a lot of the torpedoes that the Oklahoma received.

Marcello: Now is this the quay that you normally tied up to, or could that vary?

Robinson: I believe it was where we normally tied up. If we didn't normally tie up there, it was either one quay forward or aft, but I think it was the one that we normally tied up to all the time.

Marcello: What ships were forward of you and aft of you at this time?

Robinson: Well, I remember the California and the West Virginia were immediately forward of us, and the ships immediately back

of us, I don't recall which ones they were. I know the Arizona was back of us, but just how far it was back, I don't recall.

Marcello: I gather that Battleship Row was a rather magnificent sight when all the battlewagons were tied up there on a weekend.

Robinson: Yes, especially at that time, because I guess due to the emergency or the expected emergency, they had alternated the crews. Before we operated with, say, 1,200 to 1,500 people back in Long Beach; well, now they had boosted most of them up to 2,000 or more. So there were pretty good-sized crews on the ships.

Marcello: Why did they tie the ships up two-by-two there by Ford Island?

Robinson: I think it was for services more than anything else, because they could kill most of the boilers and all the other things on the ship. And then we could get electricity and water and everything from Ford Island, which was right by them.

Marcello: And, of course, also, by tying those ships up two-by-two, they could save space in what was a very crowded harbor.

Robinson: That's true. That's the main reason that they had two together, I guess.

Marcello: What did you do on that Saturday, December 6, 1941?

Robinson: I don't recall a thing that happened on Saturday, because I

suppose I had the normal watches. At that time, being a petty officer, we had the security patrol on the deck immediately below us, and we would have a patrol that lasted four hours, and then we would be relieved by someone else. I recall that I may have had the duty that particular night with the security patrol. I had one person that always relieved me in the 5th Division, and he was habitually late in relieving, so I got to the point where I would always . . . when I went up to call him, I would reach up over his head and turn the clock up thirty minutes, and then when I would awaken him, he'd look up at the clock and think he was late, and then I would get relieved on time (chuckle).

Marcello: I gather, then, that Saturday night was rather uneventful, so far as you were concerned?

Robinson: As far as I was concerned, it was just another night.

Marcello: Let me ask you this question, and maybe it's one you'll have to think about before you answer. Many people like to assume that if an enemy were going to attack Pearl Harbor, the best time to have done so would have been on a Sunday morning. What these people assume is that Saturday nights were times of a great deal of partying and drinking and things of this nature, and that the personnel would be in no shape to fight on a Sunday morning. How would you reply

to an observation of that sort?

Robinson: I would reply that they would probably be right in some respects, but maybe not so much on the drinking and carousing around. Usually, liberty would start at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, so you had this group that was getting ready to go, and then you had this group that had come back at midnight, and then you had the officers coming back before eight o'clock. So you didn't have the stability around the time of the attack that you would normally have, as far as routine was concerned.

Marcello: And even those who had duty had what I guess we could term light duty, did they not? In other words, Sunday was more or less a day of leisure aboard the ship.

Robinson: Yes, it was. It was the "holiday routine," as they called it. It was a different type of day from what you would normally have.

Marcello: In other words, even if you had the duty, after you had put in your time, you could lounge around and read newspapers, write letters, or whatever.

Robinson: Oh, yes, or go to sleep on the deck. You couldn't put your hammock up or anything like that, but it wasn't too bad stretching out on the deck and going to sleep.

Marcello: I guess when the Maryland came into port--and this would apply to the other battleships, too--it would even string

an awning along the stern of the ship.

Robinson: Yes, they would. They would string an awning, and sometimes they would let you go out and sleep on your cot under the awning at night. It'd be a little cooler.

Marcello: Okay, this brings us into that morning of December 7th, and once more I want you to go into as much detail as you can remember concerning your routine from the time you woke up and until all hell broke loose.

Robinson: Well, the main thing I was thinking about that day was going into Honolulu, of course. So after eating breakfast, I went into the petty officers' washroom--the petty officers had a separate washroom and everything on the Maryland--and I went in there to wash out my underwear because this was pretty much a routine. You'd pull off a pair of underwear, and you'd wash them out immediately and get them ready to dry. I was in doing this chore, and I wore an old pair of dungarees and no shoes. It was just like in the next compartment from where we were sleeping and everything.

Marcello: Now what deck were you on?

Robinson: This would be what they called the second deck, I believe, because the third deck was the armor deck just below us. Yes, this was the second deck. We were still above the waterline. We had ports where you could see out. But you had to keep those ports closed at all times when you were

at sea, because they were so close to the waterline that the water would come in if you didn't have them closed.

Marcello: Okay, pick up the routine now. You mentioned that you were in the petty officers' washroom.

Robinson: Yes, I was in the petty officers' washroom, and all at once I felt a shock before I heard anything. I guess it must have been a torpedo exploding on the Oklahoma that was next to us. Then the general alarm went off.

Marcello: You mentioned that you felt this shock. Can you describe what the sensation was like?

Robinson: Well, it was like . . . if you were in a house and you have a real bad sonic boom, and everything seems to shake like that, well, that's the way it was on that. The ship just kind of shuddered and shook.

Marcello: But it didn't knock you off your feet or anything like that?

Robinson: Oh, no, it wasn't that bad. And then shortly after, the general alarm sounded.

Marcello: How did the general alarm sound? What was the method of sounding general quarters?

Robinson: They had kind of a ringing siren-like thing that would go off on the ship. And if it was no drill, of course, then they would say, "This is no drill!" which they said at this time. It was the first time I ever remember them saying it was no drill. I heard it a lot of times during the war.

We had been trained to be at our battle stations in the shortest possible length of time. So I just slipped on my dungarees . . . my underwear was already in a pail; I was getting ready to wash them. I slipped on my dungarees-- I had no shoes--and I started up to my battle station.

Marcello: Now the Oklahoma had only taken that one torpedo at this point, so far as you could tell?

Robinson: Well, by this time, I could hear a lot of explosions. We knew that we were under attack by the time I started up to my battle station from the petty officers' washroom. And on the way up . . . as the Japanese planes would come over, I guess they were firing their machine guns--a burst or so--you know, to get rid of them as they came by. I could hear these things ricocheting, and everytime I would take a step going up, well, it seemed like my flesh would just cringe and all when I'd hear the machine gun bullets whine or ricochet off the ship. But I finally reached my battle station. I went in and we got set up, although there was some delay in firing, because they had the ready ammunition in ammunition lockers up on the deck, on what they call the boat deck. And they had to pass it from down there . . . well, they actually didn't have to pass it because all the guns were also on the boat deck--the 5-inch guns on each side. But it was all locked up. All the ammunition was

locked up. I remember we had one ensign on the ship, named Ensign Roddis. Somehow or another, he ran down and got hold of some bolt cutters, and he cut the locks on the ready ammunition boxes, and they started firing right after that.

Marcello: About how long of a delay did this cause?

Robinson: It was probably not over a minute or so, because he reacted in a hurry. In fact, he was supposed to have been one of the smartest men in his class at the Academy. He was a Naval Academy graduate. He reacted real quickly. It seems like after I got up to my battle station, we were firing almost as soon as we would have been firing if it would have been an antiaircraft drill or something.

Marcello: And approximately how long did it take you to get to your battle station after the alarm sounded?

Robinson: I would say not over a minute, because I was running all the way up there.

Marcello: So those 5-inch guns were in operation, let us say, at least five minutes into the attack.

Robinson: Oh, yes, they were. Now we may have not had all the regular crews on them; I don't know about that. We were controlling the fire for the starboard battery from my station, and I know we were firing at Japanese planes right away because I could see the planes in the spotting glass.

Marcello: Was your station fully manned when you got there or shortly after you got there?

Robinson: Shortly after I got there, we were fully manned; we had a full crew. I don't remember the names of all of them. The only person that I really remember the full name of is the one who was my talker, because he had to repeat the ranges. We had an indicator that went over to the range-keeper with the ranges on it, but he also had a telephone, kind of a back-up, so he would repeat each range that he'd read directly off the counter by the range-finder that I had. The reason I was the range-finder operator mainly was because a lot of people claimed they couldn't see stereoscopically. So they would give you a stereoscopic test when you came aboard ship. They found out that I could see stereoscopically, and they assigned me to main battery as a range-finder at first. Then later on, when they put those new antiaircraft mounts on, they assigned me to a antiaircraft mount.

Marcello: I'm curious about the ammunition storage that we were referring to awhile ago. Now normally, when the Maryland came in, how was the ammunition stored?

Robinson: It was pretty much normal. They used to lock the ammunition up in the ready service boxes up on deck. Then normally this would be enough when general quarters sounded to start

firing; and by that time the magazines--what is called the ammunition train, from the magazines up to the guns--would be manned. They would start passing ammunition up from the magazines. Of course, for the 5-inch .25-calibers, it was cased ammunition, in contrast to the main battery, where you would first have to put in, first, so many bags of powder and a primer and then finally put in a projectile in front of that. But in ours--the projectile, the powder case, and everything--was all together.

Marcello: In a case like this, how do you determine what planes you're going to be firing at? I mean, the air is filled with Japanese airplanes.

Robinson: Well, of course, we were on the starboard side, and we didn't have as many planes to shoot at as some of the other ships that were on the portside. I don't know. But I know that right after I got there we started firing at this plane, and I could see the red rising sun on the plane we were shooting at. And when the first burst went out, I couldn't see them. But at that moment, I had bent over to change my magnification from twenty-four power to twelve power, and in order to do that I had to bend over to the left. And at that time, I was hit by a bomb fragment in the right side. It knocked me out a little bit, and they sent me down to the first aid station. But I was back up

on my battle station, I guess, in less than thirty minutes. And I remember there was an Ensign Crow that was killed up there. He had a pair of shoes on, and I remember they took his shoes off and gave me his shoes, because there was glass and everything all over the deck from the attack.

Marcello: In other words, are you saying, in effect, that the fact that you happened to lean over to change the magnification may have possibly saved your life there?

Robinson: I'm sure it did at that time, because the bomb fragment had come through this thin shield, metal shield, that we had around the director. It just came through like it was paper. If it would have hit me in the back, it would have been "curtains" as far as I am concerned.

Marcello: How large a bomb fragment was that?

Robinson: Oh, I imagine it would be about two to two-and-a-half inches. I still have it in my box with my purple heart. I used to show it to my classes in school when we used to study the part in U.S. history about the Pearl Harbor attack.

Marcello: And we're talking about a jagged piece of metal that is pretty heavy in terms of weight.

Robinson: Right. It was just an old, rough, jagged piece of rough metal; that's about all you could say about it.

Marcello: How long were you up at your station before you got hit?

Robinson: It must not have been very long because we had just started firing, and this was the first spot that I'd made, and that's when I was hit. So it had to be just a matter of a few minutes.

Marcello: Now do you suspect that this was from one of the two bombs that ultimately hit the Maryland?

Robinson: It was either that or one that exploded in the water or something. It was either one that hit the ship or that exploded near by.

Marcello: Do you recall either one of the two that hit the Maryland?

Robinson: I recall feeling the shock of the one that hit up in the bow. We had one that hit in the bow, and it killed one man up in one of the . . . I believe it was in one of the air compressor rooms that they had up forward. I remember feeling the shock when we sustained that hit. The other one, I don't remember it at all.

Marcello: Now while you were up there at your station, what sort of a scene were you seeing before you?

Robinson: Well, it just seemed like everything was in complete disarray, I mean, no organization or anything. It looked a lot worse than it really was, because the oil had leaked out of ships and had caught on fire, and it was blazing up. You had a lot of boats milling around trying to pick up people that were in the water, especially from the Oklahoma

when it capsized. But when I first got up to the battle station, I remember looking out, and the Oklahoma was still up. Then shortly after that, I heard someone say, "The Oklahoma just turned over!" and I looked out, and, sure enough, it was--it was capsized.

Marcello: Describe the Oklahoma turning over.

Robinson: Well, suddenly it was standing upright, and then she just keeled on over and the bottom came up where the deck should have been. The decks were all under water.

Marcello: I assume that this must have been a rather sickening sight, even given all the things that you had to do at the time.

Robinson: Yes, it was a very sickening sight, because I had probably about twelve to fifteen buddies that were on the Arizona, and we could see it was all blown up. This was after the immediate attack was over when we could look around and see what was going on. Just everything looked like it had been destroyed. Of course, we knew we had been hit. We could see the ships ahead of us. We could see the California, and we knew it had been hit bad. The West Virginia, well, it was like us. They were lucky; they were inboard. But it looked like the Japanese had really wiped us out to me. I mean, this was my first reaction.

Marcello: In other words, you were able to see all this taking place before you had actually been hit yourself?

Robinson: No, this was after I was hit and back up on the station.

Marcello: But you did actually see the Oklahoma turn over?

Robinson: Yes, I did.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you're hit, and you more or less pass out or black out at that point.

Robinson: Yes, this friend of mine--Wayne D. Ring, Jr., who lives in Lemon Grove, California, he said that when that bomb fragment hit me, I just went down like a sack that had collapsed or something. They picked me up, and I don't know who took me down to the first aid station. But they just dressed it and everything, and I was back up on the station in a very few minutes. I know it was less than thirty minutes. It could have been even as short as fifteen minutes, because they just gave me a battle dressing, and that's about the extent of it.

Marcello: Now was the shrapnel actually embedded in you or had it just hit you and fallen on the deck?

Robinson: It had hit me and then hit part of the carriage for the range-finder. And this friend of mine--Wayne Ring--he was the one who picked it up and gave it to me. It was hot. He said you couldn't even touch it or anything; it was just awful white-hot when it first landed there.

Marcello: Okay, so what do you do, then, when you get back up to your station?

- Robinson: Well, it was then one false alarm after another, because they kept thinking that they were coming back. I remember I stayed on station . . . I don't know how they fed us or anything, whether they relieved some of us to go down and eat a few at a time or just how they did. But I remember we were still up there that night.
- Marcello: Well, by the time you get back to your station, then, after receiving first aid, I assume that the attack is over.
- Robinson: Yes, it is. But I remember that night. They were bringing some planes into the Naval air station, and someone was trigger-happy and they opened up. We shot some of our own planes down that night. We were more successful against our own planes than we were against the Japanese.
- Marcello: Did your 5-inch batteries open up?
- Robinson: I don't know whether we did or not. But it seemed like the whole harbor was opening up, so we may have. I doubt it, though, because we had pretty good discipline in our gun crews. We had been pretty well trained, so I don't think the 5-inchers opened up as much as the machine guns in the area.
- Marcello: Describe what the surface of the water looked like as a result of the attack.
- Robinson: Oh, it was just covered with debris all over. Right after the attack, of course, the oil was on fire, but eventually

it burned out. But still where the oil became thin, you know, where it wouldn't burn, it was still just loaded with scum. And then over next to Ford Island . . . of course, it drifted up close to the island itself, and it was just one big mess.

Marcello: Now I think that the Maryland caught afire back on its stern, did it not?

Robinson: It may have. There was so much going on that I didn't know.

Marcello: In a situation like this, that is, while the action is still going on, I assume that one does not have a chance to see the "big picture," so to speak?

Robinson: Right. I could only speak just for one little starboard antiaircraft director where I was stationed and what I could see by looking out from it.

Marcello: Now in your station, did you get the impression that everybody was performing in a professional manner and in a cool, calm, rational way?

Robinson: Well, in our particular station, they seemed to be performing just like they would be in a drill. I didn't see any panic or things of that nature.

Marcello: Did you ever see any acts of individual heroism that perhaps stand out in your mind?

Robinson: No, we were kind of a close-knit group in there, and I

don't recall anything that was much more than just . . . the only one I heard of . . . of course, this Ensign Roddis, I thought this was really quick thinking on his part, not waiting for the keys or anything but just getting something and cutting open the ammunition boxes so they could start firing. I just heard that, of course; I didn't see it myself.

Marcello: What sort of rumors did you hear in the aftermath of the attack?

Robinson: Well, mostly that they would be back for another attack, because most people thought that if they were so successful on this one attack, why not come back and finish the job. Everyone seemed to be fearful of this. And we went on what they called . . . well, we were just on one watch. I mean, everyone was at their battle stations for hours and hours. Finally, they went on port and starboard, where you'd be on four hours and off four hours. During that four hours that you were off, during the day you were working and trying to clean up the ship, make repairs, and do the normal routine.

I remember that some of the officers that we had on the ship . . . if you would have nodded your head like you were going to sleep on station, you would have practically been up on what they called a captain's mast

and maybe even given a summary or minor court-martial.

It was the enlisted man's job to go down and call the officers that had to come up and relieve the ones that were on watch. And I remember that before we finally went off this port and starboard watch that I had to wake up--actually wake up--some of the officers that we had in our starboard antiaircraft director and ask them what room number their relief was in. They were just dead from fatigue. I'm sure that the officers were a little worse off than the men in this respect, because the enlisted men could just plop on the deck anyplace, but it was a little unbecoming of an officer to sprawl out on the deck and go to sleep (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you sleep very well that night?

Robinson: Well, that night, I don't know whether I had any sleep or not. When I was finally given a chance to get off the station, I think I went to sleep anyplace because I was just dead tired.

Marcello: Now by nightfall, were the fires mostly extinguished?

Robinson: There were still a few fires around, but most of them were extinguished.

Marcello: And like you pointed out, I assume that you were expecting some sort of an invasion to occur later on.

Robinson: Yes, we were expecting some kind of follow-up or something.

Marcello: What did you do the next day?

Robinson: I don't even recall what we did after that. It seems like the Pearl Harbor attack stands out, but the rest of it is just kind of blurred. I remember when we were getting ready for . . . they had to send divers down to make a weld on the outside first--on the ship--and then they did better repairs after they sealed the water off inside. We knew we were going to go back to the States and get fixed up. We went back to Bremerton, Washington. The main thing I remember about going back there is that we figured that if we were going to be sent right out . . . well, by this time we realized that we had a real enemy to fight. Most of the people thought we would be going back out for our last cruise, so when we were in Bremerton, we were living it up to the last hilt.

Marcello: How long was it before the Maryland actually left Pearl Harbor after the attack?

Robinson: I don't remember how many days it was. It didn't seem to be too long of a time. I remember that we were still kind of panicky, because when we arrived in Bremerton Naval Shipyard, they had an alert, a general alarm, and we were so anxious to get to our battle stations that we were knocking Navy yard workmen off ladders and everything else on the way up. I mean, people were really frantic to get

up to their battle stations and to be ready.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Robinson, that's all the questions that I have relative to the Pearl Harbor attack. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that we haven't gotten as part of the record at this point?

Robinson: Well, there was a couple of amusing incidents, I believe, that I thought were amusing later.

Marcello: Well, why don't we talk about these?

Robinson: Well, one officer, a Lieutenant Bennett, who was the sky defense officer, had been ashore on Honolulu, so he was coming back to Pearl Harbor in this taxi, and suddenly they interrupted the music on the radio in the taxi and said, "We interrupt this program . . ." in fact, he said that they were advertising One-A-Day vitamin tablets, and they said, "We interrupt to say that the Japanese are now attacking Pearl Harbor." It just stopped like that, and then they started right on into the Oriental-type music that you would get sometimes on the Hawaiian stations at that time. He said here he is up there just leaning over trying to get one more word, and about that time they said, "We interrupt this program again to announce to don't forget your One-A-Day vitamin tablets." (Chuckle) He said he almost kicked the radio out of the taxi when this occurred.

Then I remember another instance after we were over the attack. The first time we were down, we were having a muster of all the personnel to see how many people we had lost. Well, we had one man named Skiftness, a large man. He had been visiting over on the Oklahoma, and he was missing. I said, "Well, we may as well write Skiftness off. He's too big to ever crawl through a porthole." A few days later, Skiftness returned to ship, and he had to crawl through a porthole. How he crawled through, I don't know. Of course, the Oklahoma had larger portholes than the Maryland had, because it was an older ship.

Marcello: Speaking of the Oklahoma, did you notice or observe any of the rescue efforts aboard the Oklahoma when they actually cut through the one side, so to speak, or burned out the one side to get some of those people who were trapped?

Robinson: Yes. We had a lot of time, of course, standing watches in the days after Pearl Harbor. They were busy. Admiral Anderson, I believe, was the person who was supposed to be in charge of the rescue operations. We could see them working over on the Oklahoma. I think they did get some people out. But one time when they drilled through one place where they knew there were a lot of survivors when they drilled through or cut through with a torch, it let the air escape, and the water rushed in, and I

think the people in that particular compartment were all lost. They were all drowned. We could see the operation going on, trying to get as many as they could out.

Marcello: Now, of course, there were fires going on all around you. Did this affect the Maryland in any way? Now I'm referring to the fires that were spreading from the Arizona and the West Virginia in particular. Was there fire all around the Maryland during the attack?

Robinson: The fires hadn't really started to much extent during the actual attack where they were any bother to us. Now if the attack had continued any longer, well, then I'm certain that the smoke would have been a real hindrance as far as seeing the enemy was concerned.

Marcello: Did they take efforts to keep that fire away from the Maryland in terms of using high pressure water hoses and so on to keep it from drifting over to the Maryland?

Robinson: I didn't see it, but I assume they probably had high pressure hoses on the fantail to break up the water so that the flames wouldn't endanger our ship.

Marcello: Getting back to the Oklahoma again, I imagine that it was quite a morale booster when they did cut through the bottom and were able to rescue some of the people aboard.

Robinson: Yes, it was, because we had some Oklahoma people aboard our ship. They had been brought over to our ship temporarily

until they could be further assigned.

Marcello: What was the morale like around the Maryland after the attack?

Robinson: I would say it was pretty low, because they just couldn't believe that this had happened to us. At least I couldn't believe it had happened. And this was the thing that made me believe that, because it seemed to us--the enlisted men in general--that the officers just looked for an excuse to go to general quarters. We couldn't help but believe that they must have been badly fooled themselves, because I had never seen a Naval officer at that time that almost wouldn't look for an excuse to go to GQ. So it was kind of hard for me later, when I read about Admiral Kimmel and them, to believe it when they said that they must have known about this attack and all that. That isn't the way the Navy usually operates, as far as I am concerned. The admiral didn't have to worry about general quarters and these other things, so I think that if he had any inkling that an attack was going to occur on Pearl Harbor we would have been at our stations probably a week before the attack (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, Mr. Robinson, I think that's probably a good place to end this interview. I want to thank you very much for having participated. You have said a lot of very interesting

and important things, and I'm sure that the scholars will find your comments most valuable when they use them to write about Pearl Harbor.

Robinson: Well, thank you very much. But it is thirty-seven years after, so I had to curtail the things that I actually remembered, and I tried not to answer those things that I couldn't recall.

Marcello: Well, again, thank you very much.