

#239 GLENN LANE
USS ARIZONA, SURVIVOR

INTERVIEWED ON
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TRANSCRIBED BY:
CARA KIMURA
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(Background conversation)

Bob Chenoweth (BC): The following oral history interview was conducted by Bob Chenoweth for the National Park Service, USS *ARIZONA* Memorial, at the Sheraton Waikiki on December 4, at four p.m. The person being interviewed is Glenn Lane, who was on board the USS *ARIZONA* on December 7, 1941.

For the record, would you please state your full name, place of birth, and date of birth?

Glenn Lane (GL): My name is Glenn Harvey Lane. And my date of birth is January 29, 1918. My place of birth is near Williams, Iowa.

BC: Thank you. Could you also tell me what you considered your hometown in 1941?

GL: My hometown was Adams, Minnesota.

BC: Okay. Could you tell me a little bit about your military service prior to coming to Hawaii? What kind of training did you undergo and what did you do prior to coming to Hawaii?

GL: I went in the Navy [*February 1940*]. Went through boot training in Great Lakes. And I lucked out. I was selected honor man of my company and then I was given, due to my scholastic standing in boot camp, my choice of schools and I wanted aviation. So I asked for aviation mechanics school, which was not open, so they said, "We've a special school, aviation radio, you can go to, but you'll have to wait because it's very limited."

I said, "Well, okay. I'll wait."

So I waited and waited and waited with the outgoing unit there, until in June of 1940, and I finally got my orders to this special radio school in San Diego, [af] North Island. Went there and spent, sixteen weeks and graduated from there and was assigned to Observation Squadron One, aboard the USS *ARIZONA*. And at the time, the *ARIZONA* was in dry dock up in Bremerton, and the aircraft were down at San Pedro, at Reeves Field, so I joined it there. And I was there until around, oh, the first couple weeks in January of 1941. [*The*] ship came down and we went aboard, and went out to Pearl.

RC: What type of aircraft did the *ARIZONA* have?

GL: At that time, we [*had*] just changed from the SOC to the OS2U Kingfisher, which was a single engine monoplane seaplane. [*It*] was supposed to be the premium at that time.

RC: So when you came out to Hawaii, what was your rate at that time?

GL: I was a Seaman First Class and I worked in aviation division and I flew very little because we had three regular radiomen for the airplanes, and in August -- well, I flew before August -- but in August I made [*Radioman*] Third Class and I started flying regularly. First I flew with the young Ensigns, and then through a quirk of fate, one of the ensigns got lost one day and I got him back to [*the*] ship okay. And then, the next day -- or two days later -- he went out with another young radioman and he got lost [*again*] and they couldn't get back. They had to use lost plane procedure on him and he told the senior aviator, "If I'd had my regular radioman with me," -- [*Lane*] -- "I wouldn't have got lost or I would have got back okay."

RC: Now, were you trained in navigation?

GL: Oh, yeah, we had to. Well, the radio navigation. We could take direction finder readings and so forth, and we had a direction finder in there, in our aircraft and the radio operator's job was to man it and get the direction finder bearing on either the ship or a shore station, or what have you, and give the pilot the heading to fly. Well this kid didn't do it. He messed up. I found out what he did wrong. He put his receiver on automatic volume control and he couldn't tell whether he got a node or not. When he got up on the ship, he got chewed out. The ensign got chewed out by the senior aviator. And he said, "It wouldn't have happened if I had my regular radioman. I'm not leaving this ship again without my regular radioman in that airplane."

And so you see, you don't tell your senior aviator that when you're a young ensign. And that week, at quarters, [*the*] senior aviator walked up to me and [*said*], "Lane, from now on you're my radioman."

I don't know whether he did it to spite the Ensign or because he wanted a different radioman. I started flying with him the rest of the time. That was about in September and on through until the war started, I flew with the senior aviator.

And just for the record, he and I made the first completely dark catapult shot in the Navy, off the *ARIZONA*, in about the first part of October '41. Completely dark, about five o'clock in the morning and you know, it might have been hairy. But we always flew off the top catapult, which was good. We had about twenty, [*or*] thirty more feet than we did off the lower one. But we made [*it*] all right.

RC: What was that like, to actually be catapulted off and how did that catapult work?

GL: Well, the catapult, your aircraft is set on a car and that was like on a rail on the catapult and it was slid to the aft end of the catapult and you had a breaking strip back there that you hooked on to your catapult car. And then they charged the catapult with about a five-inch shell, which is [gun]powder and you got all ready to go. They gave you the turn-up. You get braced in the rear and the pilot gets his head back against the back brace and they would fire the catapult, and he would turn his airplane up to max and then he'd have the flaps all the way down. The radioman's job was -- as soon as you got off, [to] crank those flaps [up]. But that was the first job you had. Anyway, first job was to get yourself off [and airborne]

Anyway, they'd fire that thing. It was just like a shot out of a cannon and it would break that breaking strip, which was a piece of metal about so big [9 1/8" x 3/4"].]And if it didn't break it, you wouldn't have enough power, so you broke that [metal strip] and you were off [to] the end of the catapult and your car hit two stops out there, and your float slipped right out of the J-hooks and you went. And then, you were in the air. But it was just like a good swift kick to get started. And then, the radioman's job immediately was to crank up the flaps and then fly.

RC: Okay. I always wondered what that was like.

GL: Well . . .

RC: I've seen pictures of it being done and I always wondered . . .

GL: I'll tell you, for a young guy in the Navy, it's good. But get to be like my age today, I wouldn't have [any] part of it.

(Laughter)

RC: Did you have any responsibility for the maintenance of the aircraft?

GL: Yeah, yeah. The radioman had to maintain all his radio equipment. He had to maintain all the electrical equipment in the airplane. We had no electricians. And we had all the lights, the generators, the regulators, and all the radio equipment and associated equipment. And on top of that, we had to assist -- we had to do gunnery too because we had a single thirty [caliber machine gun] in the rear and the [pilot had a] single thirty forward, synchronized through the prop. That was our armament as far as machine guns went. And when we go to arm, [the] radioman had to get right out there and lift those bombs and what have you, right with the rest

of them and putting on bombs on the high turret was no fun because you're up there, thirty or forty feet above [*the deck*]. You're out there on a ladder, pushing the hundred-pound bomb up there into the bomb rack and it wasn't a good idea to look down [*at*] the deck, because it's too far down. Anyway, we had our jobs. We were plenty busy.

RC: Where were you actually billeted on the ship?

GL: Our compartment was up on the main deck between number one and two turrets. We were in between the first division and the second division, and we were in that small compartment up there.

RC: Why were you located there when the aircraft were on the back part of the ship.?

GL: Well, there was nobody billeted on the after end. That was all officers' country back there and down below officers' country [*were*] the mess stewards and the mess men, officers' mess men. Nobody was billeted back there. They were all billeted from the mainmast forward. The Third and Fourth Division[s] were in there, because they were back with their turrets and then, next to them, came the First and Second Division, and we were sandwiched in between the first and second, and the Marines were back there kind of sandwiched in between the third and fourth division.

And then they had other divisions up in the casemates with the secondary battery. And the anti-aircraft gun[*ner*]s were billeted up in there too. They didn't have 100 percent amount of room that you needed. You were pretty well crowded on the ship.

RC: So you began flying pretty regularly in, you said, around September?

GL: Well, August.

RC: August.

GL: Well, actually around the first of August, I was flying regularly, but I didn't start flying with this senior aviator until about September.

RC: You were pretty much constantly training during that period.

GL: Oh yeah, yeah. When we weren't [*standing watches*].

RC: Describe what you [*did*] when you went out and flew, describe what your training, what your mission was like.

GL: Sometimes we would spot for [*gunnery*]. Sometimes we would scout, just scout for what have you and report back any other ships in the area. Or sometimes we'd go out on navigation, or sometimes formation flying.

RC: When you were spotting for the, to follow the shot from the battleship's guns, how did you actually direct -- say, if the battleship's guns were shooting too far over a target, how did you . . .

GL: Okay.

RC: . . . how did you communicate . . .

GL: You'd give a "U" if you wanted him to raise it up, to shoot further. A D, like [(D1)] down one, would be down a hundred yards. U2 would be up 200 yards, and R and L would be directing him which way to go [*right or left*]. And if you got a straddle, you gave him a K, you see. Because straddle is considered a hit, if you're towing a target out there. Straddle was considered a hit and you'd give him a K, and then he knew he had the range exactly right and he could keep on firing at that setting, until you corrected him.

RC: This was done with the Morse code?

GL: Yes, yeah, key.

RC: You didn't have a voice . . .

GL: No, no. Well, no, we didn't use voice communication with the ship. We did all Morse code and the only place we used voice communication was with the tower when we were coming in to land it at Pearl.

RC: But you also communicated with the pilot through an intercom.

GL: Oh [*yes*], intercom. We had intercom with him, yeah. -- some of the pilots would sent the message themselves. They had a key. And but most of 'em would just say, "Up two," so you just send a U2, or . . .

RC: Now, did the pilot actually call the shots?

GL: Yeah, he was calling the shots, of course. Once in a while, he'd say, "What did that look like to you?"

See, 'cause he didn't have a good look at it. Of course, you'd tell him. And but most of the time he would see it himself.

RC: Now, when you came back to the ship and the ship was moving through the water, how did you get that airplane back on the ship?

GL: Well, they had what they call a sea sled, which is a sled that they [*lowered*] off one of the cranes and it would hang out there and go on the water, -- they control it with lines and it would be out and they would make a slick in the water by turning the ship. Turning the ship like if you were going to be picked up on the starboard, they'd turn the ship to starboard and it would kind of slide in the water and make a slick back there for you to land in. Kind of smooth the water out somewhat. Never perfect, but smooth it out somewhat. You'd land in that slick and then you'd taxi up and you'd hit that sea sled, which had a big, old cushion on it and your main float would hit that cushion on the sea sled and you had a little hook on the bottom, [*that*] would hook in the netting that was there. And there you'd be, hung in there. And then, you'd keep your engine running, and they would pull you with these lines in closer to the ship, so the crane hook could come down [*to the hoisting sling*]. Well, you saw the picture in there. You hook it on, but the crane hook would [*lift the plane up from the water.*]

RC: That looks like risky business.

GL: Well, it is.

RC: . . . out there on the . . .]

GL: It was. It was. But we had a system worked out in harsh water, on the *ARIZONA*. We had a heavy web belt on, around our flight suit. That was the pilot's job to reach up and get a hold of that thing, with one hand, and hold you so that you could work with two hands, otherwise you'd have your one hand for you and one hand for uncle. We had two hands for yourselves. I got pretty good at hooking up, because I was [*a*] pretty strong young man and that hook would come down, I'd grab it with my left hand, and being right handed -- (I still grab with my left hand) -- I could slap that hook in there real [*well*]. And I [*ve seen*] guys out there struggling, stuck with everything, seeing the planes [*bob up and down*] And it's pretty tough. But I got so I could hook up pretty good. And in fact, that's what the senior [*aviator*] said about me when the squadron commander said he had to transfer somebody and he said, "How about [*if*] we transfer Lane? He's not the best radioman in the Navy"

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And the senior aviator said, "Well, he may not be the best radioman, but , he's a good man to have when the going gets rough."

So I didn't get transferred. They transferred another guy. I satisfied my boss anyway, which is what you [*have to*] do. And like I say, one of our main things was that first completed dark catapult shot.

And then, also the last week we were out there, just before the attack, Japanese submarines followed us all the time, while we were out to sea for a week. We knew they were subs, we knew they were following us. One of the destroyers [*picked a sub up on their sound*] screen and they wouldn't surface during the day, but at night they'd surface and then they'd pick 'em up [*with*] the searchlights, and they would immediately submerge. And we'd send messages to 'em on the radio, on the international frequencies, and they would not answer. So we knew that they were Jap subs, anyway. I mean, we're pretty sure they were. They couldn't have been German subs, 'cause it was too far from Germany.

But then, when we were coming in, usually it worked this way -- one battle force would be in, the other battle force would be out. And the battle force division one was the one force, and then the other battleship division two and four were the other ones and they would go out.

We were coming in on Friday, December 5. The other force [*isn't*] coming out, so we're flying in 'cause we always flew in when they catapult and then we'd fly in and usually land at Ford Island when our ship was in the harbor. Anyway, the other force wasn't coming out. And I asked the senior aviator, "Hey, what's the matter with the other battle force? They're not coming out."

He [*said*], "Well, they've decided to leave them all in the harbor and send out the faster cruiser scouting force."

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And I said, "Well, why?"

He said, "Well, we [*may*] go to war" "things are kind of touch and go [*so*], they figure the only thing that'll happen here is some hit and run raids at night by shelling from submarines, and they can't hurt the [*Battle*] wagons inside. But out here, you're not fast enough to outrun 'em, so that's the thinking of putting 'em inside."

Well, it satisfied me. So . . .

RC: So they felt that there was more danger of the battleships being attacked by submarines?

GL: Yeah, yeah. That's what they were thinking because the sub chased us, they shadowed us all over for a week and there [*were*] more than one of [*them*]. There [*were*] quite a few. Anyway, we knew they were out there and I think that was the thinking, part of the thinking anyway, [*to*] get 'em [*battleships*] in there where the sub can't get in 'cause we had torpedo

nets or submarine nets across the harbor [*entrance*], so they couldn't get in.

RC: So, December 5, you came back in?

GL: Mm-hm. Yeah. And the other force didn't go out. So we had lots of battleships in there. We put our airplanes over on Ford Island. We beached 'em over there and then went back aboard the ship. We would have been coming over to operate from Ford Island [*the*] next week, but there was no next week as far as *ARIZONA* went.

RC: So you came back into port and back on board the ship on the fifth?

GL: [Yes].

RC: And why don't you describe from the fifth up until the morning of the seventh.

GL: Well, we were parked where the memorial is right now and everything was pretty normal except the *VESTAL*, the repair ship, was alongside of us because we needed some work on our evaporators and some other stuff. And we let our fires die down and take [*took*] from the *VESTAL* and start[*ing*] Monday morning, [*they*] were supposed to be working on the ship, and that's why the airplanes weren't [*aboard*] there or anything. We would have gone over to Ford Island to operate with our airplanes. The *NEVADA* was directly behind us and she spent all day [*Friday*] taking ammunition off from her, (projectiles), and putting 'em out on [*a*] big old tin-covered barge out there, on the other side of the quay. They'd hoist 'em out there and put 'em in there.

I saw this and I remember [*thinking*] that [*they were*], getting rid of some old ammunition, I guess, putting it out there and then towing it away somewhere. But that's [*was*] my thinking December 7, that those barges were loaded with projectiles. But that's another story.

And then, we went on liberty Saturday and, the next day, we got hit.

RC: Where were you? What were you doing that morning, prior to that?

GL: It was right after breakfast. It was just before eight o'clock, and I [*had*] bought some Christmas cards the day before and we were going -- several of us -- down [*to*] one of our store rooms, way down in the bottom of the ship, where no one would bother us, we were going to write Christmas cards and send Christmas cards, get them ready to send. I had to go get a bath first, so I went [*to my locker*]. Put a bath towel around my neck and had my toilet gear in my hand, going to get a bath. And then I

heard these explosions. What's going on? "Aw, they're blasting on Ford Island," somebody said.

I said, "Uh-uh. They don't," -- they were building a lot of construction --, "they don't work on Sundays." I said, "Somebody probably," -- there [were] a lot of bombs laying around on the hangar deck over there and depth charges and stuff, because they were putting depth charges on the PBY's [and it was] possible they'd go out and attack those subs. And I said --- they had these depth charges that look like they were ashcans off of a destroyer, but they had 'em fixed so they could hook 'em on the PBY's. I said, "Some idiot probably kicked one of [the] fuses over there and blew a hangar up, [Hope] they didn't get our airplanes, see. Let's take a look."

So we went up topside, which was one deck up, the fo'c'sle. And over [on] Ford Island, big fires. And lots of smoke and [we] see an airplane or two flying around up there. Still didn't ring a bell, 'cause we see airplanes flying all the time, but then we turned around looked up the harbor and here comes -- a couple airplanes. One [man] said, "Oh, the Army's out very early today, on Sunday."

And then I saw the torpedo plane and carrying a torpedo. And I said, "Hey," -- (there were two guys with me, see). I said, "Hey, the Army [has] no torpedo planes. That plane's got a "fish" under it."

And just then they dropped the torpedo. I think it hit the *OKLAHOMA*, about two ships ahead of us. But then they swung over and they come back over the *ARIZONA*, past the *WEST VIRGINIA*, they were strafing. So we see the old guns winking at you, and get down. We got down and they missed us by about three feet, across the teakwood deck, about four or five shots.

Anyway, I said, "Good god, they're Japs."

We saw the big, old meatball on 'em, when they turned over, see, like this, they come over. And, "Good god, they're Japs."

And well that's when I realized they're Japs. Well, I look up the bridge up here and those guys up there, well, they didn't like to look in that bright sun, coming up on the east. They were watching the air show over Ford Island. I yelled up there, and said, "Wake up, up there and -- sound the air raid. The Japs are hitting us!"

Well, they woke up then. And I -- [and] the other two guys went down to our compartment, it was right down the ladder. And told the guys down there and they said, "Aw, B.S.," you know.

And I said, "Okay, B.S. to you. When we get hit, you'll know it, see, and then I won't have to [tell you]."

The aviation workshop where we had a couple [of our] third class in there, or second class, that were privileged guys. They could sleep in there. They had their bunks in there. They could sleep [in on] Sunday morning and not have to get up so early. But anyway, [I yelled] "Get out of [those] sacks. The Japs are hitting the ships ahead of us. They'll bomb us next."

And they said, "Lane, one of these days, your April fool jokes are going to get you in real trouble."

And you know, I said -- I go up here, and here's a porthole there, (inaudible) I said, "Take a look at Ford Island."

Ford Island, you could see right over there. It was blazing, it was really [burning]. "Take a look at that."

And guy (inaudible), "Take a look," and I pushed his head [into the porthole].

And right then, we got hit aft and that really shook the guy up because it shook his head in there, like that, [and] rattled in that porthole. And his eyes were big as saucers and [then] he, well, he was a believer.

And then they sounded air raid and then, they said, "All unengaged personnel, go to the third deck."

Well, theoretically, I'm unengaged when the airplanes aren't aboard and we [have] an air raid. I didn't have an actual air raid station. So I [am to] go down to third deck and wait for an assignment, where to go [to help]. We headed for the third deck. And then, just as we started to go down the ladder to third deck, general quarters sounds. Well, we do have a general quarter's station, see. And then, also "Fire on the quarter deck" was passed. And I said to the two guys ahead of me, "Hey, come on back up here, we [have] a battle station on the quarter deck [aff]. It's general quarters."

So I turn around, [to] come back up. [There] was a Marine Lieutenant standing there at the top of that ladder, and he says, and he says "Get back down there."

I said, "I'm going to my battle station."

And he said, "Get back down there. There won't be any panic on this [ship]."

I said, "I'm not panicking, I'm going to my battle station."

Well, I just went to my battle station and, I guess I moved him out of the way. But the other two guys [who] were in front of me, went down the ladder. They didn't get back up. So they're still out there. And I went back to my battle station, which was try to fight a fire back there. And, in the meantime, we got back here, well, [and] got an officer who went to the quarter deck, evidently, from down below, and he said that he got knocked out when the bomb hit. He got knocked out. Well, when we got back on the quarter deck, I heard this guy coughing and wheezing down that ladder, see, and I said to one of the guys, "Hey, there's somebody down there. Let's see if we can get him out."

(Background conversation)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

GL: Okay. I was saying we heard this guy cough and gurgle, or whatever he was doing, and I says, "There's somebody down there. Let's go down and see if we can get him out."

Guy says, "Not me, I'm not going down there."

I said, "Well, hang on to me, I'll see if I can go down."

I went down the ladder. It was smoky down in there. It was fire (inaudible). In the meantime, we had guys trying to get the hoses rigged up for fire fighting and get some water. And so I went down there [and] with my foot I found this guy and I reached down [after] I got hold of this other guy up above, I got hold of his leg, like this, see. And I reached down and got hold of this guy, and I couldn't lift him. He was too heavy. And so I couldn't lift him, so I went back up and got a couple more breaths, and I held my breath again and went back down in there, same way. And I told him -- I used pretty vile language. I said, "Crawl up the ladder, you blankity-blank or die down here."

And then he started crawling up the ladder and I had him by the belt, and --- I got him up on [deck] there. And I laid him over by the turret. He [lay]

there, heaving up his breakfast. And then, we're trying to [*fight*] that fire. I got the hose nozzle and we're trying to get some water in the thing. [*But we had no water pressure.*]

RC: Where was the fire, exactly?

GL: Fire, well, the bomb had hit the face of number four turret and glanced off and went down through the quarterdeck. And the fire was down the deck below, but it looked like a blow torch coming out of the hole, where the bomb went in. And anyway, we got that fire hose and this guy that we got out of there, he found his hat. His hat was laying on deck. I [*had seen*] an officer's hat laying on the quarterdeck, out there, but he got his hat, [*and*] he put it on. And next he [*came*] to me and he says, "What are you men doing?"

I says, "We're manning this fire hose."

He says, "Man that fire hose, that's an order."

And then he disappeared. So I knew who he was, he was the first lieutenant on the ship. And I didn't see him anymore because he went somewhere. And we're out there trying to get that fire apparatus going. We yelled at the guy, "Get us some pressure!"

And [*the talker on the phone*] says, "I'm on the phone trying to get 'em. Nobody answers."

So we got just a few drops coming out of that stupid hose and then we got hit four or five more times. I don't know, every time we [*got*] hit, [*it*] seemed like it would knock us down and then we'd get back up again and start operating again, and then we'd get hit again. And I say four or five times we got hit, 'cause I was on my hands and knees several times. -- well, I looked up one time, after I was on the deck. All the flag hoists were on fire up forward. Going up there just like fire up strings. All the flag hoists were on fire, and we had lots of fire up there, and we got that big bomb that blew [*the*] forward magazines. And when them forward magazines blew, you could feel the ship just raise out of the water, just like a bucking bronco. And then, that big fireball [*came*] rolling back, and I dropped my nozzle and I remember this. Well, I still have my towel wrapped around my neck, 'cause I didn't want to lose my towel. I put a knot in it. I had a big, old bath towel around my neck. And I didn't have a hat on.

I tucked my head in my arms. I turned my back as quick as I could and that concussion and fireball hit, just like "boosh" (inaudible). And just like

we opened a furnace door. And that's just what it felt like. And then, I don't [*remember*].

[*I*] temporarily put me out, that quick heat. And I didn't feel anything until I was in the water, and I mean I was down [*into*] the water deep. I fought to get to the surface and I thought that I could still see. I looked back at the ship, I'm out there in the water, maybe twenty, thirty feet off the ship. I looked back up on there [*and*] I couldn't see a living person on the ship. Not one. Of course, [*I*] didn't have very good [*vision*], 'cause the ship's up here and [*I'm*] down here, so. I couldn't see anybody. So I says, "I'm not going back aboard 'cause there's no use."

So I had two choices. I could swim to Ford Island or I could swim back to NEVADA. Well, Ford Island looked a mile away. Of course, I realized that the water was shallow, you could wade after you got three-fourths of the way over there. But then we had oil on the water and they had a fire on the water up forward. [*I*] looked forward [*I could*] could see fire, like this. The wind was from the after end, blowing the fire forward, which was good. But I didn't relish the idea of swimming in fire, and it was fairly close, so I struck out for the NEVADA. And there were several guys swimming toward the NEVADA, toward the quay over there, where she had her boats tied up. And, two or three of them just gave up and nobody's in a position to really help anybody because you're out there [*with no life jacket in oil covered*] water and you [*have*] your shoes on and you're just swimming for yourself and . . .

RC: Save yourself . . .

GL: Yeah. Yeah. And the water had oil on it [*several inches*] thick, and you don't get any traction, you try to go overhand and crawl, Shoop, you can't do it. So you got to get your hands down in and work, [*The old "Dog Paddle strokes"*].

And so I made headway. I get over. There [*were*] three of us, [*who*] actually, got over to a whaleboat [*motorless*]. And I'm too weak to get in. So I hung on the side of it for, oh, maybe a half-minute or more. [*Got*] a little strength back and throw a leg over and pull[*ed*] myself into the whaleboat. And I'm worn out again. I [*have*] to rest a little bit. And there's two other guys hanging on the back of the whaleboat. And I went back and said, "Hey, get in."

"I can't get in. I can't do it. I'm done."

"You ain't done."

I reached down and got a hold of him and I laid back like that and pulled him in the whaleboat. And these guys were all black with oil, completely. They're slick as grease. And the other guy, [I] got a hold of him and [and pulled him in also] they had long pants on. I said, "How come you guys got long pants on?"

Our uniform was shorts, see? And, "Oh, we're in the admiral's barge."

Oh, Admiral Kidd's barge, he was over in Ford Island and he came back and he told his barge crew to standby and he went up over the blister on the ship. And they were in the barge and the ship blew, the barge turned turtle and threw 'em out. I pulled those two guys out of the water. And here we [are] all in that boat out there, and [had] no time to think. And I said, "NEVADA's trying to get under way. She's throwing her lines off." And I said, "I know why she's getting under way because these [barges] are load[ed] with ammo out here. If they hit that, we're all gone. So let's go aboard the NEVADA."

[One] guy says, "I can't swim that far."

I said, "You swam twice that far."

It was just that -- I said, "You dive off and you [are] up by the gangway when you [come] up. You follow me."

So I dived off and came up by the gangway. I said, "Come on."

So they dived off and I'm over there, we went up the gangway. So we got onto the NEVADA. Up the fine fancy [acey] white gangway. We were filthy black and we were bumping into sides because they were getting under way. And I thought to myself, "If that bosun mate sees, he'll shoot us," because we were dirtying up their captain's gangway. And of course, they had all these fancy frills on it, and white bleached canvas. We were so black filthy with black oil that we were dirtying up their whole ship.

And those two guys went over on the port side of the NEVADA -- those two guys from the admiral's barge -- and I went back on the starboard side. And they wouldn't let me in the first casemate. I was too filthy. They said, "Hey, this is our compartment. You're filthy."

I said, "I know I'm filthy."

So I ducked under their gun, [and] went to the next casemate. They let me in. They said, "You're hurt, you're bleeding."

I said, "I'm okay. I'm okay."

And they said -- one guy's on their phones and they're getting underway, see, going past the *ARIZONA*. It's hot, real hot, the fire. I said they called sickbay and they said, "Hey, we got a mess steward off the *ARIZONA* up here, and he's hurt. Do you want us to send him to sickbay or you want to send a corpsman up here?"

And that ticked me off. I said "I [*am*] no mess attendant [*I am a radioman*"]". And he said, "Look here!"

He took me to one of [*the*] mirrors on the locker, "Look at yourself."

I looked at myself. I was black as coal and my hair was singed about that short, and I looked like a mess attendant, a black guy, 'cause I was coal black from oil. The only thing that wasn't coal black on me was my mouth. I looked at my mouth. My eyes were all fuel oil, except [*where*] I'd rubbed them a couple times. And then, I said, "Well, I'm okay but I got to get cleaned up."

So they gave me a bucket and some salt water soap -- this old heavy stuff -- and some water there -- 'cause they always have water around their guns, in case they [*have*] any [*powder bag fragments*] on the deck, they [*needed*] water. I began to wash up and when I washed, the skin started coming off my arms. I said, "No, this is no good."

So I put it back on, I put the grease back on. I did wash my face, 'cause my face wasn't burnt.

RC: So you were burned?

GL: Yeah. Just a flash burn. It was just like a real tough sunburn and the skin starts coming off, see. That's why I [*still*] can't stand the sun much. All my life, I couldn't stand the sun, 'cause my arms, -- from here down, they get burnt real quick and they don't stand it. But anyway, they didn't send any corpsman up there and I noticed my arm was bleeding. Here, I got scars here yet on it. And they said, "Well, you're bleeding. Your back's bleeding too."

I had one of their towels and I rubbed my back and there was blood back there, [*the*] back of my legs and [*the*] back of my body. Well, it didn't hurt. I didn't hurt. They're manning a five-inch gun in their casemate, so I helped them. Of course, they fired a few rounds, but what good is it to fire a secondary battery, nothing to shoot at over the cane fields. Anyway, [*were ordered not to*] shoot then. The *NEVADA*'s down, almost [*to the*] floating dry dock down there. And [*a*] second wave of Japs hit. And I mean they hit hard and they concentrated on her pretty much because

she was heading out. So they hit her and hit her bad. I remember we got a bomb hit up forward and it knocked us all askew inside there. And I thought I was looking -- I thought I was in the air looking down at the ship, because I could see these big old capstans and stuff looking right up at me. And then, when I realized I'm on the deck, the deck just peeled up, when that bomb hit up there. And what was normally down here was up here like this. And I was looking at it like that, right.

[By] then, of course, she got hit bad and there were no more Japs to shoot at, anyway. I guess because that was about the end of it. She was on fire in a lot of places, so they -- well they had a lot of wounded and I couldn't do any good where I was so I went out and started helping get wounded guys [get] on the life rafts and to get 'em headed over to the hospital over there, toward the Navy hospital, Navy yard. Then they passed the word [that] they needed some men back aft to fight fires, so [I] went back there. And the way we fought fires, we threw a mattress in the water, [would] soak it, and then throw it up to you and you put it on your back and you go up the ladder and you go up there on the boat deck, where the fires were. You throw that mattress down there and stomp on it, and then run back and get another mattress.

Well, about two trips up through [those] two ladders [to] the boat deck, I'm worn out. 'Cause I've had it, see. And I was carrying [those] two heavy mattresses and, I stepped over guys that were laying there. Their arms were blown off and their heads were blown off, everything else. But I was in such a state that it didn't seem to bother me. And then I was so tired that I just -- I had to get out of the way, 'cause I was too weak to carry a mattress up topside any more. So I --- and I told you, I was a pretty sturdy young man, but it'd been quite a day. And I went into the blacksmith shop that was down there by the number three turret someplace. I went over [to] the corner and I laid down. I was just [tired] and all I wanted to do is sleep. I was just worn out completely. And if you ever really had fatigue, you know what I'm talking about. And I went to sleep.

And then, a couple guys are shaking me and I see they're Hospital Corpsmen. And they said, "Are you all right?"

And I said, "I'm okay. Just leave me alone. Let me sleep. I'm okay."

One guy says, "Sir, [you] are bleeding?"

And he says, "How come you're all oil-soaked?"

I said, "I'm off the ARIZONA."

He said, "Good god," he says, "we better get you to sick bay."

So they started to move me, and boy, it hurt. I hurt bad when they started moving me. I yelled at 'em, "Leave me alone!" [I] hurt.

"Have you had morphine?"

"No."

So they gave me a shot of morphine and [it felt] like putting a nice warm blast [me]. And I didn't hurt any more. And then they said, "Well, we [have] no place in sick bay."

So they put me on a motor launch and they hauled me to the [USS] *SOLACE*, the hospital ship. And I went back [along "Battleship Row"] they were way over there. I would go down all along the battleships -- here's the *CALIFORNIA* sinking and here's the *OKLAHOMA*, capsized. Here's the *WEST VIRGINIA*, burned and sinking, sunk. And behind her, the *ARIZONA* is in a shambles. I said, "Good god, there's our battle fleet."

And then (inaudible) *SOLACE*. And so I don't remember too much about going on the *SOLACE*, but my morphine was kind of making me dopey and . . .

RC: But you did get a look down . . .

GL: Oh yeah, I got a look on down there. I got a look 'cause I was kind of half-laying and half-sitting in the motor launch and I got a look at that stuff and it was carnage. And there went our fleet. And I couldn't tell if the *MARYLAND*, which was in board of the *OKLAHOMA*, was hurt bad or if the *TENNESSEE*, which was in board of the *WEST VIRGINIA*, was hurt bad because she was covered with smoke from the *ARIZONA*. And I got on the hospital ship. I don't remember -- I know they stripped my clothes off and threw some pajamas on me and threw me in a bunk and [I went to sleep]. And I do remember this much on the hospital ship though -- it must have been hours later because I was laying there, half asleep -- asleep probably. Somebody woke me up and, "Here, drink this."

And they stuck a tube thing in my mouth. It had some soup, see. And I looked at the guy, and he's oriental. And I thought, "Oh god, they've captured us," see.

And I [said], "Get the hell away from me."

I knocked the thing out of his hands, "Get away from me you so-and-so Jap. [You are] trying to poison me, or something," you know.

And some Corpsman said, "Hey, hey, no, he's one of ours. He's one of our orderlies. He's okay. He's okay", see.

So he brought me another [*cup or bowl*] and I was awful hungry, I sucked that soup completely down through busted lips and blistered lips but I drank all the soup they had anyway. And then, I went to sleep again. And then, here it was dark. Everything was dark. And hear this hellacious racket outside, "Boom, boom, boom, boom," you know.

And what had happened -- well, a nurse came by and she says, "Can you get this on?"

She laid a life jacket on me, "Yeah, yeah, I'll get it on."

So I tried to put the life jacket on. I couldn't put a life jacket on. I just -- wasn't in a position to put a jacket on. She said, "Oh, the devils are at us again."

Well, a lot of noise. Of course, some of the *ENTERPRISE* airplanes were coming in and the people were trigger-happy and one guy started shooting and everybody in the harbor -- anybody that had a gun started shooting. I mean, it was pandemonium. And here, I'm laying in a hospital ship, wondering when they were going to hit it. Well, it died down later on. And --- I spent quite a number of days on the hospital ship.

Of course, I didn't feel too bad because I see guys on the bunks next to me that were dying. You know, I wasn't dying. But I got off the hospital ship and went back to duty.

RC: How long did you stay on? Do you ...

GL: Thirteen days, I think. Yeah. As I recall, thirteen days. Either thirteen, twelve, thirteen or fourteen.

RC: And after that you were sent back to duty?

GL: Yeah. Yeah, I went back. They gave me a pair of white trousers, two suits of skivvies, two pair of black socks and no hats. They didn't have any hats. And no shoes. I said, "I got to have shoes. I can't go back [*to*] duty without shoes."

They said, "Well, we don't have any your size, [*no new ones*]. There [*is*] a pile of oil-soaked ones over here. You have to sort a pair out."

So I went to sort a pair out that fit me, dirty, filthy, oil-soaked shoes. Might even be the ones I had on when I came aboard. I don't know. There were

fifty or sixty, a hundred pair of shoes there. But I got a pair that fit and went over to the [receiving] station in a boat and then reported in over there. And I run into this Lieutenant Commander that we pulled out of the hole, see. And he says, "I thought you were dead."

I said, "No, no. No such luck."

He said, "Well, somebody told me you were dying."

I said, "Well, not me. I haven't died."

"Well, what happened?"

I was in my bunk, see, and about the fourth day, I was so filthy and I stunk so bad -- I mean, that oil and B.O. and everything else, that I had to get a bath. I was terrible. So I asked about getting a bath. "Well, we'll give you a bath when we get time," see.

This was four days. And I'm used to getting a shower every day at least, so I figure if I can get out of this bunk, the shower was right fairly close. If I can get out of this bunk -- I was on the top bunk. If I get out of this bunk, I might be able to navigate into that shower and get a shower.

I got out of my bunk and it was filthy. It was black with oil. I hadn't had a change of linen or anything since I got on [the ship]. It was filthy and stunk. And so I got a little pus and blood and everything else in there. I got there and I went in and got a bath. I found a little piece of soap and I took a good, long bath. And then I didn't have any towel, but I wiped myself as dry as I could then I sat down. I [had] nothing to put on, I sat down on a bench outside there, naked, see, sitting there. Here comes a [PhM2/c] along, he says, "What are you doing out here?"

"Oh, my bunk, I couldn't get back in my bunk 'cause somebody else is in my bunk," see.

And I'm sitting there. So, "What are you doing out here?"

I said, "Well, I had a bath and somebody else is in my bunk."

He said, "Who authorized you to get out of that bunk?"

And I said, "I authorized myself."

He gave me a batch of guff. He was some wooly-headed Corpsman. And I wasn't in the mood to take it from anybody so I just [did not say anything] he [said], "I'm putting you down. I'm putting you down," that's writing a

report. [*I said*] "I'll put you down and it won't be [*in writing*] either if you give me more trouble."

So then another [*First Class*] Corpsman come along and said, "Hey, hey, hey. What's going on?"

And I told him. So he said, "Well, come with me."

So he took me, got me some pajamas and put me in another bunk. And what [*had*] happened [*was*] my senior aviator come over to see how I was doing on the fourth day, and he looked at the bunk tag and he saw this guy in my bunk who was about to die. And so he went back and told the guys "He's still alive, but we probably will never see him back to duty again, if he lives."

So that was the word that [*they*] got over there [*at the receiving station*], that I was supposed to die. Well, I didn't die. But anyway, that's a long story. [*After returning to duty I*] had to write up everything [*I*] did. I wrote up what I did and it didn't dovetail with his, so he sent back to me and says, "Rewrite this and leave this out and leave that out, and strike this out, strike that out."

I said, "You want to rewrite it? You want to rewrite it yourself."

I guess he threw it away. Of course, he told me I was recommended for Navy Cross, see, but I never got it. So he probably threw all that stuff away, so [*at least*] I lived. And [*I don't*] have to worry about the Navy crosses. But I saw him a few years later and he said, "Hey, I'm still working on the Navy Cross for you."

I said, "Good, keep it up."

But he never did. Anyway, that's about the gist of my [*experience*] then I went back to duty, of course, flying [*those*] dumb old scout planes, whatever we had left over there. And I had [*anti-*]submarine duty. And that's about the end of my Pearl Harbor.

RC: When did you start flying again? Can you recall?

GL: Well, I went back and I saw the senior aviator and he says, "How do you feel?"

I said, "Oh, I feel pretty good."

He says, "Well, when do you want to start flying?"

I said, "Tomorrow morning."

He said, "Hell, you ain't got any flight gear." He said, "I won't put you on the schedule for tomorrow anyway, but you order your flight gear and see me tomorrow afternoon and tell me how you feel."

So I had no place to sleep, nothing. Too many people in the barracks, no place to sleep. They berthed us down in the hangars. They gave us some old wooden cots, the old folding cots, and for sheets we had target sleeves that they used to shoot at. And we covered up with one, two, if we needed to cover up. Mosquitoes, five million of 'em, but that's the way to sleep. And for a pillow, we had a [*kapok filled*] piece of that target sleeve. And we had no lockers, nothing.

RC: The airplanes were all right?

GL: No. No, we lost one of ours completely. It was completely shot and the other one had to be quite extensively repaired. But we did fly it and then the other one was in pretty good shape. We had two of our airplanes that we flew. And we had some other airplanes that belonged to other ships. And then we drew out all they had in stock over there and flew them. I think we had about eight, maybe, kingfishers that we flew. And then we flew anything else that would fly.

RC: When did you leave Hawaii?

GL: When did I leave Hawaii?

RC: Yeah.

GL: Well, short times. When they decided that we ought to be dive bomber crewmen, and they sent us to dive bombers. --they took us down to Samoa on a destroyer, four of us, and then -- we went from Samoa [*and*] flew out and went aboard the *YORKTOWN* -- well, [*we*] two bomber guys did. That was about, I suppose, marching, maybe [*April*].

(Background conversation)

RC: Well, I want to say that you served aboard the *YORKTOWN* . . .

GL: [*Yes*].

RC: . . . through the Battle of Midway.

GL: [*Yes*], I was flying off her.

RC: Okay.

GL: Yeah.

RC: And that you were flying with the Scouting [*Five, (VS-5)*].

GL: Yeah.

RC: And then we can just wrap up with that.

GL: [Yes]. Okay.

RC: I really appreciate it.

GL: Well, I joined the air con just before the Coral Sea battles too. [Yes], we were there.

RC: Right. Through the Coral Sea and through Midway.

GL: And I might say my attitude was not good because I figured we were taking a beating, that we'd all be dead that were out there, within six months. But after the Battle of Midway, my attitude changed a little bit because we won the battle, which was great. And that's good. Positive attitude. And I'm still alive today.

RC: Yes, you are.

GL: [Yes.

RC: I appreciate it very much. Thank you.

GL: [Yes], okay.

(Background conversation)

END OF INTERVIEW