

Dwight Uyeno #65  
March 28, 1985

Q: Dr. Uyeno, how long have you been in the practice of dentistry?

A: Since 1926, so 58... so about 53 or 4 years.

Q: How long had you been in practice in Hawaii in 1941?

A: Same. That's the whole time since 1926 right here in this office, except this is North King Street.

Q: What were you doing on December 7th, 1941?

A: Well... see... I had the fifteen acre farm out in Lualualei Valley up in Wainae. On the day of December 7th, 1942, I picked up a group of boys that used to go with me all the time to help me improve this farm. So I had a fellow named Wombo Yamasaki(??), and Tinai Tinemoto(??), and I took my father that day, and few other boys... three other boys went in another car(three brothers) and we all went out there at about 7:00 in the morning. And just about 7:30 or 7:45 I noticed an unusual movement of planes from the west going toward Pearl Harbor. And the thing that I noticed at that time was that just about the time period between my seeing the plane, and I figured they'd be around Pearl Harbor, there was a lot of shooting you know, firing. Things I thought unusual for a Sunday morning to have this unusual aerial condition, and I didn't bother at all.

So we were working on my farm and it was about after 8:00 and then about 11:00 a Hawaiian lady living only about a half a mile away from where my farm was telling me, "Hey Doc! Go home!" I said, "What's the matter?" "We are at War!" "You crazy! We're not at War with anybody!" "Yes, the Japanese attacked!" "Hell no! I'm told that nobody can come within 350 miles outside of our Island! How can these guys come. We got surveillance all around!" "But we are being attacked!" I said, "O.K." So I didn't bother for awhile, but then at about 12:00 I say, "Hey boys, let's go home. Everything seem to be too quiet around here."

So I start coming home and to my surprise coming home, there wasn't a single car coming toward Wainae, and we were going home towards Honolulu, Hawaii now. And then we were stopped and I told that I was Dr. Uyeno, and he said, "Oh yeah, your name was mentioned at the radio call to report to the Queens Hospital." So they let me go. And as I.... still I did not think we were being attacked by any enemy at that time. Then coming around Pearl Harbor I saw huge billows of black smoke coming from a battleship in the Harbor. I didn't think at that time that it was Arizona because I didn't know ships that were in. So I just thought that well gee with these people getting rough, the pilots going to get hell from the Admiral (Kimmel at that time.) But I kept coming home. Then when I reached home I...

Q: Where was home at that time?

A: Uh, I lived at 49th Ave. of Manoa, and here my two daughters and my wife are looking for me thinking what's happening to me, because they heard that we were being attacked and it was in the area of my farm, Pearl Harbor. So they were very surprised to see me come home and they said, "Dad! We are being attacked by the Japanese!" I said, "No. They can't come within 300 miles of here!" They said, "Yes, we are!" So still I wasn't convinced that we were being attacked... we were attacked.

And the next morning sure enough, news, everything said that we were attacked. I said, "Hey, I was in the midst of the darn thing!" And they were waiting I presume that the plane came over from the west and went toward Pearl Harbor, over my farm and there was one special plane that flew low and turned around by Lualualei ammunition dump. Probably that plane was looking for the Naval ammunition dump, but he didn't find it. And probably, I heard later that it was down in the ocean now. So everything went quiet and the next day, the Captain of the Naval Yard... I forget his name... Captain.. I used to report to him any time that I used dynamite on my farm. And that Sunday, fortunately, the guy that was supposed to be an expert dynamiter was called to Pearl Harbor, so we didn't use the dynamite.

You see, I use dynamite through the permission of the police and the ammunition depot Captain to dynamite, but to let them know, the Capt., that I am using dynamite. The reason I use dynamite is that I used to dig a hole and put dynamite and blow, and make a big hole for my trees, you see. One blow and it's over, and the other way I have to dig, dig, dig, and it took a long time. So that day, no dynamite, so we didn't. (traffic noise)... what are you going to do with the dynamite? I don't know, do we want it? Gee, I got too much problem in my official capacity, ammunition dump. I said, "Oh, I'll take it down to Waianae to the people who are taking care of all loose ammunition. So I took the dynamite and the caps and everything and depart for Waianae Plantation (sugar plantation). They took care of it. Then everything turned out all right.

I used to go back to the farm to work. But this time I had to have permission to go there every Sunday with a group of boys because we were Japanese you see. Anybody Japanese weren't allowed in that area because it was area that is too close to the ammunition dump. So we used to report, come out, and report again. That went on all through the period that we were at war with Japan.

Q: On December 7th, or just shortly thereafter, did you go to any of the hospitals to help with wounded?

A: You mean I did? Yes, I was um... at the Queens Hospital I was head of the dental division then. But, not much.

Q: Were many wounded brought into Queens?

A: No, I didn't go there at the time when the accident happened. I went there the day after, so I don't know. My brother, Dr. Ray Uyeno, is also, he's a M.D. and he went there but I didn't go because there wasn't any job for me. But I was on the staff of the Queens Hospital, oh... for the duration and a little after; almost 9 years I think.

Q: Did you participate in the Civil Defense set up?

A: No. I was not asked to participate at all.

Q: O.K., well, I can't think of any more questions. If you have anything to add that might be of interest to people...

A: Well, I can tell you of another incident of the Pearl Harbor Attack. It was told to me by Dr. Edward Hoyer(?). He had a beach lot down below the Pearl City Tavern, down in that area facing the Pearl Harbor; the Bay. He told me that, "You know Dwight, that day I was at home and just looking over the Harbor and here this big battleship was throwing up black smoke and burning." So he didn't know it was hit by a kamikaze or something; Japanese plane. "So I told my wife, let's go get a better view of this up around the bend at Aiea." So he took his wife and went around the bend with the view of direct to the smoke. And as he was enjoying thinking that something must have happened; didn't think at all that we were attacked. A policeman came and said, "Hey you! Get away from there! We are being attacked by the Japanese!" He said, "Oh no." He said, "If you don't believe it, come and see my car! You see the holes on the side of my car?" He said, "Well, a Japanese plane strafed me."

Then he said he jumped in his car, drove back to Pearl City, and at the entrance to the road to his place, down by Pearl City Tavern, a policeman said, "What are you doing here?" "I'm going to my home." He said, "You can't. You have to go up the main hill toward Waimano Hospital." So, he said, "I'll go up there." And then he drove up there and to his surprise, he was going up that road, cane field on both sides, a Japanese plane came and over strafed him. And he looked at that thing, grabbed and stopped his car, grabbed his wife, went running into the cane field, and the plane came back and strafed behind him. And Jee(?) said, "You know how I dove into the cane field and stayed there from 8:00 in the morning (a little after 8) until about 7 that evening; because he didn't know whether he was safe to get out or not."

After even all the way up in the cane field, he came back to his big home, got what he needed and went home up... he live up by Diamond Head Lighthouse; his main home over there. So he said he crawled because no light was allowed, in the dark. He made his way home, but he said that was the most scary thing; that incident you see.

Q: I'll bet.

A: Yeah. Whenever he tells you, he kind of laugh about it because he wasn't hit, but when he got strafed twice, he said that was enough. Well, that's about all I know.

Q: O.K. Well, I thank you.