

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
#298**

**ANTHONY JOSEPH IANTORNO  
CAMP MALAKOLE, SURVIVOR**

**INTERVIEWED ON  
DECEMBER 7, 1998  
BY JEFF PAPPAS**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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**USS *ARIZONA* MEMORIAL  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**Jeff Pappas (JP):** The following oral history interview was conducted by Jeff Pappas for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial, at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 7, 1998 at eight p.m. The person being interviewed is Anthony Iantorno who was at or aboard Camp Malakole on December 7, 1941. Anthony, for the record, would you please state your full name, your place and date of birth?

**Anthony Joseph Iantorno (AI):** My full name is Anthony J., Joseph, Iantorno. I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, November the twenty-fourth, 1919.

JP: Good. So you were raised in Cleveland?

AI: Yes.

JP: First few years of your life...

AI: The first seven years of my life, yes.

JP: Do you remember anything about Cleveland?

AI: Well, I remember where I was born it was kind of the old part of town. And I think it's been torn down now and they got the new city park there and also the new city college there. So as a matter of fact, I don't, I lived only about four or five blocks from the new stadium there.

JP: From the new baseball field?

AI: Which is Forbes Field.

JP: Forbes, yeah. So you moved from Cleveland at a very early age, at seven.

AI: Yes.

JP: And you moved to where?

AI: Long Beach, California.

JP: Now tell me a little about your, before we get to Long Beach, or even in Long Beach, tell me a bit about your father and mother, your parents and your family.

AI: Well, my mother was born in Buffalo, New York.

JP: And include full names for me too, for the record.

AI: Oh, okay, yeah. My mother was born in Buffalo, New York and her name was Mary Iantorno, Antoinette, Mary Antoinette Iantorno. And my dad came from Italy when he was ten years old. His name was Vincenzo Maria Iantorno.

JP: What part of Italy is your father from?

AI: He came from Naples. And I guess he came...

JP: Your father, was he born in Naples?

AI: In Naples, yes. I believe it was just south of Naples, but he always says Naples. I'm not sure. I can't remember the town right now.

JP: That's okay.

AI: Yeah.

JP: So you had moved to Long Beach. So essentially you had gone, you went to school, most of your schooling was in Long Beach?

AI: Yes, I went to grammar school and then I went to junior high school, then I went to Long Beach Poly[*technical*] High School in Long Beach, California.

JP: Okay.

AI: Yeah.

JP: Well, did you finish high school?

AI: Yes, I did.

JP: Okay, what year?

AI: Nineteen thirty-eight.

JP: Okay, very good. Tell me a little bit about some of the things you enjoyed to do in high school.

AI: Well, I played on the football team and I believe that year we won CIF championship. And the next year we didn't, but we did that year, in 1938. And then I used to like to go down to the beach and ride the waves down at Long Beach, before they built the breakwater. And we played volleyball down there at the beach. And I was kind of a beach guy.

JP: (Chuckles)

AI: And so when I went in the service, I wasn't exactly a soldier to start with. I was more of a beach person.

JP: Well tell me about that. Did you like to surf or...?

AI: Oh, back in those days, we didn't have a surfboard. We did body—what we called body surfing.

JP: Yeah.

AI: You know, you kick your leg up a little bit and you ride the waves on in and then you get up and swim back out again and catch the next wave and come on in.

JP: Sounds like a real fun childhood.

AI: Yeah, I mean we used to love the beach. I spent most of my time on the beach. I guess I was one of the beach rats, or whatever you want to call 'em.

JP: And how much time in school, compared to the beach?

AI: Well, I'd get out of school about 2:40 and by 3:30 I was on the beach. And I stayed there until the sun went down and then I went back home again.

JP: What did your father do in Long Beach, as a vocation?

AI: My dad and his brother had a mechanic, had a garage where he was a mechanic and he did body and fender work and a lot of painting and things like that.

JP: Had your father learned that trade in Italy?

AI: No, no. No, he learned it here in California. His brother started it and then my dad helped him and that's where he picked it up, the trade, that way.

JP: Oh, interesting. So tell me, what about your mother? Your mother a homemaker?

AI: Well, my mother was, she went to school in Cleveland, of course. She graduated. But my mother loved music and she loved the piano. And she used to sing to us all the time when we were kids and she used to play the piano, a little bit more than my dad did. Of course, my dad always liked opera. He liked Caruso and things like that. But my mother used to sing all the time. It's a beautiful voice.

JP: Could she sing in Italian?

AI: She did. She did on certain songs, but she always talked to us kids in English, but she would sing in Italian all right.

JP: Well tell me about that. You had some Italian influence in your family. Was Italian ever spoken in your home?

AI: Well, up until I was five years old. Then once I started school, my mother said to my dad, "Jim,"—she always called him Jim—"we're going to have to start talking to the kids in English 'cause they're going to start school and we think it's best for them."

So my dad and mother stopped talking Italian to one another and from then on it was always English to each other and to us kids.

JP: Well, us kids, did you have, obviously you had some siblings.

AI: Well, I had two other brothers. My brother, John, which went in the service with me and I had a younger brother, Joe. He finally went to USC [University of Southern California] and graduated with a doctor's degree.

JP: That's University of Southern California?

AI: Yes, that's right.

JP: A doctor's...

AI: In education. And he was the dean at the—let's see—the dean at the Palm Springs Junior College. He was the dean of activities for the whole state of California. He became the director of that.

JP: Under the—it was a state office?

AI: Well, no. He first started out with the school, but then he became, he was elected to the state office. You're right.

JP: I see.

AI: Yeah. And he's doing a great job. Yeah.

JP: Well, talk about that a little bit. Was college ever discussed in your home?

AI: Well, in my case, yes it was. In my case, we went through the Great Depression.

JP: Right.

AI: And so being the oldest son, and my dad didn't make all that much money to start with, so I used to have to go out and work to supply the family with the extra expense, you know for the family, feeding the family. And but then

when I went in the service, I started sending money home when I was a sergeant. And my mother saved her money and then she put my brother through college and then he became the educated one in the family.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: I think we were just born at the wrong time. (Chuckles)

JP: Well, talk about Long Beach Poly, your high school.

AI: Yeah, Long Beach Poly is the Jackrabbits, that's their name, the Jackrabbits.

JP: What's the full name of the high school? The full form...

AI: Long Beach Polytechnical High School.

JP: Now, did you have the option of going to Long Beach Poly, or was that...

AI: Yeah. Yeah. I could've went to St. Anthony's Catholic school, but we picked that Long Beach Poly because going to St. Anthony's school, it would cost us a little extra money and my folks didn't have that kind of money at the time.

JP: Good. Now, as a polytech, were you studying electronics? Were you doing specific sorts of vocational training there?

AI: Well, I did some vocational training, but playing football, I remember one time I took a typing class. I wasn't doing too good and the teacher come up to me and said, "You know, Tony, I think maybe you better stop taking typing class and go out and play football." But...

JP: A teacher actually recommended that you go play football instead of taking typing.

AI: Well, she said that to me, but I wanted to play football anyway.

JP: Okay.

AI: But one thing I did do, I went to take cooking class because I loved to cook and then most of us boys are in a cooking class—I think it was five or six of us, the rest was girls. We liked to cook real fast like and then we had ‘em eat. Where the girls would gossip back and forth. They didn’t care too much about eating. But us boys enjoyed eating whatever we cooked.

JP: Sure. Cooking, where did you get that from?

AI: You know what? My mother told me. She’s an Italian mother, you know. And she told me, she said, “One of the things that you should learn is how to cook.”

And I’d say, “Why Mother?”

And she would say, “Because when you get married someday, and your wife is sick, you have to learn how to cook. Or your wife has a baby, you have to learn how to cook. Or something else may happen like that where you’re going to have to learn how to cook.”

JP: And did your father...

AI: So I used to sit and watch my mother do cooking in the kitchen whenever she cooked and then she would tell me what she’s doing and then she’d let me help her a little bit. So I kind of enjoyed that. As a matter of fact, today I do about fifty percent of the cooking at home.

JP: All right.

AI: When my wife was out doing something or she’s taking care of my little granddaughter and she’s busy, I’ll just go out in the kitchen and start cooking.

JP: So you had done some cooking in high school.

AI: Yeah.

JP: Now, of course in Long Beach back then, you had, you were exposed to the United States Navy.

AI: Right. Well, I tell you why I joined the army, how it happened. Actually it was the California National Guard to start with. And I joined the National Guard [*in*] 1939 because it paid us one dollar a night for every night we was there. And I had bought me a 1931 Model A Ford and I made just enough money to pay for it, thirteen dollars a month. Then I didn't have enough money to buy gasoline. So by getting a dollar a night, I could buy like ten dollars of gas for a dollar back in those days. And then I could go out and have my date with girlfriends, or whatever I wanted to do. And so 1939, then 1940 came along, that's when President Roosevelt decided he wanted to call us into service, thus becoming the first reserve or National Guard unit in United States to be called into service for one year. And because the fleet left Long Beach...

JP: Now, what unit was this now, the National Guard? The...

AI: That was the 251<sup>st</sup> Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft.

JP: Very good.

AI: Okay. And because the fleet left Long Beach and went to Pearl Harbor, they needed anti-aircraft protection over there, so they immediately sent us to Hawaii for one year. Now we was in Hawaii one year when our time was just about up. But Congress decided, hey, we're having problems with Germany and we're having problems with Japan, maybe we need a little more time to build our army up. So they extended it from one year to two years, two and a half years.

JP: Were you disappointed?

AI: Well, I was hoping to come home, but you know, I enjoyed Hawaii. And I was sending ninety-six dollars a month home on the, what they call it, the allotment. And so I didn't mind it too much because I was building up my reserves in the bank while I was over there.

JP: Ninety-six dollars a month is that your salary?

AI: Oh yes, I'm sorry. I'll take that back. I made ninety-six dollars a month and I sent seventy dollars a month home. All right, that's right. You're correct.

JP: Huh. 'Cause most of the navy guys I spoke to, they were making twenty, twenty-one dollars a month.

AI: Well, that's when we first went in. I'm talking about when I became sergeant, I start—when I first went in, I made thirty-six dollars a month, you're right. And then I went from forty-two dollars a month, then I became corporal, I went to fifty-four dollars a month. And finally when I made sergeant, I went up to ninety-six dollars a month.

JP: When did you make sergeant? What year?

AI: That would be in October 1941, just about two months before Pearl Harbor.

JP: Good. So you'd been over at Pearl now for how long?

AI: About thirteen months before the war broke out.

JP: So you were shipped over there at when...

AI: We left San Pedro on the SS *Washington*, the luxury liner, October 31, Halloween night, and we arrived in Honolulu November the fifth, 1940.

JP: Nineteen forty.

AI: Yes.

JP: Okay.

AI: So we was there approximately thirteen months before the war broke out.

JP: What was your reaction to that, the order that you're going to Hawaii?

AI: Well, I kind of liked it. Everybody kind of, you know, was thinking about hula girls and dancing and beautiful women, and the breeze in the trees, and the coconuts, things like that, you know. So we didn't mind it, besides we

was on a luxury liner to start with. We went over on the SS *Washington*, which is a luxury liner that the government had leased for a year, I guess, and we got to sit in the dining room and we had maid service in our cabin and we had music. They had an orchestra aboard ship. So we kind of enjoyed ourselves.

JP: Tell me about your training though as anti-aircraft.

AI: Well, when we first got over there, we went to Fort Shafter, but they didn't have enough room for us there, so they moved us out to Barbers Point where we started to build our own camp. We had to go out there and start and...

JP: Was anything there when you...

AI: Nothing there.

JP: ...arrived?

AI: Nothing there to start with, just algarroba trees, *kiawe* trees, they call 'em, or algarroba trees. And we went out there and we was in tents to start with, pup tents and [*six men*] tents. And that very first night we was there, we had a tremendous rain storm and it flooded the whole area up and all our shoes and barracks bag and foot lockers were just carried right out to the sea.

And so we had to move up to higher ground and then let the water drain out, and then we started to build our camp. And we had engineers coming from—Third Engineers [*3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion*], I believe it was—from Schofield Barracks. Yeah, Schofield Barracks. And they came on down to show us what kind of a camp they wanted us to build. And so we start working on that.

We would go to Nanakuli and we pick up sand. We'd go along the beach, pick up coral rock, take it to the rock crusher. We'd crush rock. We'd bring the sand in and they would haul the cement in there and we built our foundation. Once we got that built, the lumber was brought in and we built our floors, the side of the building, the roof. We did roofing. We built our own sewer plant, our own showers, our own bathroom, and our own theater,

and that's Camp Malakole, right near Barbers Point, right where the lighthouse is at.

JP: Now, what was this going to be for? What were they going to do there?

AI: And that was for an artillery. We were supposed to start firing at the planes as they was towing across from Barbers Point to Nanakuli. That was a military area and the planes would come by and we would open up on fifty-caliber machine gun, thirty-seven millimeters and a three-inch anti-aircraft guns.

JP: Now, you're still with the 251<sup>st</sup> at this time?

AI: I'm still with 251<sup>st</sup> [*Coast Artillery AA*].

JP: Under what command are you at this time?

AI: It was, there was an artillery command—I can't remember that. I can't remember that.

JP: Was it regular army?

AI: Yeah, regular—we was under the regular army. We was under regular army, yes.

JP: Okay.

AI: We took our IQ [*intelligence quotient*] test and all our medical records and everything else was kept up there at Schofield Barracks.

JP: Did you guys mix in with the regular army?

AI: Well, at first, being like a reserve outfit, we was a little bit lax on discipline to start with, because I knew everybody in school and I knew 'em from grade school and junior high school and played football together. And when I was a corporal, or when somebody else is a corporal, and they'd give out an order, we didn't particularly like it, we didn't exactly say, "Yes, sir. No,

sir.” We’d say, “Why do we have to do that? How come? Why do we do that?”

Well, little by little we got to be a little bit more militaristic, started obeying orders. And then when we went up to Schofield Barracks, they said, “What kind of outfit are you guys? You guys don’t act like soldiers up here at Schofield,” until we went up there and we took our IQ test and we came out about twenty percent higher than the regular army.

Well the reason for that was, we had a lot of guys that was in the service—no, I’m sorry. It was in the college, they went to city college, UCLA [*University of California, Los Angeles*], USC [*University of Southern California*], San Diego State and we had a lot of guys that were college graduates and so their IQ tests would be higher. And so when they combined it all together, it was approximately twenty percent higher than the regular army.

JP: Now, the army had issued the IQ tests at Schofield?

AI: Schofield gave us, up at Schofield. Well that kind of threw ‘em back a little bit because I had the first sergeant come out and say to me, “I’m going to take ten percent of you guys back up to Schofield and you’re going to take the IQ test again.”

JP: Now, how many are there of you at this time, in the reserve?

AI: Now, we went over with 1200, so he sent approximately 120 back up there.

JP: Okay.

AI: We took it the second time, right.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: It came out about the same average. So then the army began realizing that maybe this group that came in had a little more schooling. It wasn’t that we was better soldiers necessarily, but we was a little more educated, maybe. Let’s say that way, huh.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: But we didn't think we were better soldiers than they were, but we just thought we maybe two or three more years of education more.

JP: So what did they do with that information?

AI: Well, the way it turned out, we had a lot of people go back to officer's candidate school that had over 110 IQ. I particularly, I think I had 121. And but we had people go back with 135, 140, that went back to officer's candidate school, clear back to the States. And our particular unit of 1200 men wound up with six generals before the war was over with, [*some were reserve officers when they went in.*]

JP: So essentially, a part of your reservists, they had qualified for officer's training school based on an IQ exam?

AI: Yes, because up on the bulletin board and the air corps, it said that anybody that has over an IQ of a certain number can qualify for going in back to the officer's candidate school or if they want to get into the Air Force.

JP: So it was optional though.

AI: Yes, it was.

JP: They didn't have to...

AI: But the colonel of the outfit could turn you down if he thought you were necessary for his command. If he thought you were training new recruits coming in and new draftees coming in, if he thought he needed you there, you couldn't go.

JP: Do you remember any of the commanding officers that were issuing these exams at the time? Any of their names?

AI: Yeah, I mean we had General Byers. Let's see, what's that? General Byers and then General—oh it slipped my mind now. General Byers, General

Sherman and...hmm? He was a lawyer in the city of Long Beach, district attorney of the city of Long Beach. Willis T. Lyman, that's him. And a few more, I can't remember right offhand, but there was at least six of 'em.

JP: What happened to you then? Did you opt for officer's training school?

AI: Well, I had a chance to. But we was bringing in new recruits and because my brother was with me and I knew it would make my mother happy if I stayed with my brother...

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: ...and the colonel said, "Tony," he said, "you're training new guys coming in." He says, "Right now, I need you. Maybe at a later date you can go back to officer's school."

JP: Right.

AI: But then the war broke out and that did that. That was the end of that.

JP: So now you're constructing the camp.

AI: Yeah.

JP: What were you doing? What did you do to help build?

AI: Well, I got into the electrical trade. I didn't know a damn thing about electrical to start with, but the engineers from Schofield Barracks was showing us and telling us what to do. And if we made a mistake, they'd be there to tell us what to do. And so that's how come I learned the trade, because when I got out of the service, I joined the electrical trade and the guy at the union hall said to me, "Well, what kind of experience have you had?"

And I said, "Well, I did a little bit of wiring at Camp Malakole."

And he says, "Good, you're in as an apprentice."

JP: Mm-hmm. So that's what you did then.

AI: Yeah.

JP: You were an electrician.

AI: Yeah, I was an electrician and I wound up as a general superintendent at the end, working on Disney Studios in Anaheim there. I worked on the Dodger Stadium and also the Angels Stadium, and plus other places.

JP: Now, how long did it take your unit to build Malakole?

AI: From about November 1940 'til about July 1941, just before the war.

JP: Had they brought in the artillery at that time?

AI: The what?

JP: Had they brought in the artillery by...

AI: We took over some artillery with us, but we got the new guns in about the same time, in July of '41.

JP: What kind of guns you got?

AI: Well, we started out with fifty-caliber machine gun.

JP: Water-cooled?

AI: Water-cooled fifty-caliber machine gun. Then we had the old World War I thirty-caliber machine guns. Those went out. Soon as the thirty-sevens came in, the thirty-caliber machine gun was gone. We had the thirty-sevens for a while and then just before December 7, we got the forty-millimeters.

JP: Those were the anti-aircraft?

AI: Anti-aircraft gun. They came in.

JP: Right.

AI: And we took the forty-millimeters and fifty water-cooled with us to Fiji and then down into Guadalcanal and up to Bougainville then.

JP: You able to mount all the artillery prior to the attack?

AI: Say that again.

JP: Were you able to mount all the new artillery prior to the attack?

AI: Oh yeah. Yeah. We fired. Matter of fact, on December 7, we still had 500 rounds of fifty-caliber machine gun that we had left over from firing at a towed target.

JP: So you had been practicing all this time?

AI: Practicing, right. Practicing all the time. So we had that and we put it in our supply room at the end of the barracks and we used the last bit of it to fire at those Japanese planes that day.

JP: Well, let's go. Let's go there to that morning. What were you doing that morning?

AI: Okay, that morning I started out going to the mess hall. And on Sunday mornings, you could more or less go late if you want to. And so I must have went about 7:30, 7:40. And you could have your eggs and your bacon and your pancakes kind of cooked the way you wanted to on a Sunday morning because there's not that many guys there. Half the guys might be gone. This particular case, only about one-third was gone.

JP: Well, how many were stationed there first?

AI: About 2400. yeah, and about half of 'em, about a third was gone.

JP: All reservists?

AI: All reservists, no. And the draftees. By this time, we'd been getting in draftees coming in from all over the country.

JP: And they were regular army?

AI: And they were supposed to go in for one-year service. Okay. And we was training them. So anyway, I was coming back from the mess hall that morning, with Bernie McCall, my corporal. That's about the time I made sergeant. Just you know, in '41. And...

JP: Before Pearl Harbor? Before the attack?

AI: Yes it was. Yes. And then Bernie McCall was working with me and he said to me, "You know, Tony, I hear some planes."

We kind of looked around and we didn't see 'em at first because the barracks was in the way. And he says, "Well, wow, what kind of planes are those?"

I looked up and I said, "Doesn't look like any of ours," because we was trained, well trained in our own planes.

JP: Before we go to the battle, explain to me the location of the camp in relation to the island itself. Put it in geographical perspective.

AI: Okay. The Camp Malakole was located on the southern west tip of Oahu, right next to Barbers Point. There's a lighthouse out there. And Nanakuli, the beach is a little bit to the north of us, on that coast, on the west coast, and we was stationed right there. And there was a ranch, I think it was [*Campbell Plantation?*] It was a cattle ranch there. Right? Okay. And so that was where Camp Malakole got started. [*Not sure of the name of the ranch.*]

JP: Okay.

AI: Okay. And anyway, that morning I was walking back to the barracks to sit down on the couch and write a letter home and listen to music from back in the States. Because in the morning, you could get the States. The afternoon

or late morning, the sun would come up, and you couldn't get the music from the States anymore. And so I was walking back to the barracks, carrying our breakfast with us. And when McCall said, "What kind of planes are those, Tony?"

And I said, "Well, they don't look like one of ours."

And he said, "Well, look at 'em."

I said, "Do you know, they look,"—we knew planes. We knew the German planes, the *Messerschmitt*, [*other nation planes also.*]

JP: You'd been trained to identify the symbols.

AI: Right. 'Cause the way we used to identify planes, we used to hold a card behind our back and sit in front of the guys, and bring it out like this here for about a second, and put it back there, and say to the guys, "Now, what kind of a plane was that?"

JP: Hmm.

AI: Was that a British plane? Or was that a German plane?

JP: Did you show the plane itself?

AI: Yes, we did.

JP: Yeah.

AI: The silhouette.

JP: Yeah.

AI: The plane itself.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: Or was that an American plane? Or was that a navy plane? So we knew the P-40's, the B-17 bombers, the SBD's, the navy dive-bombers, the [TBD], the PBX, you know, that lands in the water. So we knew all the planes and I said, "Bernie, that doesn't look like one of our planes."

He said, "Well, what kind of planes are they?"

And about that time, that plane came a little more into view where I could see the round—we called it meatballs—but the round flag of Japan. And I said to Bernie, "Those are Japanese planes."

But that brought back something to me that I heard a couple of months before that. Maybe a month before that. When the captain said to me, one day he said, walking down the road, he said, "Hey Sarge," he said, "come over, I want to talk to you."

I said, "Okay, Cap, what do you want?"

He said, "You know, I just come in from an intelligence report," and he didn't tell me where. He wouldn't tell me where. I asked him, he wouldn't tell me.

He said, "I come back from an intelligence report and they said they hadn't seen a Japanese carriers or heard from the Japanese carriers for quite a while. They don't know where the Japanese carriers are at."

And I said, "How in the world did you know that? How do you know that?"

Well, he said, "Planes fly in and out in Japan. They have ships that go in and out. They have cargo ships going out. They have embassies up and down the China coast, up and down Japan, different countries. The embassies would report certain ships are in the harbor, certain ships have left the harbor." And he says, "And one other thing, the navy had these different stations around the island what was listening post. And they can listen to the ship, the guy that sends off the, the radio operator and the guy that operates the key, they could tell which ship that was coming from by the way that operator works that key."

I said, "Well, how do they know that?"

He said, "They get used to knowing what ship it is because they know that guy, how he works that key." So he says, "They don't know where the Japanese carriers are at."

Well that morning when I saw that plane come by, all of a sudden what that captain had told me a month or so before that, which I had kind of stored [*in the*] back [*of my head*] I guess, I said, "Now I know where the planes, the carriers are because Japanese carrier planes can't fly more than 300 miles out and 300 miles back."

JP: You knew this?

AI: Yes, I knew that. When we had copies of the Japanese planes that said how much the power of the engine was and how much of a load it could carry and what the capacity was on fuel. We knew that already. None of our carrier planes could fly more than 300 miles [*out*] and 300 miles back, so it couldn't be any different. So I knew right then that the Japanese carriers were right near close to Oahu. I did not know where they were at. They were north of Oahu, but I found out a lot later. But I didn't know that. Anyway, that's the story on that.

JP: Well, we're going to stop there for a second and change tapes.

AI: Okay.

JP: And we're going to resume the story...

END OF TAPE #31

TAPE #32

AI: Okay.

JP: Okay. So Tony, we're at the morning now, December 7...

AI: Yes.

JP: ...1941. You had recognized, at this time, you had recognized that these were indeed Japanese planes. There were not American planes or any other sorts of planes. And your first reaction at that moment, you had recognized the fact that Japanese carriers must have been someplace off Oahu...

AI: Yes.

JP: What happened then? What did you do?

AI: Well, we did run in the barracks and got my rifle out to start with, the first thing. And I remember there was some ammunition in my footlocker that the captain had given me for protection against local sabotage. He said we had to have something to protect ourselves in case there was local sabotage.

JP: Now at this point, had [*Camp*] Malakole, had you engaged any sort of combat at this time?

AI: No. No.

JP: Okay.

AI: No, things are quiet, but like he said, because what was happening in Germany, he said because of what the Germans were doing in Germany, there were saboteurs were going into these countries before the army marched in and they were taking over railroad station and the bridges and maybe the communications center and places like that. Maybe the city hall, the police department.

JP: So one of the first things that your commanding officers, that you thought about, was the fact that there might be some saboteurs...

AI: Yes.

JP: ...around the area.

AI: Yes.

JP: That was the first thing you were concerned with.

AI: Right. That was the first thing that I was concerned about.

JP: Okay.

AI: Because the Japanese, the population on Oahu was about forty percent Japanese, and that's what they was concerned about. It didn't work out that way. The Japanese people were very good about it. But they were concerned about it and so in order to protect ourselves, the captain did give me, a sergeant, just enough ammunition to put in my rifle and just in case somebody broke into our camp, we could just protect ourselves. That was the main thing. But he said, "Put it in a footlocker and lock it," which I did. And nobody else knew about it. But he said, "Dish it out to the men in case of emergency, only if it's an emergency."

That kind of surprised me because we never carried ammunition in the barracks while we had rifles there because they was always afraid that somebody might go haywire, or somebody might come back from Honolulu and may be intoxicated or something and they'd get into a fight, and they might shoot one another. So we never had that before, and that's what surprised me so much was that they wanted us to have ammunition to protect ourselves. And I said, "From what?"

And he said, "From local sabotage." He said, "We got forty percent of the population in Oahu is Japanese descent. Now which way are they going to go?"

And far as I was concerned, we had no problems at all. I know there's some people say different things, but I don't recall any problems at all with 'em.

JP: So let's continue here, that morning.

AI: Okay. Okay. Now, this is after I fired my rifle at the Japanese planes. I was trying to hit the torpedo on those planes, big, ugly torpedo, with my rifle. I don't know why I picked on the torpedoes for. It has a detonator on the front of the torpedo, and I thought, you know, if I could hit that thing, it

might blow that plane up. But I wasn't any good. And I said, "Well, this is no good."

So I remember the fifty-caliber machine gun on the end of our barracks and I told the men, "Let's go in and get our machine gun out."

'Cause we still had 500 rounds of fifty caliber machine gun left over because we couldn't fire any more at the targets that day. Something happened to the plane or the target, or we had to stop. They don't send it back to Makalapa crater or Red Hill when it's already belted and out of a crate, 'cause it'll rust. So we put it in our own barracks. So we got that out.

JP: At this point, though, you hadn't been fired on yet.

AI: No. At this point—yes. Yes. Yes. At this point, the first torpedo plane I saw, the tail gunner swung his machine gun around like this here and start strafing our camp. I don't know where it landed. I thought it looked like he was right down my nose, but probably landed somewhere else. And that's when I took off, start running to get my rifle. [*I could see the tail gunners' eyes.*]

JP: Okay.

AI: Yeah. So he was firing at us. And as each plane came by, the tail gunner would spray us a little bit, just to keep us busy. They weren't trying to bomb us. They weren't trying to hurt, really hurt anybody. They were wanting to confuse us so that we couldn't fire back. You know what I mean?

JP: Sure.

AI: And but we got our fifty [*caliber gun*] out and we took the 500 rounds and we loaded it on the fifty caliber water mount and we fired those at two planes that came by, and whether we hit 'em or not, I don't know. I know there was two planes in that area that was shot down but who shot 'em down, I don't know. There were two planes. One near Ewa Marine [*Corps*] Base, between us and Ewa Marine [*Corps*] Base. And they said one was supposed to crash in the ocean. That I don't know. That I don't know. I got this from our general, one of the generals that went back to the Pentagon

said he that's the report he got. So we maybe got probably two planes, but not for sure.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: Okay. And after that, we was out of ammunition. So I told old Corporal Barbariea, Manuel Barbariea...

JP: Now, you're ranking here, you're a sergeant?

AI: Yeah, I'm a sergeant already. No captain there. No officer there. They're gone on the other side of the island, on Saturday and Sunday. They went to some luau or somewhere. The first sergeant was in the room listening to the telephone to find out what in the hell is going on, what's the orders. So I told Corporal Barbariea, "Go get the truck and bring it down here."

And he said to me, "Why, we got orders to go somewhere?"

I said, "Manuel, go get the truck and bring it down here!"

Now the reason I knew where to go is I was in Pearl Harbor at least six or seven times prior to that on alert and maneuvers and I knew exactly where to go. I knew to go to Hospital Point, where the [*naval*] hospital was at.

JP: Did you think instinctively that these torpedoes ...

AI: Yes, because the captain had told us many times before, "This is your gun position in case of emergency. This is where you're going to have to go."

JP: But you were convinced at this moment, though, that they were going to fire at Pearl?

AI: Yeah, you're darned right. 'Cause I could look over then, by this time, look over Pearl [*Harbor*] and I could see the planes circling around like this here and all of a sudden coming down like this.

JP: So you guys took off for Pearl Harbor?

AI: So we took off for Pearl Harbor and on the way into Pearl, we passed those sugar cane fields and pineapple fields. And there was workers out there and they looked like they was Oriental of some kind. They might have been Chinese or Japanese or—there was some Portuguese over there working.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: Or maybe somebody else. And they was running to their house because it kind of scared 'em, especially when they saw the army coming down the road on the back of this truck, with the rifles.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: We was worried about somebody might stop us on the way down, like a local sabotage. That's what we was worrying about to start with. So we knew we had to get there...

JP: How anxious were you at this moment?

AI: Beg your pardon?

JP: How anxious were you at this moment?

AI: You know what? I wasn't nervous at all but I was nervous the next morning. I don't know why. I was so excited. There was so much going on. I knew I had to get to Pearl Harbor, but I don't remember being nervous. I don't know why. But the next morning, when I thought they was going to come back, because in Pearl they got those gasoline storage tanks all around 'em. And I looked over there at night and I said, "They didn't even touch the gasoline storage tanks."

JP: Those would be the oil storage, the oil supplies.

AI: Yeah, oil storage. And the ships gotta run on oil. And then they didn't touch the machine shops or most of the dry docks.

JP: Now, you got to Pearl.

AI: I got to Pearl. And on the way...

JP: What'd you do then?

AI: On the way to Pearl, those planes that were dropping their bombs like this and leveled off as they flew north, the tail gunner would shoot at us. And so I told Manuel, I said, "If I hit you on the top of the truck like this, (slapping [hood] sound) you stop because we don't have any ammunition in our fifty caliber machine gun. We're going to get off!"

And so I saw one plane come in. I thought he was coming right at us and I went like this here (slapping sound). And he put the brakes on so damned hard that the machine gun almost fell off the truck. And a lot of the guys that was hanging on the truck fell off on the ground. Lucky nobody got hurt, but they got skinned up a little bit. And as soon as the plane flew by, then we got back on the truck again and we raced into Pearl Harbor.

We couldn't shoot at the Japanese planes, we had no ammunition! So as I got into the Pearl, the second attack started. About nine o'clock.

JP: Well, let's stop there for a second. What was your impression? What was your first impression? Now you're at the Pearl Harbor, the first attack had already come and gone.

AI: You know what bothered me? As I came around the gates, the first thing that hit me was the Marine guards are at that front gate. 'Cause we'd been in there before and the Marine guards have always stopped us before to see where we were going. And then they would have to call the liaison officer they had between the army and navy, and say, "Here comes an anti-aircraft unit into Pearl. Is it okay?"

And generally the liaison officer would say, "Yeah, yeah. I know all about them. Let 'em in."

So then the Marine guard would come out and say, "Go on in."

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: But I was worried about if we came around forty-five, fifty miles an hour around that turn, I don't know if the freeway is the same way today, but you made a turn like this here to come in. And there was a Marine guard standing there with a BAR [Browning Air Rifle], and think he was shooting at the planes. But I saw that BAR against our rifle, it kind of worried me a little bit. I wasn't sure whether he was going to stop us right away or what. But he saw that we was army. I guess he recognized us, so he motioned us in.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: Yeah. That's what I had in mind.

JP: So at that moment, you had seen...

AI: At that moment, yeah. At that moment.

JP: So now you've seen...

AI: But you know what, I can remember seeing the ladies running to their house. They had their babies strapped to their back. The Oriental people had the babies strapped to the back when they was working in the fields.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: And they was running to the house and I could see the panic in their face. I could see the panic in their face, because they didn't know what we was going to do. And I saw this one lady run into the house. It was a house right in the middle of a sugar cane field. And she got into the door. She pulled the shade down and then she looked out [*behind the shade*] like this here, and I could see she was nervous as anything. Still today I can see that gal doing that. Yeah.

JP: So now, at this time though, you had gotten to Pearl during the second wave. What did you guys do?

AI: Okay. The second wave just got started and the battleship *Nevada* was just going down the channel. And it beached itself at Hospital Point. That's where my gun position was, at Hospital Point, and their "C" landing there.

JP: Your gun position was at Hospital Point?

AI: My gun position.

JP: Meaning...

AI: At Hospital Point.

JP: Okay.

AI: If you look on the map, you'll see a little area there on the map where it's a sandy area right in there. You look on the map, you'll see it. You'll see a little sandy area there. That's where I had my machine gun there.

JP: Okay.

AI: And forty millimeter.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: And right to the right of me there would be where "C" landing's at. You know where "C" landing is at? This is where the ships used to take the pilots that parked their car there and they used to take 'em across to Ford Island and then they used to take off from there, but the cars would be over there, where "C" landing is at. This is where the shuttle would go back and forth.

JP: So you made your way off to your position?

AI: Yes.

JP: Okay.

AI: Yeah. And then I had to wait for the ammunition to come from Makalapa crater or Red Hill. That's where our ammunition was stored. And we didn't get any ammunition until the whole attack was over with.

JP: So you just...

AI: But I could sit there and I could watch the last plane circling around up there and he turned out to be that Commander Fuchida. Remember him?

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: He's the commander and I could see him circling around up there. And the navy had the three-inch guns, they were trying to get him, but he was too high up. They couldn't get him. I could see him circling around up there and he must have been taking pictures, I guess. Why would he hang around that long? Anyway, and then the ammunition came and the next thing that happened to me was the whale boats, or the motor launches would start pulling into sea landing, taking all the dead sailors that got blown in the water, into that oil, and taking them over to hospital, and those that were alive went inside. And those that were dead, they were put on the lawn right there. And I don't know how many bodies were there. It looked like it was 300 or 400 there, but I don't know how many bodies were there. Well, the guy said, "Hey, Marine!"

He thought I was a Marine because my uniform looked like a Marine. He said, "Help us carry these bodies from the boat to put 'em on gurneys or put 'em on stretchers," and they carried them over to the hospital and put 'em out on the grass, [*from "C" landing.*]

And that's where the corpsmen and nurses was going through, trying to identify these guys before they put 'em in their casket. And they had to bury 'em the next day or so, maybe two days. I don't know, not sure. But I remember that.

Then our ammunition showed up and then we had ammunition for the next morning, but they never came back.

JP: Of course, before that...

AI: Now let me tell you what happened before all that. We had a box called I.F.F., identification friend or foe, radio. You couldn't dial on it, but they could send you a message. When you're in the field, you don't have a telephone and you don't have a radio that they could get information to you, so it's called I.F.F., identification friend or foe. And all of a sudden, here come an announcement on that I.F.F., "Paratroopers are dropping at Barbers Point. Paratroopers are dropping at Barbers Point."

It didn't say who they were. It didn't say they were Japanese. It didn't say it was American, or what. And we assumed they were Japanese. And we all got nervous. We all got nervous. And the whole island got nervous and that night, whenever you heard a noise anywhere around Pearl, around out there, in the sugar cane fields, you could hear firing going all night long. Everybody was shooting at everybody, thinking when those paratroopers dropped, maybe they were Japanese that was coming, see.

And then, just before that, these six planes came in from the *Enterprise*, coming across Hickam Field side, towards Ford Island and somebody opened up. I don't know who it was. And as soon as they opened up, we opened up. And I thought, my god, what's going on. I looked at the exhaust on the SBD's, navy dive bombers, and I could tell by the exhaust on the side of the plane and the sound of the engine, that they were not Japanese planes, they were American planes. But everybody was firing at 'em and couldn't stop it.

I don't know how many shot down—four or five? Yeah, something like that.

JP: Five of the six, I believe.

AI: Yeah. Maybe the six. So anyway, we had a bad night. Firing was going on all night long. We still had firing up in the hills. And that firing up in the hills was not because identifying where Pearl Harbor was at, it was because the sugar canes would burn their field after they grow eighteen months. They stagger 'em so they burn the sugar cane field, get all the leaves off 'em, then they take the husk and the sugar cane. And we looked up in the

hills there and somebody was saying, “God, look at those hills! They must be identifying where we’re at, where Pearl Harbor is at,” but that wasn’t it.

It was because it was done every day of the year before that. You know what I mean? But everybody was, imagination was getting away with them. I’ll bet you today there are people who still tell you that the local people started those fires to show the Japanese pilots where Pearl was at, because we had total blackout. Everything was blacked out. The only thing we could hear was when the *Oklahoma* rolled over, I could still hear those guys pounding on the hull, trying to find their way out. And then you could see the navy frogmen, or whoever they are, first using torches, I guess, and then they decided to stop that and they was using jackhammers or electric hammers or whatever to try to make a hole in the ship to pull those guys out. But you could hear that noise over there.

And at first we said, “What is that?”

And finally we found out that there was men in the *Oklahoma*, it rolled over and they were trying to find their way out. See. So I’ll never forget that. I’ll never forget those 200 or 300, 400 guys on the lawn there. Their arms and legs were off. Heads were off. The corpsmen were going through it, trying to identify these guys with their dog tags or on their—the navy had a habit of putting numbers on the shirts. You know what I mean?

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: The army didn’t do that. And—or maybe in their wallet or whatever to identify these guys so that they can notify, I guess, the people back home.

JP: Mm-hmm.

AI: But I thought sure the next morning, that’s when I got nervous. I thought, oh man, 350 planes are coming back the next day and they’re going to finish us off. I saw all those oil tanks behind me and that machine gun over to my right, and all those at dry dock over there. And I thought, oh boy, we’re really going to get it. And then I got nervous about dawn; just about time we got light. And they never came back. That really made me happy. That was one mistake that they made, one mistake the Japanese made, they didn’t get

the oil fields and they didn't get the machine shops. And if they'd have done that, we'd had to bring oil from the West Coast and we'd had to have all the stuff repaired back in the States instead of Pearl Harbor.

JP: I think at that time, we're going to finish for the night.

AI: Okay.

JP: I really appreciate your time.

AI: I hope I gave you everything, you know. I mean, anyway, I thank you for interviewing me.

JP: Well, I appreciate your time.

AI: Yeah.

JP: I really do.

AI: And I would like to have a copy.

JP: You will.

END OF INTERVIEW