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Interview with  
ANNA URDA BUSBY  
December 8, 1978

Place of Interview: Las Vegas, Nevada

Interviewer: Ronald E. Marcello

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Approved: Mrs. Anna Urda Busby  
(Signature)

Date: 8 Dec. 1978

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Oral History Collection

Anna Urda Busby

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Anna Busby for the North Texas State Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 8, 1978, in Las Vegas, Nevada. I'm interviewing Mrs. Busby in order to get her reminiscences and experiences and impressions while she was a nurse at Tripler General Hospital during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations on December 7, 1941.

Mrs. Busby, 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.

Mrs. Busby: I was born in German, Pennsylvania, on March 14, 1912. I attended school in German, Pennsylvania. I graduated from Hackensack Hospital School of Nursing in Hackensack, New Jersey, in 1937.

Dr. Marcello: Had you always wanted to be a nurse? Was that your lifelong

ambition?

Busby: I had wanted to be a nurse ever since the age of ten, when a private duty nurse had been taking care of my father at our home. This was in the days when nurses very often did twenty-four-hour duty, and I imagine they had about six hours off to sleep. Then, of course, there were several relatives that were in the nursing profession, and this is another reason for going into the nursing profession; but mainly it was because Daddy became well after having been ill several times.

Marcello: You might mention for the record what your maiden name was.

Busby: My maiden name was Anna Urda. Do you want to know anything else about my background?

Marcello: What sort of nationality is this name, Urda?

Busby: My parents and grandparents came from Austria, from a place called Galicia, Austria, and it is a Russian name.

Marcello: Describe the process by which you eventually got into the Army and became an Army nurse.

Busby: After I graduated, or even before I graduated from nursing school, I knew some military people. I had dated a captain at that time at Governors Island, New York, who thought I might be interested in the Army Nurse Corps. The next thing I knew, I was out at Fort Jay, Governors Island, visiting the chief nurse out there to get information about what the

Army Nurse Corps was like. In the 1930's, one had to wait to be accepted into the military service, in the Army Nurse Corps. You had to be a member of the American Red Cross, so I became a member of the American Red Cross and waited six months before a vacancy existed . . . before I could get in. Then, of course, after I was accepted, I thought I would do a little private duty, when I received orders that the Army Nurse Corps had a vacancy. The next thing I knew, I was out at Fort Jay, in August, 1939.

Marcello: What was the advantage of being in the Army Nurse Corps as opposed to being a civilian nurse?

Busby: I really did not know, except the few times that I went to Governors Island . . . of course, as you know, it is a very small island in New York. I had a good time. Since I was born into a family of six brothers, men had been part of my life . . . and I've always had a good time. I thought, "Oh, here there are more men!" I just had a good time wherever I have been--then and now.

Marcello: So you joined the Army Nurse Corps, and you mentioned that there was a waiting list. In other words, this was a rather attractive profession at that time.

Busby: Very much. To me, to be a member of the Army Nurse Corps at that time, and to have had waited . . . and it isn't like it is today. You can get most any job if you had the qualifications.

At that time, it was different. You had to have the qualifications to be a member and to have had to wait. You really had to have wanted to be part of this organization.

Marcello: When you were accepted as a member of the Army Nurse Corps, would you have gone in as a second lieutenant, perhaps?

Busby: I was a second lieutenant at that time, yes.

Marcello: Do you have to undertake any additional or special training once you become a member of the Army Nurse Corps?

Busby: No. All you had to do was have the proper qualifications.

Marcello: Describe the process by which you eventually got to the Hawaiian Islands.

Busby: Oh, this is a long story! We'll be here all day (laughter). How briefly shall I make this? While I was at Fort Jay, that year went by so fast. The opportunity came for me to serve on the USS Château-Thierry. We were taken down to the Panama Canal Zone. Then another time, I was on the Hunter Ligget. We were taking troops out to the Panama Canal Zone. On that first trip, we were taking the families and a few soldiers. On the second one it was just the men. I remember I was the only nurse aboard, and I had a good time playing bridge.

I remember one time we saw this ship way off somewhere, and they thought it was in trouble. I remember the doctor saying that we might have to come to the rescue of that ship. My immediate thought at that time was, "My goodness! What

will I do? I am the only nurse aboard!" It just seemed that everybody was so helpful in so many ways, and I thought, "Well, we'll have a lot of help." We soon found out that they were not in distress, and everything turned out fine, and we went back to playing bridge.

For the duty that I had on these two transports, this again was a long, long chapter, and it was a wonderful chapter because after I got to the Panama Canal Zone, there were other people who met me there. We had a very busy time, and the next thing I knew, we were coming back to Fort Jay,

Then the opportunity came to go either to Newport, Rhode Island--to Fort Adams--or San Juan. I thought, "Oh, no!" because in those days, for overseas duty you had few choices. The one place I wanted to go to was Hawaii, because I heard all these other older nurses talk about the Philippine Islands, about Hawaii . . . and Hawaii was my choice.

The next thing I knew, I was up at Fort Adams, Rhode Island. As you know, this was a very, very lovely place. It was the resort place in its day, in the 1920's and 1930's. I enjoyed very much the dancing, playing tennis, swimming, yachting; and the days went by too fast. I was at Fort Adams from November, 1940, to May, 1941, when I received orders for Hawaii.

I had the choice of stations I wanted. It seems that

throughout my entire seven years in the Army Nurse Corps, I had gotten everything I'd wanted. It was unbelievable, the way I have felt about it. At any rate, I was being transferred to Hawaii.

I had a boyfriend at the time . . . oh, I had several. And, of course, there was someone that I was a little interested in. I thought, "Oh, I've got to go to Hawaii." I had about a month's leave, and I shopped for everything imaginable in New York City. A cousin of mine helped me pack everything. It seems that I am a person who always does things at the last minute, but I get them done.

As I was getting ready to go to Hawaii . . . and in those days we went by train, and how I ever made it to New York City on the train, I don't know. Anyway, my two youngest brothers were seeing me off, and so were other friends. Here I was, buying my ticket at the last minute. The ticket clerk said to me, "Don't you know any better than to buy your ticket at the last minute?" At any rate, I did get an upper berth, and after three or four days across the United States, I finally reached San Francisco and waited there for a week or longer for the Mariposa, which took about twenty-four nurses that June to Hawaii.

We had a very good time in San Francisco. When you are in your twenties, what do you think of when you're a



young girl and you're having a good time? You think about the boys, don't you? We were having a very good time in San Francisco.

But I remembered rumors about Lindbergh--this, I shall never forget--that he was causing trouble, that he believed we would not get into war. Yet, others knew we were going to get into a war eventually. As far as I was concerned, I didn't believe we ever would. Another reason why I wouldn't believe it is because I had a roommate up at Fort Adams, Rhode Island, who listened to the radio, and she would say, "We are going to have trouble with Japan." Well, I was too busy just having a good time, too busy with the men, and there was just not going to be any war.

Anyway, we finally sailed on the Mariposa for Hawaii. Then I remember, after we got there, being greeted by other nurses, and these lovely flowers. To me, the whole memory of my career has been very beautiful, if I could just write it down like I would like to.

Marcello: You've gotten to the Hawaiian Islands, and as you mentioned, you were greeted by these nurses.

Busby: While we were on the Mariposa, on the last evening out, which took about three or four days to sail across . . . of course, there was always the captain's ball. I remember going to the beauty shop, and I didn't have enough money with me to

pay to the beauty shop. When I got back to my cabin, I asked my roommate, who was Lois Watson at the time, if she could loan me a few dollars. Lois couldn't make up her mind which evening gown to wear, so she had two evening gowns spread. I said she could only wear one. Well, anyway, it didn't matter. This all worked out all right. She loaned me the money, and we had a good time. But today, here in Las Vegas, I am finding out how others had seen me at that time, and this is what's funny because I don't remember all of this. They say I flitted all around, and I was having a good time. I don't remember anything on the Mariposa, except I was enjoying every moment.

In Hawaii, I remember the ship entering the harbor, and they pointed out Diamond Head. We got the flower leis. We were transported to the hospital where we were going to be assigned, and, of course, I went to Tripler.

Marcello: Did you have a special dormitory or nurses' home right there at Tripler where you stayed?

Busby: At Tripler, yes. I was assigned to the Main Nurses' Quarters, and I had a roommate whose name was Allie Martin.

Marcello: Describe what your quarters were like there at the hospital.

Busby: It was a large room with a double bed. It was a very simple room, nothing compared to what we have today. With a trunkload of all new clothes, adventure, liking the nursing professions,

and the change in the many assignments we had in the military . . . I liked this because it always made me feel that no matter where I was assigned, I was going to do the very best that I could. I felt that I had many responsibilities and that I was one nurse who could be sent anywhere and get the job done.

Marcello: By this time, had you advanced rank?

Busby: When we went in, we were all second lieutenants. I was a second lieutenant at this time. Rank meant nothing to me.

Marcello: How fast or slow did promotion run in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army Nurse Corps?

Busby: Very slow, very slow. Promotions did not come along until after the war. I remember back again to when I first entered the service. I was told by the captain that I had dated that if I remained in the service that rank would come fast. I said, "Rank does not interest me."

Marcello: Let's go back and again describe your quarters. You mentioned a little bit about your room. Can you elaborate on anything you said? The room, the dormitory, or the general housing area where the nurses stayed?

Busby: The nurses' quarters, I imagine, at that time--I would be guessing--housed fifty nurses, maybe not. I was on the second floor with a large room with a double bed, double dressers, and I believe there was just one closet. It was a plain room, but how much

time do you spend in a room?

Marcello: Did you take your meals right there at the nurses' quarters?

Busby: At that time, yes. We took our meals at the nurses' quarters.

There were two nurses who were assigned to the preparation of the meals. We had a very nice dining room. It was all very, very lovely. I liked being waited on. I liked the fact that somebody did my laundry for me; I liked the fact that we had a maid who did all the maid service; I liked the fact that somebody would do even other washing for me. All I had to do was just nurse and have a good time.

Marcello: I talked to one of the nurses yesterday who was out at Schofield Barracks, and she mentioned that out there they had a Japanese cook and other servants.

Busby: We did, too . . . and the Filipinos, that's right.

Marcello: What would the two nurses do? You said the two nurses were assigned to duty in terms of meals.

Busby: They purchased the food, and they saw that it was prepared. This was their responsibility.

Marcello: So they acted in a supervisory capacity, rather than actually preparing the meals?

Busby: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Marcello: I gather that the dining and so on was a relatively formal affair, too, was it not?

Busby: Yes, and very nice, very nice. Everything was served to you

at the table. All you'd have to do is just sit down, and you were served.

Marcello: How closely would you have been supervised by the head nurse or the house mother or whatever you would want to call her in the nurses' quarters? Were you closely supervised in terms of your going and coming?

Busby: I never felt that I was. I knew what the rules were, and whatever rules I wanted to break, I did. I'd love to tell you about one of them (laughter). I think in the first three months that I was at Tripler, I did not know that this regulation existed. Anyway, I had the opportunity to go to the other islands. I thought, "I want to do what's right," because I was in the regular Army Nurse Corps. I went to the chief nurse's office one day, and her name was Captain Edna Rockefeller. She is deceased now. At that time, we didn't address them by rank, and I said, "Miss Rockefeller, I have an opportunity to fly to the other islands." She said, "Don't you know any better than to come in here and ask to go to the other islands? Don't you know you must be here at least six months before you can go anywhere?" I started backing out the door from her office, and I said, "No, ma'am, I did not know that. Thank you." She says, "You can't go." I says, "Yes, thank you."

I backed out of the door, and I went and that was it.

I took two other nurses with me, and one of them was from Schofield, and the other was from Tripler. I don't remember the nurse's name right now from Schofield, but the other nurse's name from Tripler was Gelane Matthews. She lives in El Paso now, and her name is Barron, and she is a retired colonel now. She and her husband have visited me at least four times in Montgomery, Alabama.

Marcello: I've interviewed her.

Busby: Oh, have you! Anyway, these were fun days before and during and after the war, even though there was that scary part.

Marcello: Did you get into any trouble after having taken that trip?

Busby: I went over to Molokai; I went over to Maui; I went over to the island, Hawaii. The major that we went with was on a regular reconnaissance tour. I knew he was on some kind of a tour, but what he was doing, I did not know. This was before the war, just about three months before the war. While we were at these various islands, he had provided transportation for us and took us wherever we wanted to go. We were to return at a certain time to go to these other islands, and this is exactly what we did. I remember while we were on the islands of Maui, we were sitting down near the ocean there for a while . . . and I remember having fallen into the water. We had taken pictures of all this, had a wonderful time, and came back.

I thought, "Oh, golly! I hope nothing happens because if it does, it will go down on the records that I was AWOL!" Well, I kept my fingers crossed, and everything turned out all right. I got back. We had pictures taken of all of this, and we could never let Edna Rockefeller see these. On December 7th, and shortly after, Edna Rockefeller's attitude toward the nurses changed. She began to see some of these pictures and has never said a word about them. Of course, I didn't care, either, by then. I was too busy.

Marcello: I gather that in terms of the social life for the nurses and so on on the island that there were usually regular dinners and dinner dances and so forth on the weekends at the various officer's clubs.

Busby: To me, there was a dinner all the time (chuckle). All I had to do was have the time (laughter). I went to a dinner and dance quite frequently.

Marcello: Again, this was all very formal in terms of long dresses and so on.

Busby: Oh, yes. I was ready for all this; I was well prepared for this. To me it was all just good times. We played golf a great deal in those days, and I went swimming and played tennis. I was what you might call an outdoor girl.

Marcello: You must have been in your glory there in the Hawaiian Islands with all the service personnel around.

Busby: I was in my glory! I was always in my glory; I was always in my glory! Every opportunity that I had to go swimming and play golf at Fort Shafter across from Tripler Hospital, I did.

Marcello: Let's talk about your professional duties while you were a nurse at Tripler General Hospital. Where did they put you when you first arrived in the Hawaiian Islands?

Busby: I was on the men's ward, on a surgical ward, for a while . . . at a medical ward. Then, because I liked "OB," which is maternity, I was on the maternity ward before Pearl Harbor was attacked. This is where I was working.

But just before the attack, I was a patient at the hospital. I had an infection of the right cheek, and I was a patient on the women's ward, which was located directly above the maternity ward on the second floor. Now, I am a patient.

Marcello: Am I to assume that, while you were working at Tripler, you were kind of moved around throughout the hospital, performing different functions so that you would kind of be familiarized with every phase of the operations at the hospital? Was this a standard procedure?

Busby: I was on the medical, surgical, and "OB" ward, and now I am a patient.

Marcello: What sort of hours did you have there at the hospital?



- Busby: In those days, we worked what we called the "twelve-hour duty." It was a twelve-hour duty at night, and at the daytime it was from seven o'clock to seven o'clock. You would have a few hours off and then return in the afternoon. Let's say you were off from ten to two o'clock, and then you came from two to seven o'clock. If I remember, we only had a P.M. and an A.M. off, or maybe have, like, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.
- Marcello: Was it relatively rare that you would receive a full weekend off?
- Busby: I don't remember receiving a full weekend off at all before the war. No, not unless we took a little leave.
- Marcello: When would you get the night duty?
- Busby: Oh, golly, night duty came too often (laughter). Night duty would come . . . well, no, I had night duty just one time before the Pearl Harbor attack. The next time it was in March, after the attack. The younger nurses were the ones that got night duty, I think, much more frequently than the older nurses. In fact, I remember having night duty only about three times.
- Marcello: How long would you have night duty? In other words, how long would this last?
- Busby: Oh, it would go on for one month at that time--for one whole month. Then when you came off duty, you had one day of what

they called "sleeping time," and then you'd have a whole day off, which was not much time in comparison to what it is today.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the two countries continued to deteriorate, were you able to notice any change at all in your routine or the activities that occurred there at Tripler?

Busby: I never did. I, for one, never did. I was completely surprised at the time of the attack.

Marcello: When you were out on dates with your officer friends, did they ever talk very much about increased tensions or anything?

Busby: Never. I never heard anything.

Marcello: In other words, they didn't talk shop very much at all.

Busby: No, not the officers that I was with.

Marcello: Mainly because you probably weren't interested in shop talk.

Busby: No (laughter).

Marcello: Generally speaking, would you say that Tripler General Hospital was a very ideal place for a young nurse in that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Busby: I loved it. What else could I say? How else could I describe it? I liked it very much.

Marcello: In looking back, would you say that this was probably the feeling of most of the other nurses there, also?

Busby: As far as I know, I think it was. I think each of them will

have to speak for themselves. I liked the nurses' quarters very much. It was home. Mainly, I was having a good time.

Marcello: Where exactly was Tripler located? You might pinpoint its relation to some of the other military installations, such as Pearl Harbor or Schofield Barracks.

Busby: Tripler Hospital was located right across from Fort Shafter, just across the street. Downtown Honolulu was just maybe--I don't know--one or two miles away. Schofield was about fifteen or twenty miles from there.

Marcello: I guess it was a pretty large military hospital, was it not?

Busby: Yes, it was. I don't remember the bed capacity right now, what it was at that time. I imagine it was around 300 or more.

Marcello: I think that brings us into that weekend of December 7, 1941, so let's go into as much detail as you can remember concerning that weekend. You had mentioned previously that you, yourself, were a patient at the hospital at that time. So pick up the story at that point.

Busby: I was a patient at the hospital with an infection of the right cheek. My entire right cheek was involved. The doctor felt that this was an infection that was probably picked up at the swimming pool, because I went swimming quite frequently. It started out as a little pimple, and I decided that I would treat it myself. What had happened was that the infection had spread. I had received X-ray treatment and many other treatments,

and when I saw that the infection was spreading, I became quite alarmed.

I had asked Doctor Young--he was Captain Young at the time--if they wouldn't consider sending me to a specialist in town, and they did. They provided transportation for me. Alma Asson went with me to see the doctor in town, and he looked at me and said all I needed was some boric acid treatment and sulfa powder. The sulfa powder was put on in the daytime, and at nighttime the boric acid was put on. Within a day or two, this thing was clearing. But, as you know, all skin conditions will clear up if you give them time.

I remember Doctor Spitler making rounds one day. He'd been making rounds with Doctor Young. Doctor Spitler was a surgeon; Doctor Young was the chief of medical service. When Doctor Spitler looked into my room, he said, "Well, I guess that specialist in town helped you." I said, "I am getting better," and I was. The infection was clearing up.

And on December 7th I had just set my breakfast tray down, when I heard the horrible noise. The head nurse, Madeline Dougherty, ran down the corridor, and this was unusual for nurses to run. With that noise and the nurse running, I thought, "What is happening?"

I followed her to the back porch on the second floor of Tripler Hospital, and we saw all the smoke, all this noise.

It seems like that within a moment, something flashed before us, but it may have been a mile away or so. It struck the oil drum at the pineapple cannery, and this thing went up in flames. I really was scared then.

She ran back down the corridor into the office, picked up the phone, and called an officer at Hickam Field. I heard her say, "My God! The Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor!" I said to myself, "We will all be needed on duty. I will get into my uniform and report to the chief nurse."

The next thing I knew I had changed my garb, put on my nurse's uniform, picked up my little radio-record player, and as I was coming down the stairway, I looked into the window, which was the "OB" window. Verla Thompson, whom we call "Tommy," was preparing formulas for the babies. I said, "'Tommy,' the Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor," and she said, "Oh, go away, Anna! You're always kidding!"

I went right on to the nurse's quarters, and when I got there, I met Peggy McKay. Peggy McKay had a little basket on her arm, and she said, "Anna, we're celebrating my boyfriend's birthday, and we're going on a picnic." I said, "Nobody's going anywhere! The Japanese are bombing Pearl Harbor, and we will all be needed on duty!"

With that, I went down the corridor into the chief nurse's office. Edna Rockefeller looked at me, and she said,

"Where do you think you're going with that red face?" I said, "Wherever you need me--on duty." She said, "You can't go anywhere with a face looking like that." It was quite red. She said, "You go back to the women's ward, and you take charge, and I'll send the charge nurse elsewhere." So before the second attack came, I was back on duty on the women's ward.

Marcello: At that time, that is, by the time you got back on duty again in the women's ward, you had not actually been tending to any of the casualties coming in.

Busby: On, no, no.

Marcello: Could you observe any of the preparations that were being made for the casualties that would be coming in? Obviously, since the attack had already started, common sense would have told the nurses and the doctors that casualties would be coming in. What preparations were made?

Busby: I can't tell you, except that I returned on duty, and it was later in the day when I saw the corridors out there on the outside just filled . . .the litters were just filled with bodies everywhere. As I was going on out there, I did not know because I was the only one on the women's ward with whatever help I had, and I don't remember what help I had.

Marcello: Were the casualties numerous enough that they actually had to bring some of them into the women's ward?

Busby: We did not have any casualties brought into the women's ward.

Marcello: Did you ever, during the attack, have the opportunity to administer to any of the casualties that were coming in, or did you remain right there in the women's ward?

Busby: No, I remained on the women's ward. I took no part in that at all that day, or, in fact, for days after or maybe even a week or more.

Marcello: What could you possibly do while you were there in the women's ward? Just simply reassure the women that were there that their husbands were okay?

Busby: No, I don't remember that, except that it just seemed to me, as I looked down the corridor, it looked like Broadway. All the lights were on; a good many of the lights were on. I remember having one very ill patient who had cancer and who required morphine injections every three to four hours. It is surprising that for a day or so this particular patient didn't require as many injections as she had before this.

One other lady, I remember, was like a little doll with beautiful white hair, and she was not to get out of bed. She was a dependent of the military. How she got to her cigarettes and lit a cigarette and the handkerchief on her table, I don't know. Somebody started yelling, "There's a fire across the hall," and when I got to this lady's room, I took a pitcher of water and threw it on the handkerchief that was on the

table. The fire was out, and I took her cigarettes away from her, and I said, "You cannot smoke! And nobody can stay with you while you are smoking! You will just have to wait until I have time or someone has time!" I must have said this in a very angry way. The reason I say this is because I shall never forget.

I reported this to Captain Charles Young, and I think within a day or two she was discharged. As she was going out the door . . . and I now don't remember if she was going out on a litter or on a wheelchair, but I do remember her because she was a lovely little old lady, like a dressing doll. She said to me, and a patient had never said this to me, "I know you're glad that I'm going." I don't remember what I said to her. I was glad that she was going, but I didn't need any more trouble than I was already having. I had enough to do. All I remember is that the days were busy, and the weeks were busy.

Marcello: How many women did you have there in the ward at the time of the attack?

Busby: I don't remember. I couldn't tell you what the census was right now, except that I was busy. I could tell you a lot that had happened between then and the next morning.

Marcello: Okay, let's go into that next morning then.

Busby: On December 7th, that evening at seven o'clock--you see, we



didn't know how long we were going to work as far as hours and days were concerned--the night nurse, Alma Asson, came to relieve me at seven o'clock. I remember I was too frightened, too terrified, to cross over from the hospital to the nurses' quarters, which certainly could not have been more than fifty yards, if that. The reason I was so terrified was that I knew that if the M.P. said, "Halt! Who goes there?" I did not think that I would be able to reply, and I would be shot.

So I decided I would sleep on the women's ward that night in the same bed where I was a patient, and I did. Around two o'clock in the morning . . . three o'clock in the morning . . . anyway, some wee hour of the morning, I was awake, and I went into the nurse's office to talk to Alma. The night supervisor was making rounds, and so the night supervisor said to me, "As long as you are up, you take care of the ward for a little while. Miss Asson will relieve on one of the other wards." This is what happened. So when Alma Asson returned within thirty minutes or one hour, whatever it was, then I went back to bed to sleep.

I was awake by six o'clock in the morning, in my uniform, and I was going to go over to the nurses' quarters to change my uniform, have breakfast, and return to duty. Alma Asson and I were standing on the porch outside the ward when an enemy plane flew over Tripler Hospital and fired on the dental

clinic. This is on December 8th. When we heard this firing, we both threw ourselves on the corridor floor in the ward.

Marcello: Did you actually see the airplane itself?

Busby: No, just the firing. When we heard that "BANG! BANG!" that really frightened us. Now, we are lying down on the floor, and as we were lying down, she said to me, "Anna, have you had that rosary blessed that your boyfriend gave you?" I said, "No." She said, "Let me take it and have it blessed for you the next time I can." I said, "All right." While we were lying there on the floor, she said, "When did you hear from him last?" I said, "I just heard from him." He had written, in Spanish, "Una te olvida." I said, "How do you translate that?" She said, "'You will never be forgotten.'" I remember that conversation very well.

Then, of course, I went over to the nurses' quarters, changed into my uniform, and came back on duty.

Marcello: When you came back on duty again, did you go up to the women's ward, or by this time were you taking care of the actual battle casualties?

Busby: No, I took care of the women's ward the whole time. I did walk over to the surgical ward and saw some of the patients from the hallways, but that was about all. I had nothing to do with the casualties themselves. I will never forget the moaning and the groaning in the corridor.

Marcello: Am I to assume that something of this nature is very disconcerting, even to a nurse such as yourself, who has perhaps been around pain and suffering for some time, that is, this sudden influx of casualties coming in, most of whom have been burned or hit by shrapnel?

Busby: The only thing I could tell you is that I was so terrified. There was a job to do, and I did what had to be done. I remember that I remained on the women's ward for a couple of weeks or so before the ward was turned over to whatever it was turned over to.

Marcello: I guess that the nurses and the doctors who were handling the battle casualties literally worked themselves to exhaustion, did they not?

Busby: Oh, yes! I remember now I did go over to the nurses' quarters the next night, and this is where you were beginning to hear all kinds of stories, and this was just terrible. Many of the nurses were working for days at a time without having any time off to rest and sleep.

I remember the next night, when I was at the nurses' quarters--this was December 8th--hearing something during the night. I didn't know that we had a guard on duty down in the nurses' quarters. There was some more commotion, and I awakened. I walked out into the hall, and there was Madeline Blonsky. She was a nurse anesthetist--a beautiful nurse. She was my

supervisor. I remember when I walked out of my room into the corridor on the second floor, and I said, "Madeline, what's wrong?" She said, "Hush! Everything is all right."

I can't think of the nurse's name right at the moment now, but she was a very lovely nurse. In the next room she went to bed, and her mattress caught on fire. She was smoking a cigarette, and you could smell the fire. Madeline told me that everything was all right, so I went back to bed, and that was it.

I also remember looking out the window at nighttime one night. They said the Ku Klux Klan had started a fire with a big cross up there, and I remember the fire up there.

I also remember that we put blankets over all the windows at nighttime, and we would play bridge. When we would go into the corridor, we would turn off the light before we went out; and when we'd come back in the room and close the door, we'd turn on the light.

Marcello: You mentioned the cross that the Ku Klux Klan had. Did this occur around the time of the attack or afterwards?

Busby: This may have been a day or two later. I don't know which. Right around December 7th.

Marcello: You never heard anything about why this fiery cross had been lit and so on and so forth?

Busby: No. By this time, I knew we were at war, and I didn't know

what else was going to happen. I really didn't know the significance of this, except that with this fire, maybe the enemy was out there, and this would show them where the islands were. This is all I could think of then.

Marcello: I assume that probably the Klan had lit this cross more or less as a way of venting their anger against the Japanese.

Busby: I really don't know. I really don't know.

Marcello: This brings up my next question. Did you say awhile ago that you did have some Japanese working in the nurses' quarters?

Busby: Oh, yes! What happened in the nurses' quarters . . . it seems some Japanese and some Filipino . . . what did they do? They got into a fight with one another. The Filipino was angry because his people were still in the Philippines, and he thought that the Japanese had attacked his family or relatives or someone over there. I remember a little bit about that, now that you ask me.

Marcello: What happened to the Japanese employees?

Busby: I do remember something about the Japanese and the Filipino knifing one another. The Filipino knifed the Japanese, I believe it was, because the Filipino was quite concerned about his family back in the Philippine Islands. What happened after that, I don't know. This was the responsibility of the chief nurse. I had my other duties to take care of, so I was taking care of my own,

Marcello: Up until this time, would you say you had very cordial relations, however, with whatever Japanese you encountered on the islands themselves?

Busby: I had no difficulty with anyone, in the hospital or in the nurses' quarters or anywhere else. All I know is that we were told not to drink any milk when we went into town--days later--and we had to carry a gas mask. I don't remember now just when those were issued to us, whether it was immediately or when, but I remember we had to carry those with us at all times. I was always with a group when I went anywhere. We had to be in by a certain time; that was another thing. We were not to stay out late, and, of course, I abided by the rules.

Marcello: You mentioned just a moment ago that you seemed to always be with a group. I've heard one of the other nurses say that it seemed to be a general practice that several of the nurses would congregate in one room in the aftermath of the attack. I assume this was because there was a certain amount of security in numbers or something like that. Did you observe or recall that taking place?

Busby: This is true. I was always with someone. I was never alone, never alone. But I never thought of it that way. I would listen to what was happening elsewhere in the hospital or what they had heard.

Marcello: Did you have any different feelings toward the Japanese now

as a result of this attack? I mean, even when you encountered, let us say, innocent Japanese civilians in and around Honolulu, did you have any different attitudes toward Japanese?

Busby: Really and truly, I don't believe that I, as one, did. I really had not heard the rumors that some of the other nurses had heard, as I have learned now through the years.

Marcello: Had you heard the rumor that night of December 7th, perhaps, that the Japanese had landed or were about to land and all this sort of thing?

Busby: I did not. I was a patient. I really knew nothing. This was a complete surprise to me.

Marcello: I have one last question, Mrs. Busby. I assume that your world had now changed.

Busby: Yes, in many ways. Of course!

Marcello: In other words, the life of an Army nurse after December 7th was a lot different than the life of an Army nurse before December 7th.

Busby: Oh, yes, indeed. Shortly after that, I became Area Chief Nurse of the Fort Kamehameha area and Kaneohe area and of Tripler. This, again, was something I did not want, because as a second lieutenant, I felt that I could still put on an evening gown and go out dancing. You were not supposed to; you were supposed to be in uniform at all times. Now that I was an Area Chief Nurse, I had to set an example. I went to town and bought

myself a pair of shoes with bows on them while I could get them (laughter).

Marcello: So I assume, then, that your life, both professionally and personally, did change after December 7, 1941?

Busby: Very much so. I've had a very interesting life, I think.

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

Busby: Well, thank you.