

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War 1939-1945 - American

Personal Experience

O.H. 1645

EARL F. BARKLEY

Interviewed

by

Dirk Hermance

on

May 20, 1993

EARL BARKLEY

Earl Barkley was born in East Lewiston, Ohio on December 7, 1923. His parents were James F. And Edna Barkley. Mr. Barkley spent 2 and a half years in high school. He entered the United States Navy on December 27, 1940 and received his basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training base. He was trained to be a striker - an apprentice gunner's mate - in aviation ordinance, which included torpedoes and aircraft gunnery. He was assigned to the U.S.S. Whitney in the Pacific destroyer fleet, and subsequently was assigned to mine school at the submarine base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii from August 1, 1941 where he learned to de-fuse mines. Much of his work involved re-arming destroyers with armaments. During the Pearl Harbor attack, Mr. Barkley handled ammunition for the three inch gun turrets on his ship. After suffering from stress problems, he was subsequently re-assigned to the U.S.S. Satterlee which had an important role in the Allied invasion of Normandy and southern France. It should be noted here that Mr. Barkley was at two pivotal events of World War II, Pearl Harbor and D-Day. He was discharged from the Navy on July 31, 1945.

Mr. Barkley married his wife Betty on October 8, 1945. Mr. and Mrs. Barkley settled in their current residence in New Waterford, Ohio where they had seven children; Sandra Lee, Anne Marie, Kathy Lynn, Ellen Jean, Laurie Roth, Frederick Leroy, and Keith Raymond. He was employed as a truck driver by numerous firms, and worked for Arrow Trucking Company from May 16, 1978 to December 19, 1988 when he retired. He received Pacific, European, Mediterranean, and American theater medals, and a Pearl Harbor Medal. Mr. Barkley enjoys fishing and being a HAM radio operator, and remains active in the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association

H: This is an interview with Earl F. Barkley for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Pearl Harbor Survivors - World War II, by Dirk Hermance, on May 20, 1993, at the History Department, at 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Barkley. On Pearl Harbor Day, why do you not tell me where you were, and what is your first recollection of that day?

B: I was sleeping on a cot on the top side of the USS Whitney, right near an ammunition box for the three inch fifty anti-aircraft guns. My first recollection was being half asleep and half awake, and hearing guns firing.

H: What time was that?

B: That would of been right after the attack started. Eight o'clock probably, earlier. I was wondering what we were doing out to sea firing for because the destroyers had been belting machine gun ammunition for anti-aircraft practice. This old ship had to go out every so often, out to practice. The thought went through my mind -- what are we doing out to sea on Sunday? At about that time, a Fire Controlman rushed out of the fire control shack. He grabbed me right by the arm and stood me on my feet, and said, "The damn Japs are bombing us!" So, I just took my foot and kicked the cot aside, because I could still hear the explosions and the machine guns firing vividly. The destroyers alongside were firing. I ran over and looked astern, 2,000 yards astern was Ford Island. And at battleship row, there were great columns of smoke. The sun was shining bright enough that I could see the Japs' silver planes with the red disks on the wings, as they banked away, after they dropped the torpedoes.

H: Were they low?

B: Yes, they were low.

H: Very low?

B: Yes, very low, at that time.

H: What vintage was your destroyer? Did you have one of the older model destroyers?

B: This was a destroyer tender. Yes it was. It was put in commission, I think back around 1920 or 1924, somewhere in there.

H: Was it a four stacker?

B: No. It was an old tender. The ship that held approximately nine hundred men, and what we did was service the destroyers. That morning, we had five destroyers alongside us. We had the Cunningham, the Reed, the Tucker, the Case, and the Selfred tied up alongside of us. Our job was to -- when they had fired their torpedoes -- we brought them on board, cleaned them, and restored them for another firing. We supplied them with ammunition. We even supplied them with stores for food and that sort of thing. That was our job, to take care of those destroyers.

H: What was your specific task?

B: I was a Gunner's Mate Striker. What is called a Striker or an Apprentice Gunner's Mate. I had gone through the Great Lakes Boot Camp. I had trained at Great Lakes for Aviation Ordinance, which included torpedoes, aircraft machine guns, and gunnery. We had to have twelve weeks of training, so I was sent to the destroyer fleet in the Pacific. And then I had been sent to mine school just before Pearl Harbor, from August 1st to October 24th. I had been in mine school on a submarine base out there studying the mark ten mine. They wanted somebody on every ship that would be able to disarm a mine that they found floating. I had been sent to the mine school and then sent back to the USS Whitney for further transfer to a destroyer and the fleet.

H: Now, December 7th is your birthday. How old were you that day?

B: Eighteen.

H: Exactly eighteen?

B: Exactly eighteen. I joined from a minority cruise when I was seventeen years old. I was seventeen years old on December 7th, 1940, and I went into the swearing on December 27th, 1940.

H: So you were able to get in at seventeen?

B: Yes. At that time they had a deal, you could get in on a minority cruise. At that time, they were signing up six year cruises. But by being seventeen, I could sign up until I was twenty-one.

H: I understand. So you would only have four years instead of six?

B: Instead of six, yes.

H: Now, tell me this then. As a striker, you say your job entailed the re-arming of other vessels and other destroyers, and you learned how to defuse mines. What

about torpedoes?

B: I did not learn anything about torpedoes. I did not get into torpedoes, that is what I wanted to be, was a torpedo man really, but I did not get into that. Our job on the ship, was to take care of our own guns, keep them clean. We had fifty caliber machine guns, we had three-inch fifty anti-aircraft guns, and we had five-inch fifty-one main battery guns. The old bag type guns that used powder bags and shell casings. But our job was to take care of those. We had a gunner's gang that -- I am just making a rough guess -- I would say we had about fifteen or eighteen men, something like that counting the chiefs. Fifteen or eighteen men that took care of the guns on the USS Whitney.

H: So, most of your job, on the Whitney anyway, did it entail a lot of waiting, or were you pretty busy?

B: Well, they kept you busy, because we helped a lot of work details. Like ammunition parties, you know where you would pass ammunition to other ships. They would come in and tie up just for a day or two. And then they would be re-ammued and restored with food, and gone again. Re-fueled in some cases, and gone again.

H: How long did it take you to tend a ship, like a destroyer?

B: Well, depending on what they needed. We had a regular boiler shop, we had a machine shop, we had the torpedo shop, as I say. What they would do, is go out and fire their torpedoes in a dummy run. They had to retrieve those things because they cost a lot of money. They would bring them back, and they would bring them in and we would take them aboard our ship, into the torpedo shop. We had a large torpedo shop. They had to be completely disassembled and reassembled again, and made ready charged with alcohol, and water and they were ready to go again. They were steam driven torpedoes is what they were.

H: That is right. Those were the early torpedoes that were steam driven, until they came up with the electrics?

B: Yes.

H: Give me an idea. Average turn over time to tend a ship, nothing major has to be done, how long did it take?

B: They could do one in a day, but to re-arm, give ammunition, get food if they needed it, and if there is nothing major to be done, they could tie up in the morning and be gone in the evening.

- H: What was your routine during your average day, whether you had somebody to tend or not?
- B: We mostly took the guns apart, cleaned them, put them back together, policed all around the gun areas, and any painting. Chipping, like on gun shields. We always had chipping and painting to do on a ship, even if it was not out at sea. But you had that kind of thing to do, and that was the most things we did. Usually you would get an ammunition working party a least every other day.
- H: Pearl Harbor morning. They shook you out of bed, you kicked the cot aside, you were on the deck, what happened?
- B: Being a gunner's mate, I knew we needed ammunition immediately. And about that time the ship had sounded general quarters, which was a (mimicking the sound) gong, gong, gong. Well, they had sounded general quarters, and the gun crews that managed those three inch fifty anti-aircraft guns, rushed up and tore the canvas covers off. I located the First Class in charge of magazines, A.A. MaGee. He tried to get the keys for the magazines off of the captain, but there was so much going on, so much excitement, so much confusion, that he could not even speak to the captain. So we just went down to the handling rooms. Then there was a magazine on all four sides of it. They were locked with locks.
- H: How far down was that?
- B: That was just like second or third deck. You would have, like, shells one place, powder in another. We had -- I forget how many of those magazines we really had on there now anymore -- we had about three or four magazines up forward. We took a fire axe and chopped the lock off the doors. We just did not have the time, we needed to get in there and get the ammunition, we felt. This three-inch fifty ammunition came in a box, four shells to a box. And they weighed about a hundred and twenty pounds. I weighed about a hundred and forty pounds.
- H: As I recall, a box for that ammunition is about as long as this desk here?
- B: Yes, it was something like this.
- H: About that wide?
- B: Yes, square.
- H: Yes, great.
- B: So, they put four shells in there and they have a wooden thing to keep them in

place and rounded out, so the shells will lay in there just nicely.

H: Yes. This desk is about five feet long, is that about right?

B: It was not quite that long. The fixed ammunition, they would be about like this, probably. So, that is about three and a half, four foot.

H: Wooden boxes, square?

B: They had a lanyard on each end that you could pick it up by.

H: Four rounds in a box?

B: Yes. Normally two guys handled it, but that day I handled it. (Laughter)

H: All by yourself.

B: I carried it through two decks. Well, three decks, actually, because I was carrying them to the top side. That was where our guns were. We did have a three-inch fifty forward.

H: Could you carry one of those the gangway?

B: Put on your shoulder.

H: Just heaved it over.

B: Carried it.

H: How many decks? Three?

B: When you are propelled by necessity of fear, you can do a lot of work. You are able to do things you are not able to do other times, really.

H: Three decks?

B: Yes, at least three decks I had. They were handed up one deck, so I only had to carry them about three decks.

H: That is not bad.

B: No.

- H: If you were in a hurry. (Laughter)
- B: It was fairly orderly. I mean considering the attack, and planes flying, and this and that. The guns firing, the destroyers alongside of us putting up a terrific anti-aircraft barrage, because we had five of them, and they had fifty caliber machine guns. And one of them was a flotilla leader, and it had a 1.175 Pom-Pom, a four barrel job. They did not prove very good because they managed to keep one barrel firing at a time, that was about it. I mean that was it, one would quit and then they would get it going, another would quit.
- H: They would jam.
- B: Yes, they jammed easily. It was a gun that was not good from the start.
- H: Was it lack of training or failure of the equipment?
- B: No, it was failure of the equipment. The way the shells were made, the size of the shell and what they were trying to do. Now the forty millimeter, on the other hand, a clip of four or eight worked just fine.
- H: Slap them in.
- B: Set them on top and they just went right down through. But these guns were not made that easy. They were made so they could jam. Most of them, I have heard throughout the fleet, that that was the big problem with them, was jamming.
- H: So the Pom-Poms jammed?
- B: Yes, the fifty caliber machine guns were more effective than the Pom-Poms were.
- H: The fifties would not jam?
- B: No, they did not jam. If you had one shell that did not fire or jammed, you would just grab the thing, give it a pull and you were firing it again.
- H: You have been down in the magazine, you got a box of shells. You are going up deck, up to the top, then what happens?
- B: You go back and get another one, because you got to get them to the gun crews.

H: To give them those three inch?

B: Yes.

H: And then back down stairs?

B: Yes, we had three or four guys doing this.

H: Did you have to go on the turret, or was there somebody with the door open?

B: No, it was open.

H: Open gun pit.

B: Yes, they were just out in the open.

H: And all you did was shuttle?

B: Yes, and we did not have a director for priorities. Guys had to point and work the hand wheels. And point and train their own guns around and up and down, elevation.

H: Was there a lot of confusion on the part of the officers?

B: No, I do not think so. As I remember it, there was not, they did pretty good. After the initial shock was over, they settled right in and did pretty good.

H: The Japanese came in more than one way?

B: Yes.

H: Now, when did the first wave come to an end, do you recall?

B: No I do not, really I do not. There was a lull -- if I remember correctly -- about the time, I did go through the mess hall and grab a cup of coffee or juice or something, but that was it because my mouth was so dry. You had to have something, and I grabbed something and then said a few words to a couple of people.

H: It was warm that morning. The sun was up, and clear as the dickens. One of the other Pearl Harbor survivors that I have talked to, said that he basically had nothing much on, but a tee shirt and underwear.

B: Probably.

H: Were you in the same boat?

B: No. I grabbed my dungarees and I had a tee shirt, because I had that right there at the cot. Whatever happened to the cot even when I kicked it aside, I do not remember whether I found it after the attack was over or whether I found it to sleep on, or what I did anymore. Whether I got another one or something.

H: How close were you to the Langley?

B: I do not know, I really do not know where she was berthed at. I have a map at home where all of them were, but I do not really know.

H: Was she not on a dry dock down a ways?

B: It is possible.

H: Because the Langley blew up entirely.

B: Yes. She might have been hit in dry dock. It seems to me she was, because I do not remember any of them that were out in the harbor blowing up like that, except the battleships.

H: How close were you to the battleships?

B: It was about a mile or less, three quarters of a mile, four miles, something like that, across the harbor. When you are on water it fools you. It could have been a mile and a half more near than three quarters. When you come in the harbor from the west, you immediately see Ford Island in the middle, and then you go around Ford Island on one side or the other. The battleships were tied up alongside Ford Island -- that was where battleship row was -- right alongside Ford Island.

H: So you were across the way from them?

B: We were straight east of them, and directly east of us was an Oil Tank Farm. It was on the beach area. We were closer to the beach than we were to the battleships. And yet, there was quite a distance of water in between there. They had buoys around that you were tied to. We were tied to the buoys, then the destroyers moved over to us to tie up.

H: How many ships were in harbor, got any idea?

B: I should know. It is something that has been talked about, and that has not been mentioned how many, but there was quite a few of them. I know the Dixie had five destroyers alongside of her. There were other destroyers, there were cruisers in there. There were quite a few compared to other times. It seemed there were more ships in harbor than normal at that time.

H: Were you anticipating being inspected? Having an inspection by chance?

B: No.

H: You were near the tank farms?

B: Not to far.

H: Easily visible from where you were?

B: Yes. You could see them, huge oil tank storage places.

H: Do you recall any Japanese planes going near the tank farms?

B: Not over by our way. Except the ones that may have flown over the top of us.

H: They did not even target them?

B: No. I do not believe so, not those anyhow.

H: Now, they fired at you and they bombed you guys?

B: They dropped a bomb seventy-five feet from our fan tail, and they screamed.

H: But that was it?

B: The destroyers were putting up a heavy enough anti-aircraft fire, that when they dropped their torpedoes, they tended to veer away because the destroyers were really putting up a hail of bullets of fifty caliber bullets and five inch thirty-eight anti-aircraft. They had better guidance on their anti-aircraft fire than we did. The only thing, that was so close range, that a five inch shell would not explode, because of the close range. When you fire a five inch surface or anti-aircraft gun, it has a range of close to eight miles. Usually you would have it set so it will burst about forty thousand feet. When the shell bursts, it is timed with a timing device in the nose. Depending on the range of your planes, that is where the director starts setting your fuses at. You had a fuse setter right on your gun. You would stick them in there, and then the shell man gets them and puts them

in the gun, for an anti-aircraft attack.

H: So, most of your time that morning, for the first and second attack then, was mostly hustle and shell?

B: Getting ammunition, making sure there was ammunition. I did not man a gun or anything like that.

H: Did not fire a shot?

B: I did not fire a shot. No, because I did not have a gun station. I would have manned a gun if we would of been at sea, and there would have been a ship or surface attack, because we had five inch fifty ones, and I would have manned one of those.

H: Let me ask you this. Did you even get a chance to see what was going on elsewhere, or were you just too busy?

B: Mostly too busy. I saw one plane that was hit. I think it was the one that dropped the bomb.

H: A Japanese plane?

B: Yes. One of the destroyers hit him and blew a wing off. He veered over and crashed in the harbor.

H: Close by?

B: Yes.

H: How close?

B: Not too far away. Probably a mile away in the harbor, half a mile, three quarters maybe.

H: Where you anywhere near the submarine base?

B: No, not too close. They were over at the subbase, where I had gone to mine school, but we were not close to them.

H: Not real close.

B: Of course, that harbor is not all that huge. You are pretty well bunched in there,

even so.

H: Second wave of Japanese planes, what happened?

B: It seemed there was a more concentrated and steady fire. They came in dive bombers mostly. When the torpedo planes had done their thing, the dive bombers came in then. They did not show us their plane. They had a steady anti-aircraft fire that was coming up. By then the Army and the Marines on the beach had gotten into the act, and they were firing on the planes. That kept them up a little higher. They did not come down amongst us like the first attack with the torpedo planes and the fighters.

H: Were they more interested in the battleships?

B: Yes. There still was the main thrusts of the attack on Ford Island, the battleships, Ford Air Strip Hiccum Field, I could not see any of those. That was where they were, I think the second wave mostly hit.

H: The second wave went more toward the airfield, because they were dive bombing rather than anything else?

B: Yes. Knocking out airfields, and things like that.

H: How long did that go on?

B: Seemed like forever, I suppose. (Laughter) A couple of hours I guess. Maybe it was not even that long, maybe only an hour and a half. It seemed like it was all day, because when it was over, we were still busy. Later in the afternoon, I did see life boats. The bodies in them I could not identify, because the bodies were covered. Some of the boats from various ships -- not from the ones that were sunk -- were helping in the rescuing and picking up the bodies and that sort of thing.

H: When it was all over, what did you do?

B: Thank God. (Laughter) No. We were really teed up then, I do not even remember eating that day. I know I did eat, but I do not remember eating. I do not remember if we had a regular organized meal, like lunch, I do not think we did. I do not know what we ate or anything else. I do not even remember eating that evening, because that was still a tense time. While one attack was going on, some bombers, the Flying Fortress was coming in. And some of the guys got excited, and started shooting at them. I do not know what ships or anything, but they were coming over the tank farm.

H: That was a little after nine in the morning, if I am not mistaken.

B: Around that time. Probably when the second wave dropped over, I imagine more or less. They were shooting everything then. By that time, they were shooting everything that moved. I had gone to school, and after that I had gone to school a lot more, plane identification and that. They would flash something on the screen just for a split second, like a Japanese plane, and we were supposed to be able to identify it. Especially for us, because later on I was a Mount Captain of the destroyer and you had to know them kind of things. You had to be able to identify planes and all that sort of thing. This time, it seemed to me -- as far as I remember -- the second attack, the gunner's on all ships and that, it was more like we were veterans now. We were settled down, we were not just shooting. We were shooting at you.

H: In other words, no more battle nerves, you were set.

B: We were settled in.

H: You were, "Okay, well we know what to do now."

B: That is right. Of course, when I first went through those magazines, you did not have a chance to realize much. Although I did realize that a bomb in one of the powder magazines, it was all over, as far as I was concerned, I realized that.

H: Did you get under way?

B: No.

H: Stayed docked?

B: Yes, we stayed there tied to the buoy. With the destroyers, they did not even get under way, they stayed tied to us.

H: What was the first thing you heard from your officers? What did they say?

B: Nothing. You know what I mean. Anymore than just to relate that it was a devastating attack and we had been hit hard. They exhorted the men to equip themselves well, and to not be discouraged and that we were going to bounce back from this thing.

H: How much information did they give you? What did they tell you?

B: Not a whole lot. We pretty well knew how many battleships were down, and all this and that. We knew one was aground out in the harbor. And we knew the

Arizona was gone, the Utah turned over, we knew that the West Virginia, the California, the Tennessee and Maryland.

H: How much concern was there about the carriers?

B: Not much, because they were not there.

H: So you did not even talk about the carriers, because you knew they were not in port.

B: No. It was kind of funny though. The Enterpriser went out the night before she stood out, headed for Wake Island. When she went out, she went right past the stern of our ship, and I happened to be on the deck at that time. And it seemed funny to me because usually you do not see a big ship like that going out at night. But she went out on the night before, probably around just a little bit after dark. She had her lights on and she was lit up and everything.

H: No cautionary?

B: No precaution like that.

H: In other words, you were not under any warnings, were you?

B: No. It did seem funny that she was going out at night, because most ships did not go out at night. Not the big ones or any of the battle wagons or aircraft carriers go out at night, usually.

H: But she went out fully lit?

B: Well, you could see the decks and the port holes and even the doors to the deck were open.

H: No blackout precautions of any kind?

B: No, there was no blackout or anything like that. She was going to Wake Island, I understand, to take planes to Wake Island for something.

H: Were you close enough to holler?

B: No.

H: So you could not talk to them?

- B: No, we did not talk to them. She was twelve hours out about, I understand. What I was told, when she moved out from Ford Island, they put the Utah in her place. The old target ship Utah. I assume that was why it was hit first, because they were after the carrier first.
- H: They put the Utah where the Enterprise had been berthed?
- B: Yes. They moved her out where she had been berthed, and they moved the Utah in.
- H: The Utah was a World War I vessel?
- B: Yes, and they used it for a target ship, floating target, that sort of thing.
- H: Yes. Everything is basically inert on that ship?
- B: Those target ships for battleships. They towed a big target, I suppose in some cases.
- H: So they put it where the Enterprise had been? That is very interesting.
- B: That is what I understood. That they had moved it up when the Enterprise had berthed. Not a precautionary measure or anything like that, not that I know of, to even fool anybody. It was just a case that she was not in her regular spot, because the Enterprise was there, and when the Enterprise went out, she moved back to that spot.
- H: So, the Enterprise had been parked where the Utah normally had been docked?
- B: Then they put her back where she had been before, as far as I know. That is what I had been told.
- H: It is five o'clock on Pearl Harbor Day. What are you doing?
- B: I think about that time is when we tried to get something to eat. The guns were all manned. They kept the guns manned all day and all night. Mostly at that time, we were trying to get something to eat, and what watches we were going to stand, and all this sort of thing. It was starting to fall into -- what we might say -- a preparedness routine in case of another attack, although I do not believe there were many people that thought that. They pretty well understood that it was a hit and run thing. Most of them were saying "Well, boy we were just fortunate that they did not send some transports with them and make a landing." Which would have made a lot harder way to dislodge them. They could probably have done more damage than they did, although with all the extra ships and that, they

would not of had the secrecy. That was why they did not, I imagine.

H: Where was the best view from your ship, bow or stern?

B: It would of been the stern.

H: What did you see looking off the stern?

B: Well, you could see the smoke and all that. See, where I was at, I was up on the top side, though. If I would have been back on the stern, I would have seen everything. I was a deck higher -- actually almost two decks higher. We would be in this building and would be two stories higher. When I looked back, I had to look around the side of the ship. There was a library in the middle, there was the gunner's mate shack, the fire control shack, and another store room. I had to look around to see anything.

H: In other words, you were still staying pretty close to your gun?

B: Yes. By five in the afternoon, we had looked around. We could see the battleship still burning, smoke and fire, and everything was pretty much in disarray. It was pretty well cluttered up. The water was covered with oil, debris was floating around, even some fire was in the water from the oil burning.

H: Any wounded on your ship?

B: No. We did not have one wound. We were very fortunate. They did scrape some, but we did not have any wounded.

H: Nobody was killed?

B: Nobody got killed. We did not lose a man, we were very lucky. I do not think the destroyers alongside us lost anybody.

H: I want to jog your memory. How do you defuse a World War II mine? Do you remember?

B: By its type. We studied the mark ten mine. What you have to do is be able to just break the circuit. That was all that you have to do, and it is disarmed.

H: Is there one horn in particular that you have to go for?

B: All of them were armed, the horns especially. If you could break the circuit by taking one lose, the thing was disarmed.

H: Was it delicate?

B: Yes, it would have been delicate, even then. Because we had learned that the Germans had planted boobie traps under their horns, so that you could not disarm them. They had cases where they were very careful to try to spot boobie traps under them, or anything at all that would indicate that the horn had been taken out and put back in.

H: When you disarm a mine, did you have to get in the water with it?

B: Yes, you would have to go by boat over there.

H: You would have to hang out of the boat?

B: Yes. We did not have any diving experience or anything as divers. It was a case of disarming them by, going amongst them in a small boat.

H: How did you feel about doing that?

B: I did not think that I would like to have to do it. I was hoping that I would not have to do it.

H: But you wanted to learn how?

B: More or less, I did not give it any thought. I was picked, because I had already gone to school.

H: Who picked you?

B: I suppose my record, the Captain. When I went out there, I went on a troop transport out to Hawaii. I arrived there July 22, 1941. I immediately went aboard the USS Dixie. Well somehow, whether they ennie, mennie, minnie, mowed or what, some of us were sent to the USS Dixie, some to the USS Dobbin, some to the USS Altair. All three were destroyer tenders. I happened to go to the, Altair. They sent me aboard the Altair. And for two days I thought I was going to be a torpedo man. That was what I wanted to be, and that would have been my preference. So that was in my record, and that was probably why I was sent to the Altair. But they had apparently received a call for somebody who was school-minded to be sent to mine school. And here I am, a new man. I was not working into their system or anything, so they just shuttled me out to mine school.

H: Did you have a Sea Daddy?

B: No. No I did not, really. I did not have somebody who took me under their wing, just looked out for me. I had friends among a lot of people, and this old gunner's mate, I still think of him a lot of times. Fibber MaGee, we called him. He was not that old, although he had been old enough, that he had seen duty in Asia.

H: Is this the same MaGee that you were talking about earlier?

B: Yes.

H: What was his first name?

B: I cannot even remember. I think it was Clarence, but I am not sure. We always called him Fibber. (Laughter)

H: Where did he come from, do you know?

B: I do not even remember where he came from. Magee, and we had a guy named Dorothy. I ca not remember his first name. He had gotten married over in Honolulu. His fiancé had come out there, and he got married just two or three weeks before Pearl Harbor. I am trying to remember the names of all the top guys we had.

H: Can you remember your Captain?

B: I do not even remember the Captain's name. I knew it well, but I do not remember it now. He was a Commander in rank.

H: Any other senior officers that you can recall?

B: Larson, he was the old Chief Warrant Gunner. He had gone through as a Warrant Gunner, and wound up with a Lieutenant Commander stripes, but he was nice. To me they were ancient. They were men of about forty, forty-five years old. I suppose the skipper might of been fifty, I do not know if he was that old or not. To me these guys were ancient, I was eighteen. (Laughter) We had real nice officers on the ship. Of course on a ship like that, the ones you really get to know very well, are your Gunnery Officers, and your Warrant Gunner, and the Skipper, and the Executive Officers. And I do not remember the Executive Officers' name on that ship anymore. Then I had only been on there from October 24th to December 7th, and we had about nine hundred men. And even a man here that comes to a Pearl Harbor Survivors meeting, I do not remember seeing him on there.

H: On the same boat?

B: Yes. I did not know him, because we had nine hundred men. Especially after the attacks, we had men from other assignments on other ships.

H: Who was the other fellow that was on the same ship?

B: Tom Clifton. He belongs to Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Chapter Five, Mahoning Valley. Then there is more. I just got the gram, my wife was asking me a couple of names, one of them sounded familiar, but I could not picture him. I remember a Glenn Heathman, he was a First Class Gunner's Mate. When I was on there he was a Second Class, but he was a First Class Gunner's Mate, from Pontiac, Michigan. I remember him, I can see his face as plain as can be. He was a blonde-headed, nice young person.

H: Pearl Harbor plus three days, what is going on?

B: For some reason, I went on a working party -- and I do not know to this day -- I have tried to figure out what I went for. We were over aboard the USS West Virginia, she was tied up beside the Maryland, and they were both settled in the water. There was water over the deck. You could walk on the top deck, but there was this much water there, so you had to wade. I do not know why we went, I do not know what we did.

H: Was it rescue operations?

B: Something like that or whether it was just to see if there was something that we could do, because I do not remember that we did anything. But I remember going over there and getting aboard, and going out of the boat, and being aboard her. I can remember the smell of fire, and oil.

H: How did you feel?

B: Angry. Very angry at Japan at that time. I guess you would say I was patriotic as a country boy. But I always wanted to go to the Navy because I had a neighbor boy, who had been in the Navy from 1928 to 1931. He was on submarines. And when I was aboard the submarine base over there going to mine school, I met him. He had been called back in the reserves, and I met him. I was walking out of the shower one night and he was right ahead of me. I had seen his name on the towel. He had a funny name, Neverdusky. He was Polish-Russian, his father was. He was a nice young fella, and I found out he was on the USS Dolphin. I went aboard her, and several times I went to see him. He was the one reason I was in the Navy. I always wanted to go, and when I asked my dad to sign he said, "What do you want to go in now for with the danger of being in war?" I said, "That is why I want go in now." I said, "I do

not want to go in there green. I want to know something before we do get in war." I was always interested in history. I prided myself as well as I could, going to North Lima School out there. At that time, we used to have what we called current events tests. We had a little paper of current events that we got once a month. I really liked this, because up until I was thirteen years old, we did not have a radio or a newspaper or even electric lights. At that time, we lived over in the country, on Detwiler Road off of 165.

H: Yes, I know where that is.

B: We lived right up there on Detwiler Road. If you go off of 165 at the first bend, if you did not make the bend, you went right in our driveway. We had a little twenty-seven acre truck farm up there. There were six of us kids in the family. We worked hard, because when we were young kids, the Depression was on. In those times, Dad could not afford to hire anybody. We did hire a neighbor girl to help pick strawberries. We were expected to pick the strawberries, but we could not eat them. We picked beans, you would pick them clean. When Dad and Mom went to the market, they left us plenty to do. We were just like all kids, we would cut some of it.

H: Do me a favor. I want to make sure I have got something. What is your mother's maiden name?

B: My mother's maiden name was Martin. She died when I was four days old. She had Scarlet Fever and had a relapse, then she died. When I was about a year and a half old, my dad married Mary Whittum. She lived up near Cadillac, Michigan.

H: Do you remember your mom's first name?

B: Edna.

H: Edna Martin. And your step-mother was?

B: Mary Whittum.

H: Mary Whittum.

B: W-H-I-T-T-U-M. Like I said, we were kept busy as kids. We did not have no time for sports. I could not play baseball in high school, because I had to go home and work.

H: Let me ask you about this. Third day after Pearl Harbor -- there you are on the

West Virginia -- you do not recall what exactly you were doing, some kind of work party?

B: It was a working party. I forget what it was for, I never really did know what it was for.

H: What did you do? Did you know anything about what you did?

B: I do not know anything that anybody did, except we went there to look around to see what we could see. We did not have any divers to go down under water, that I recall. I do not know if we went to see what we could salvage. If there was anything that we could salvage from the top side, is what I think why we were on the ship for.

H: Were you recovering bodies?

B: No. We did not recover any bodies.

H: Had that all been done?

B: That had been pretty well done, as far as I know of. I did not see any bodies at all after the initial day of attack.

H: About five or six days, maybe a week later, what were you doing?

B: Well, it began to get kind of monotonous. You realize that the Japs were not going to come back, although we did have regular watches. But we realized that it had been a sneak attack, we understood that. The ships were gone, and they were not going to be coming back. It kind of went into a routine. And then it became kind of boring, because we did not have the freedom to go ashore like we had done before.

H: You had to stay on board?

B: In Military law at that time, as I recall it. They were trying to organize things so that they could send parties ashore for rest and recreation, and that sort of thing caused confusion. I think the top chain of command was still pretty much in transition here, "How do we do this." Admiral Kimmel and General Short were in danger of being relieved of their command.

H: Which they were shortly thereafter.

B: The chain of command was kind of . . .

H: Confusing?

B: Confusing, disorganized, I would say, probably, at that time.

H: No direct orders. Seemed like things were in disarray?

B: They just kind of let it go. I suppose somebody did think, "Hey, we got to get these guys some recreation a little bit. They just cannot sit out there on the ships. The ones that are out on bases just cannot stay there, they got to have a little chance to go to town." And they started doing these kind of things. Getting organized again, and getting shore leaves set up and that sort of thing, so you could go to shore.

H: You were on General Quarters the whole time?

B: No. You would stand watches like you would stand four out of twelve hours.

H: In other words, four hour watch, and you would do two watches a day?

B: Yes. And they were setting that sort of thing up, and they were moving. The Army was consolidating their positions. Because they had out there, what they called out there, the elastic line. At one time, they had talked building something like the Maginot Line. But they figured to have their troops so they could move in a short time to any point on the island that they needed to. They had Diamond Head protecting them on one side, the mountains on the other side. They were pretty well set up so that a good flexible Army could do something. And they did. In between attacks, I remember hearing on the radio that they were giving instructions in Honolulu. The Army was on the move then through Honolulu. They were moving already.

H: You got your radio news on board?

B: Yes. We had radio.

H: Was there any radio restriction?

B: No. Not in regular radios. We did not short wave or anything like that.

H: Well, the radio room had that?

B: Yes, they would have had that.

H: So, we are about a week after Pearl Harbor. Things are kind of in disarray. You

guys know that General Short and Admiral Kimmel are in trouble. You still do not have anything particular to do, but a lot of sitting and waiting. What was the first action that took place? When does your ship actually go to work?

B: We stayed there until April or May of 1942.

H: Four months?

B: At Pearl Harbor, yes. We stayed there, because we were not an action ship. Then we sailed, and went to Tonga Taboo, the Island of Tonga down on the equator.

H: Did you do any tending duty?

B: Yes. As I remember, our Metal-smith put a patch on the Raleigh. She had taken a torpedo. And they put a patch on the Raleigh. They did an underwater dive and put a patch on her. We also had sent men from our ship to go over and work on ships that were dry-docked, that needed help on them.

H: Because the Japanese bombed the gate for the dry dock?

B: Yes, and that sort of stuff. They helped out in all of that, what they could. We had working parties, even for various little things that needed to be done, that would not have had to be done if it had not been for the attack.

H: Give me an idea?

B: Just free working parties. Just to clean up debris. I did not get on very many of those, for whatever reason, because I was not selected. It was mostly deck floors and that sort of thing. That was working parties that were sent.

H: So, they kept you on board most of the time?

B: Yes. It began to get monotonous because I wanted to get on a destroyer. I was young and I did not know different, and I wanted to get out where the fight was. It just seemed like I was on this ship, supposedly for transfer to a destroyer, and here I am sitting at sea. And right about that time, outside of guys coming on board and being sent out again, our people were froze. They were trying to get on the old Tug Beerio. I tried to get on the tug. I thought I was going to get on one of the tugs one time.

H: The Beerio had a busy day in the harbor that day?

- B: In fact, I thought I was going to get on one of those things. It was not exactly what I wanted, but at least I thought I would be doing something. You are moving around, you are not just sitting there swinging around the buoy. That was what I hoped for.
- H: Now, they moved some of the guys from the battleships. They shifted them over on to other ships. When did you get shifted?
- B: I did not get shifted until we got to Australia in 1943.
- H: In other words, you took off to Tonga.
- B: We stayed there and swung around the buoy. And we took care of the ships when they came in. We stayed there, we took care of ships from like the Coral Sea and those kind of battles that were taking place out there. Then we moved on to New Caladonia, I do not know, it was about eight months later when we moved to New Caladonia. We anchored out there on a buoy, and we stayed there until 1943. We went to Australia for rest and recreation.
- H: How were you supplied?
- B: Supply ships that came in. Big regular, not troop ships, regular supply ships. They brought food and everything in, and working parties, we did it.
- H: Let me ask you a question. Since you got food from the supply ships, do you think your food ration was a little better?
- B: No.
- H: Or just the same?
- B: No, the main thing was we always had it. We ate the same thing like what they ate in destroyers, but we always had it. Sometimes they would run short on one thing or another a little bit until they got back in. But we always had it, that was the best thing about it. It was not always the best food, but the Navy got lots of it.
- H: Yes. The Navy always had reputation for having lots of food.
- B: That was one thing that I liked about the Navy. As long as your ship was not sunk, you had a place you could sleep, it was dry, you were not laying in the water in a fox hole somewhere. It did get monotonous. In fact, I did have a rough time with my nerves, because I was a person that was restless. I did not

take to orientation, just sitting there. I want to be doing something. Any of us wanted to do something, but we were not doing anything. It did bother me. I had a spell with my nerves, because I was not resting. it was my own fault.

H: Were you frustrated?

B: Yes, more or less. It was an anxiety-type thing.

H: Were you angry, too?

B: Yes.

H: Did you feel like you wanted revenge?

B: Against the Japs, yes. We wanted to tear them apart. We wanted to go in and sink the island and destroy it.

H: Most of the other guys were young. Did they feel the same way?

B: Yes. Yes, I think they did.

H: What about the old salts?

B: They were worse. Because they had seen some of this, they had been over in China and all of that, to the Yaugzse River. You see, we did not understand some of these people at all, and they did not understand us, of course. You see, there are no nice wars. Today, we try to have nice wars; you cannot have a nice war. If I am shooting at you, that is not nice. There is no way it is nice, I do not care. You can say, "Well I will go out here with a gun, but I will not pull it unless he shoots at me." Well, it is too late then, you are dead. We are not playing. Too many people, I think anymore, just like the young people who go around and shoot people. They know better, but they do not realize the finality of it. They see it in the movies all the time. A guy gets shot in a movie, but they see him again in another movie. It is not the finality, that life is gone. I do not think they realize.

H: They do not realize the value.

B: But about this time in life, I did realize it. It started to settle in on me a little. What is the use of this world? No matter where I got in this world, someday I got to die and leave it. This part troubled me. I did not have the right kind of counseling. When I had a problem with it that gave me any kind of a physical feeling or spell, I talked to the doctor. If they would have sat down then and told

me what they told me later on, I would have been in great shape, because I am intelligent enough to grasp it. But they did not. They said, "You will be alright pretty soon. It might get a little worse, but then it will get better, and then you will be alright." See, they did not tell me anything. Of course your mind runs away with you. I am a healthy boy, never been sick a day of my life, hardly. Although I did contract -- I do not know what you call it -- I call it yellow jaundice. I was as yellow as I could be -- like this shelf here. After a month, I had to have the corpman with me to eat. Because I was not allowed to eat any fat or anything like that. My grandmother on my fathers side had died of yellow jaundice. Of course, it did not frighten me that much. Just some of the things I did not understand.

H: What year was that?

B: That would of been in 1942. We were still in Pearl Harbor.

H: You were under stress then?

B: Yes. This went on while I was in the Navy, although it did not handicap me. In fact, that was one reason why I was discharged.

H: When was that?

B: 1945. I knew then that my nerves had been in trouble. I knew that it was partly my own fault, because I was not getting rest. I was drinking and things, and I was not getting rest like I should at that time. I realized that I was tearing my own body down by not getting the rest that I should get. Even when I could get rest, when we were not standing watch and things, I would sit around half of the time and talk to the guys on watch, before I lay down and maybe catch two hours instead of three or four. I knew that this was not the way to treat your body.

H: What drove you?

B: I do not know.

H: Were you apprehensive?

B: A little bit, I could not tell about what. I had an unreasoning -- I would not call it fear -- but anxiety. Coupled with the idea, there is know use.

H: That it was pointless?

B: Yes, it was pointless. That is the best way to put it. And I could not shake it.

There would be times where I could shake it for awhile, but it was just like there was a dark cloud over you all of the time. It seems at this age and everything, and eventually I did shake it. If the doctors would of just told me at first, "You got a problem with your nerves, get all the rest you can." Then I would have been alright, but they did not tell me that. They knew what was the matter, they knew it was the nerves. Eventually -- they did not call it battle fatigue -- they called it operational fatigue, and I laughed. I said, "That is the first time that I heard it came in a bottle." (Laughter) That is what I told them. I was a clown. But seriously. When they asked me, they said, "Do you want to discharge now?" I said, "No." I said, "I only got a year and four months to do. I can do that standing on my head. I do not worry about that." I said, "I just want to feel like I did when I came into the outfit." They said, "Well, we got to send you to the hospital." I said, "I do not want to go to the hospital." They said, "Well, you got to go, or we cannot do anything."

H: They sent you in?

B: So, eventually I went.

H: This is 1942?

B: No, this is 1945.

H: 1945. The end of the war?

B: Nearly. I get in the hospital out there. I would have been gone and back in the Pacific again, except I did not get my gear. My gear was held up. When I muster out there, I was supposed to have shore duty, not by choice. But I was supposed to have shore duty in Damneck, Virginia, as a gunnery instructor. We just got settled there, and then comes a draft. They want a 105 third class, and fifteen second class. I was second class gunner there. I knew right away, I was first one drawn out of the hat, for second class volunteer. (Laughter) So they put our names in hats and drew them out. I was either the first or second one drawn out. So here I am, on my way to the West coast, to go on to sea again. But, I never got my gear. I never got it, until I was out of the Navy for a year. It was out in Point Pleasant, California, somewhere up in the mountains.

H: There is a storage facility there. There still is.

B: It took them over a year to get it for me, even then. I was out of the Navy over a year, before I ever got my baggage. But that is why I did not go to sea, I fell out on the grinder for muster. They said, "Where is your baggage?" I said, "It has not gotten here yet." "Fall out." So, I was a master at arms out there in the

barracks until I got sent to Corpus Christi because the Oka Nawa casualties were coming back, and they wanted to make room. "No more shore duty. You either go to sea or you go home," they said. And I would have turned it down, because I could pass a physical and everything. But I goofed up one night, I went to shore, got drunk, fell asleep. I was supposed to be back at midnight. Somebody woke me up, and asked, "What time?" I had to be back on base in the morning. I came back in the morning. nobody ever said a word to me, you just automatically do not get a pass anymore. So, I thought, I might as well go with the draft. I was telling this nurse about it. She said, "What do you care, you are going home anyhow." I thought she was just kidding. That's about what happened. I just let them send me home. Because when I got out there -- they called me up about two or three days I got out of there -- to Corpus Christi, I talked to a doctor. Three or four days later, they called me up in front of a medical board, and recommended me for discharge. I did not argue about it. Of course, you never know. I might have, because I should have stayed in the Navy, a good thirty years. It would not have hurt me a bit.

H: Now, you got transferred in 1943?

B: Yes, off the USS Whitney. I got transferred in Sydney, Australia.

H: Where did you go?

B: For new Construction. Came back to the United States, and went to the West coast up to Bremerton Wash and put a ship in commission. The USS Satterlee S-A-T-T-E-R-L-E-E. It was not a big new fashion. It was still the 1500 class destroyer. It had four gun mounts on it, torpedo tubes, and mines. But it wasn't one of the big faster ships like the ones in the 2200 class we had.

H: What was your job?

B: Gunner's mate.

H: Still gunner's mate?

B: I was second class gunner's mate. I was a Mount Captain. During attack, I was Mount Captain.

H: Describe that job.

B: Number one gun. You wore the headphones and everything. In case the director went out for any reason, you took over and directed your crew. You even had to even do the spotting for them. I was a qualified gun pointer and

spotter.

H: You had taken the training for that. We were talking about that earlier, plane spotting.

B: If ever you found a target, and you see them firing low, you tell them to bring it up. You had to do that. But normally we just sat there, because we were under control of the director even your guns moved by the director.

H: Was it hard to spot planes?

B: Yes, pretty hard, because they were getting pretty fast by then. Even for us, even your old Vought Corsair that the Navy had was a pretty fast plane at that time. She would climb like a Grumman could dive. They had the power to climb. They were not easy to spot. Coming in, especially, in a little cloud, with clouds here and there.

H: So, you leave Washington State, new ship?

B: Yes. New ship down off of the west coast.

H: Green crew?

B: Pretty much. Except us guys that came from other ships. Naturally, when you have your skeleton crew, it was all veterans from another ship. But then we shipped down off the west coast, then we took the British aircraft carrier, Victoria.

H: Which one, Victoria?

B: Victoria, through the canal. Two destroyers we brought through the canal, the Harding and the Satterlee. Then we went out on the east coast. We still finished some of our shaking down off the east coast. We went to Portland, Maine, we went to Boston. We escorted President Truman to the Army-Navy football game, in his yacht.

H: Vice-President?

B: President.

H: He was President by then?

B: Yes, he was President by then.

H: This is late now. Truman did not become President until 1945.

B: 1945. Let us see. I thought it was 1944. It would of been Roosevelt in 1944.

H: Roosevelt dies in April of 1945.

B: It must have been Roosevelt. I always keep thinking it was Truman. But it must of been Roosevelt that went to the football game on the yaught.

H: Yes, that is right. It would of been Roosevelt.

B: Because I was discharged in July of 1945. In April, I was out in Oakland, California.

H: So, there you are. Along the east coast shaking down so more?

B: Yes. I was shaking down some more. Then they started running convoy to Casablanca, and they sent me to Advanced Gunner's school because the Gunnery school that I went to did not have the latest electro-hydraulic. I had not had that.

H: Which gun is that?

B: The five inch anti-aircraft surface gun. I had not had this system at all, so they sent me to Norfolk, Virginia to that school.

H: How did it work?

B: What do you mean?

H: Describe it. How did that system work?

B: The hydraulic system? It was driven with hydraulics, which is compressed oil. You use an electric motor to drive the pump. The signal is sent from the director key, or from the gun key, right here on the gun. What we did when the gun crew would mount the gun, you give them the command match pointers and switch to automatic. And that was what they would do. They would bring the wheel around until the pointer lined up with another pointer inside there that was being moved inside there by the directors. You match them or you come that close to them, you just switch the thing into automatic then you sit back and ride. The director was doing everything with your gun.

H: So the gun would do everything after that?

- B: It would move where the director told it to move. The directors would get in on the planes and the guns would move right with it.
- H: Were they accurate?
- B: Yes. They were accurate. We landed the Rangers on Point Dehoc where Normandy is, we did that. After school, I got back on when we made the Normandy invasion. When we made the Southern France invasion, than I came back again.
- H: You mean the Normandy invasion as well?
- B: Southern France invasion.
- H: Could you describe that?
- B: Normandy. We landed rangers on Point Dehoc. We were by ourselves up the beach. These various rangers were assigned to different ships, that they were using for artillery. They used us as an artillery piece. We landed these Rangers over this nine hundred and ten foot cliff. They used grapnel hooks. They went up these lines. Well, the Germans ran along the top. They started to cut the lines and dropping hand grenades down. So, we were close enough to open fire with forty millimeters. We strafed them with forty millimeters up there on the cliff, the Germans.
- H: Let us back up just a little. When did you know this was the invasion of Europe?
- B: About a month before it happened, we knew we were getting ready for it. We were in Portland, England. You could see the build up of the ships, it was horrific. Something like we have not even dreamed of before. We were out in the channel running. The Houston came over and they held a mock invasion, about four or five weeks before we had a mock invasion. On Dover, we went through a mock invasion with the USS Houston. We knew we were going to be in it. Then, the night we were supposed to leave, they called it off because the channel was so rough. We thought, "Well it has to be scrubbed." But then the next day we went. It was GO Day. That was something to behold.
- H: So, you are near Point Dehoc. You were close to shore?
- B: Yes. Fifteen hundred feet.
- H: Who was it that ran right up, almost virtually aground firing? It was another ship that did this.

B: I do not know that. But there were firing at us with an anti-tank gun.

H: They were shooting an anti-tank gun at you?

B: Yes. That was how close we were in there. They straddled us with it, until our gunnery officer ordered, "Commence rapid firing." I was on number one gun. We fired for one minute. When we were done, we counted -- over your powder can, you have a little cap or primer that you pull off and toss in the corner -- we counted twenty-one of those. Twenty-one rounds in a minute, five inch thirty-eight. We just obliterated the top of that hill.

H: Were the shore batteries firing? Were there any shore batteries there?

B: Well, that was all that was fired at us anymore. Of course, they had bombed that place the night before, all night long. It was a steady thunder of bombs all night long. We were out in the middle of the channel, it was shaking the ship out there in the middle. Loaded planes are going this way and empties are coming back over here. Just like a two way street, like a freeway.

H: You could see the Germans cutting the lines?

B: You would see them running along the top. You could not tell exactly that they were cutting the lines and dropping hand grenades. But they were trying to loosen the lines and drop hand grenades down to kill the Rangers coming up.

H: You guys just laid it on them?

B: We straffed them with forty millimeters first. We had twin forties, two barrels. Ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom. (mimicking the sound)

H: I know the one you are talking of.

B: We were straffing with the forty millimeters. Then we brought two guns. Of course, we did not come broadsided where we could bring four guns on, because that would give them a bigger target. We were pointed at them, and they straddled us. One on one side and one on the other. That is with the number one and two gun, I was on number one. We opened fire one minute without stopping rapid fire.

H: Twenty-one rounds in a minute? That is a lot. What was your job in that?

B: Mount Captain. I was sitting up on a little platform in the back, there is an opening on top of the gun mount. I could stick my head out there and see what was going on. Although at that time I was not, I was watching what was going

on with the gun. Because it was not that safe to have your head out at that range either. (Laughter)

H: Were you in command or did you just fire at will?

B: I was in command until they went into rapid fire, because they just let them go. That five-inch, thirty-eight anti-aircraft surface gun was one of the greatest guns ever built. Nobody has come close to it. We had an up and down hoist, just like this. They just kept putting the shells in down below. When you take one out, it automatically brings the other one up. Not slowly, it goes zzzzzz (mimicking the sound) and she is there. The powderman grabs the powder out of the thing in the floor, he throws the powder in, the man throws the shell, and hits the rammer for another shell. The gun goes close, boom, and comes open again and he throws another one in there.

H: That fast?

B: In reach of the rammer lever like this.

H: How many people on the crew?

B: A powderman, a shellman, a hot shellman who was supposed to knock the shells down when they come out. He has got asbestos gloves, because when that casing comes out about this long, it is hot. Then there is a hole in the back of the turret and you do not want them rolling around in there, you could probably try to knock them out. You try to steer them out that hole if you can.

H: So, basically you get to sit back.

B: You got the Mount Captain, the Pointer, the Trainer, because they have to stay there, you even have a Fuse Setter. So, that is four. Then you have the two Loaders.

H: That is six?

B: Seven men.

H: Seven guys, including the Mount Captain.

B: Including the Mount Captain.

H: Shellman ?

B: Powderman, Fuse Setter, Pointer, and a Trainer, and a Mount Captain.

H: And a Mount Captain, that is you. That is seven men?

B: Two gun crew, yes.

H: Work as a team. Twenty-one rounds in one minute?

B: Twenty-one rounds in a minute.

H: That is one every three seconds.

B: That is really firing. The British had a new cruiser over there, and they thought it was really good. I think they said they could fire something like twelve rounds a minute. They thought that was really good.

H: Tell me more about going to Point Dehoc.

B: Well, we landed the Rangers on Point Dehoc, and then we just laid back, and they used us for artillery. This one guy was assigned to us, his code name was Rocky. He has a walkie-talkie, and we got the TBS, or ship radio. You could hear him talking. He would start us out, we would commence firing. He would follow a road, up fifty, up fifty, up fifty. Then he would go around a bend, left fifty. Then you knock out a bridge and that is it. Cease fire, until he found another target.

H: Which Ranger group was this?

B: I do not know which one it was, it was just called a group of Rangers. Now, I do not know what outfit it came out of or anything. But these men were special trained for that. One time he said, "Well, I will be back after a while, it is getting too hot here now." Then he was gone awhile, and pretty soon he came back on, "Hello Stardust, this is Rocky."

H: They called you Stardust?

B: It was a code name. We fired all the ammunition we had, went back across the channel with fifteen rounds of ammunition.

H: You fired everything?

B: We reloaded in England and came back over the next morning, we were back on station.

H: How many rounds is that? Do you know?

B: About fifteen hundred.

H: That is for one gun?

B: No. That is for four guns. We carry fifteen hundred rounds.

H: You went home with fifteen rounds?

B: Fifteen rounds, and we had to go back across the channel in case we surfaced a sub and had to use it. Of course it is sixty miles across there, it didn't take that long to go over. You got your destroyer, kick her up to thirty knots, you get across there pretty fast.

H: How much of the entire invasion force did you see?

B: We did not see a lot of it. We were near the Nevada. The Nevada had been damaged in Pearl Harbor. She came back to the states and was re-fitted. She came out like a new ship. The old two towers gone, she was swept like a cruiser. She had fourteen inch guns. She was laying out there, she was shelling. The Houston, I saw her. A lot of small boats you could see, but we could not see what was going on on Omaha Beach. Then they moved us to the outter screen; after we landed the Rangers, that job was done. They moved us to the outter screen, and we screened all our ships, we were patrolling out there. So that U-boats and Q-boats or anything else could not come in and attack the supply ships.

H: Did you see any German planes?

B: No, I did not even see a German plane that day. It was amazing. Only when we were in Plymouth, England, one or two came over one night. They did not drop a bombed near us. I heard the explosion, but they did not drop them near the Portland Bill Harbor where we were at.

H: That was the only time?

B: That was the only time I saw any German planes at all.

H: You guys never got trained on them?

B: No, did not see them. They did not let us to open fire, for fear of giving away our position in the harbor. They did not want them to know there was anything in the

harbor, so they would think it was empty. They were massing ships there that were all blacked out. They were massing ships there before the attack.

H: How much secrecy was there a couple of days before the attack?

B: A lot.

H: Were you allowed off of the ship?

B: No. They had Hitler fooled, because he would not listen. If he would listen to some of the Generals, he would have been prepared that because they told him.

H: Rommel knew.

B: They feinted and made it look like they were going to land somewhere else.

H: Yes. They were looking for Pas de Calais, and the Germans were set up for them. But Rommel knew.

B: Yes. I heard later that he did. He told them that it was the ideal place to land. That is what he told them. He did not listen to him. Instead, Hitler listened to someone else. That is how wars are won. Somebody pulls a boo-boo.

H: So, they get through 1944, what happens? After June 6, what goes on?

B: We patrol for a while, like two or three weeks, then we went to southern France, the Mediterranean; the Southern France Invasion.

H: What did you do down there?

B: We were down there -- I forget, it might of been in August when we made the invasion -- we probably went down there in the latter part of July. We were down there patrolling around for a couple of weeks, then they got it up to force and made the southern France invasion. We mostly did screening there. We sunk a Q- boat that was trying to break the screen one way. The Harding and the Satterlee we had on patrol, and we sunk the Q-boat coming in. We took German prisoners then.

H: What was that like?

B: A lot of firing, a lot of confusion, a lot of noise. We used rapid firing until they said cease firing. Someone said we got them.

H: What was the attitude of the Germans? Did you see them?

B: Defiant, more or less. They were a sorry looking lot. Most of them in there were kids and old men, mostly. The Commander of that boat was a fairly young fellow, but he was wounded pretty badly. He did not want any blood transfusions.

H: He did not want any American blood.

B: He did not want any blood mixed with his Aryan blood.

H: He was a hard-core Nazi.

B: A Q-boat is not as big as the PT-boat.

H: They are a step up. An E-boat is like a PT-boat, right?

B: Yes.

H: And a Q-boat is a bit bigger?

B: No. They were old Italian Q-boats, were what the Germans were manning. They were, I would say, probably a step under a PT boat. They probably had two torpedoes to the four. A PT-boat carried four torpedoes on it. Like Kennedy was on.

H: So, a Q-boat is about the same size as a PT.

B: Yes.

H: And a E-boat is roughly the same, or maybe a touch bigger if I remember right.

B: In the First World War, the Q-boat was a big ship, usually. Fast and heavy guns, that was what they call Q-boats. But anyhow, I came back to the states and I had a choice. I made First Class Gunner, and had been busted in Pier 92 in New York, which the Captain really had no authority to bust me. The charge was accurate, but I had no chance to defend myself. What had happened, I had borrowed a pea coat -- we had traded a guy a blanket in Norfolk for a pea coat, when I had been through the first gunnery school. I traded him because I was going up North, I knew I needed a pea coat, and somebody stole mine. He needed a blanket so I traded him this blanket for a pea coat. Ordinarily, you are supposed to take that clothing or that blanket to the Mastered Arms and have him write DC in it. People did not bother doing it, it is just a negligent thing. I get

up in Pier 92 in New York, and they are stealing clothes so bad. I was going out to take my uniform across the street to have it pressed, they wanted to check the name in the pea coat. Wearing clothing with another mans stencil, you cannot defend against that. Now, if they would have given me a summary court martial, then I could have defended myself. But they didn't, they didn't charge me for stealing, just wearing clothes with another man's stencil. I was guilty of that. Through negligence. He put me in a brig, busted me back into second class. He really did not have the authority, because he did not give me the rank. But this old man was getting away with a lot up there on the pier. His wife was as powerful as he was, and he was getting away with a lot stuff.

H: Who was it?

B: I do not even remember his name. I had heard it, yes, because I knew him and her both their name, but I was not there long. They put me on the old USS Cameron, which had been captured in the First World War from the Germans, which was the brig. It was cold in there and you slept on the springs, that was all you had. We did not have the rights then. You did not hear about the prisoner's rights. Prisoner went on brig, you did whatever they give you, you did whatever they told you, that was it. But anyhow, they said if you stay on the Satterlee, you will get you rank back. They told us they were going to make a mind sweep, a high speed sweep out of her, send her to the South Pacific. I could get my rank back if I stayed on the ship, or I could go to Gunnery school in Washington D.C. I said I am gone. So, I turned down the rank and went to Washington D.C. When I was coming out here, I was supposed to go For New Construction, after I went to California instead and lost my baggage, that is how I wound up.

H: That is how you came out?

B: Yes. That is how I got discharged out of California, I went out of there to Corpus Christi, Texas.

H: When you came home, how did you feel?

B: Great. I was glad to get out. In retrospect, after things were over, I should have stayed in, because I had a buddy to join with me. He stayed in twenty years, and was a radio man. He liked the Navy fine, although it never did him any good, because the last I heard from him, he was a beach comber on Pearl City over there. Could not live with the wife, married with children, could not live with her and got divorced. He went back to Pearl Harbor. Some friends of mine went to see him, they went over there and picked him up. They said he was just beach combing.

H: Did you go over on the fiftieth anniversary?

B: No. I did not get to go.

H: When was the last time you were at Pearl Harbor?

B: 1942, when I left there. I never got back. Everybody told me, even in 1944, they said you would not even know the place anymore. I would have liked to have gone. After it was all over, my daughter up here in Warren said to me, "If I would have known that," she said, "I would of seen that you got to go." (Laughter) I said, "Now you tell me." We did not have the finances to do it, my wife and I did not. I did not want to go without her anyhow.

H: Do you want to go?

B: Yes. I would like to go. I would like to have gone when Bishop and all of them went out and Bob and them went out, and Chuck. I would like to have went out then. Yes, I would kind of like to go out to Pearl Harbor and to Hawaii. I do not think that I ever will, I probably will not.

H: I have one last thing for you. When it is all said and done, how do you feel about the Japanese now?

B: I do not have any problem with the present Japanese. They are just like our kids now. Like my kids, they do not know anything about the war. They were not in power then, they had nothing to do with it. We have always had wars, we are always going to have wars. I do not know where we get the idea that we are going to stop wars. Like forming the United Nations. First, I am a Christian man, I read my Bible daily. The Bible tells me that there are going to be wars and rumors of wars, and so far that Bible has not missed a thing. I am not peddling anything, but regardless of what we want to say, whether we believe it, whether we do not, it has not missed any predictions yet. When we are seeing people killed everyday, I am very serious. Children suing their parents, things like that. It (the Bible) tells you that in there, in Timothy, it tells about it. Disobedience to parents, truce breakers, all that kind of thing. We made a big mistake and that is the only political thing I will say, I will say we made a terrible mistake. When we did the Korean thing, when we did the Vietnam thing, it was a terrible mistake because you cannot fight a nice war. If you are going into a ring to fight, you cannot tie your hands behind your back and conduct, say, "Do not hit me, do not hit me!" You cannot do that. It does not work. These people do not live that way.

H: Let me ask you one question, then, related to that. How did you feel about the

Persian Gulf?

B: I was glad they made a move, if only to redeem ourselves from Vietnam mostly, I think.

H: Was it valuable for them?

B: I think so. In that thing in itself, I think the United States really needed that. Like a moral builder. "We are back again." We have had so much criticism of our nation. People that live here get the benefits, I cannot understand it. But I do understand it in a way, if they lived during the Depression, then they would have something they could compare. We have a beautiful country, I have been all over it. I have trucked in every state in the forty-eight with a truck. It is a great big beautiful country. Sure it has faults, it is bound to have them. My goodness, I listen to Washington everyday and the various activist groups, this is a terrible place. And to me, the saddest thing is this, we still have too many people in this country -- we do not even need to mention groups -- we still have too many people in this country that think that communism or socialism is the way to go. It just has not been done right, and that is the biggest lie that has ever been perpetrated. It is not alright, it will not work, because people are not honest. It would work, it could work, if everybody went by the Bible. "You do onto others, as you would have others do onto you," you know that Golden Rule. It could work, it could work beautifully, but it never will. It just will not, because we do not have that kind of people. You have seen yourself in life, you could take a nice man here, give him power and give him money, and he is a stinker. (Laughter) That is what happens, it is people. Because it is here, right here in the heart. Until we have a heart change, we are not going to ever see it. I got other news for you -- I am not going to be in this world all that long anymore -- if it is not going to get better, regardless what you are taught, regardless what you think, it is not going to get better, it is going to get worse. It will get worse, you have seen the tip of the iceberg in the anarchy. I saw a lady last Friday -- I go to Roger's every Friday -- I saw a lady down there, a grown woman, I suppose she got kids in school. She has on a big tee shirt, "Question authority". Question every authority, you know where that leads, anarchy. You cannot have two hundred and fifty million voices. You got to have one voice lead you. One group or one representative voice leading you. You cannot please everybody out here on the side street. That is why this government worked before, but why it is not going to work if you do not make some kind of change. The only change we are going to see is what we have in our pocket. That is it, I am afraid. (Laughter)

H: Thanks Earl.

End of Interview