

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**#382**

**MANUEL HERNANDEZ MAGDALENO**

**USS *TENNESSEE*, SURVIVOR**

**INTERVIEWED ON**

**DECEMBER 5, 2001**

**BY ART GOMEZ & CAPTAIN DAN FRASER**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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**USS *ARIZONA* MEMORIAL**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**Art Gomez (AG):** The following oral history interview is conducted by Art Gomez of the National Park Service and Captain Don Fraser, of the United States Navy, for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial, at the Ala Moana Hotel, Room 3426, on December 5, 2001 at 11:20 a.m. The person being interviewed is Manuel Magdaleno, who was a [*seaman second class, fire controlman stricker*] on the USS *Tennessee* on December 7, 1941. Mr. Magdaleno, for the record, please state your full name, place of birth and birth date.

**Manuel Hernandez Magdaleno (MM):** Manuel Hernandez Magdaleno. And...

AG: Place of birth and birth date.

MM: Place of birth is Yuma, Arizona and what was the other thing?

AG: Your date of birth.

MM: Oh, August 2, 1917.

AG: At the—in 1941, what did you consider your hometown?

MM: I enlisted in California in the navy and that's where we were living at the time.

AG: What part of California?

MM: Los Angeles, California.

AG: Los Angeles. What were your parents' names?

MM: My father's name was Porfirio Magdaleno. My mother's name was Adelaida, Adelaide Magdaleno.

AG: And how many brothers and sisters did you have or do you have?

MM: Eleven brothers and sisters.

AG: Eleven brothers and sisters. Did you go to high school and where did you go to high school?

MM: I went to high school in Yuma, Arizona and in Los Angeles, California.

AG: I'd like to have some background on when you enlisted and why you enlisted in the service at that particular time. And as I understand it, you enlisted with a brother.

MM: Yes, we both enlisted together.

AG: Why don't you tell me about that a little bit?

MM: Well, we got out of high school, nothing to do, and we decided we'd go into the navy. And my dad didn't approve of it. And but he says he wouldn't do anything, you know. He says, "I just want you to know my feelings."

So we went to—we signed up in Yuma, but then we had to go to San Diego to enlist. And we went to San Diego and reported to the enlistment center there. And they took our names. They took me first and then his name too.

AG: What was your brother's name?

MM: Henry Magdaleno.

AG: Is he still living?

MM: Yes, he lives in Connecticut now. But anyway, they had a—I don't know of any, if this happened in any other place, but they, the man that was in, you know, handling the enlistment, the sign-up, says, "See that red line there on the floor?"

And they had a red line all the way across. It's about one foot wide. And he says, "Once you cross that red line over to where I am, you cannot go back."

So they took me first and I passed. And then my brother, when my brother came up, when they measured him, he was a quarter of an inch too short, and he says he couldn't join. And I says, I asked him, "What do you mean he can't join?"

He says, "He's underweight and you're over on this side of the red line."

I says, "Well, if that's all that's stopping me, watch this," and I walked back.

And they said, "Well, wait a minute. Wait a minute."

They had some corpsmen there. And the corpsmen, they asked the corpsmen is there anything they could do. And they said, "Well, we can try one thing." He says, "We can put him in a harness and let him hang overnight and then we'll rush him over here in the morning for the measurement."

And he—I mean he hung on that harness all night. They put weights on his feet. And then in the morning, they took him over and they measured him

and it came within. And he happened to ask, “Well, what happens if I shrink between now and then.”

He says, “I’ve already got your signature. Your height.” He says, “What happens over here is our responsibility now.”

So that’s how we got in. But in no way were we, we weren’t going to go in together. We made our minds up then, you know, when we talked about it, that we have to be together and they put us on the same ship together.

AG: What year was that that you enlisted?

MM: In ’40.

AG: In 1940. In San Diego.

MM: Mm-hmm.

AG: Where did you take boot?

MM: In San Diego. Yeah, they had a big, beautiful parade ground there. Yeah, we took boot training in San Diego, in the naval station, the navy station there.

AG: Were you and your brother both assigned to the same training unit?

MM: Yes, we were in the same battalion—I don't know what they used to call it now, but the same class. Yes, we were assigned. And then we were also assigned to the same ship. So from there we went to, we got on a destroyer and they took us to (chuckles)—where? Let's see. They took us to where we were going to get *Saratoga* to go down to Pearl Harbor to, you know, to become part of a ship's company. And on the way over, the destroyer almost discouraged me. And I weathered that all right, but then on the *Saratoga*, the whole hangar deck was full of humanity. Mattresses laying down, that's where we sleep at night. One night we hit a storm and it was a rough one, even to some of the old hands there said they never had something like this happen. And then the night before, we had had a movie and the Marines were in charge of strapping the chairs up on the, against the bulkhead. And

they didn't strap 'em, they just piled 'em up there and all that chairs fell on us. My gosh. I rolled over and I hit an object in the corner with my back and it bent me to a ninety degree. At least it felt it was ninety degree. Anyway, I had a funny feeling after that.

And then when we got to Pearl Harbor, I asked if I could see a corpsman and I went down to see a corpsman. And this happened later on. In fact, right at, near the incident at Pearl Harbor. But anyway, the *Solace* happened to be there when we got to the *Tennessee* and we were transferred off of the aircraft carrier to the *Tennessee*. And then I made an, approached a corpsman, a hospital corpsman what I could do about that. And he says, "Well, we'll give you a preliminary examination here."

So they examined me and this was later on, you know. And it was on the week of December. And he said, "We got your name and your ship number." He says, "We want you ready to come back to the *Solace* for x-rays."

I said, "When?"

He said, "Sunday, December 7."

And I said, "That's a holiday."

And he looked me straight in the eye, and he says, "It may be for you sailors, but the corpsmen work thirty days out of the month." He says, "We'll send over a motor launch and get you to the x-rays."

Well, December 7 came and they forgot all about me. All hell broke loose.

AG: Well, let me take you back a little bit, before we get to December 7, and when did you arrive at Pearl?

MM: I can't give you the same date, the exact date.

AG: But it was in 1940?

MM: Yes. But on the way down, they gave us a piece of paper to fill out and we're up in the flight deck and we're supposed to fill out our preference of battleships. Well, I only knew the *California* and *Arizona*. And I asked around and one guy from *Tennessee* says, "Well, the *Tennessee* has a battleship."

I says, "Well, I think I'll put that down," and that's what we put down and that's what we got, the *Tennessee*.

AG: So you and your brother both asked for the same ship?

MM: Yes, yes.

AG: Again, assigned the same ship.

MM: They were doing that then. After that Sullivans incident—but everybody is surprised that I was in for six years. And that was the only six-year enlistment that the navy took when they took my brother and I. We thought

we were going in there for four. And after we signed up, why, six is better than four! (Chuckles)

AG: What had you heard about the *Arizona*? You said you knew about the *Arizona*.

MM: Just being born there, that's it, see. I didn't know no dates about it or anything. It's just that we were from Yuma, Arizona and that's what we would want. But you had three choices and put the *Arizona*, *California*, and the *Tennessee*. Well, they chose to put us on the *Tennessee*.

AG: Did you have a choice of the type of vessel, for example, destroyers or battleships?

MM: No, they told you.

AG: Or did they tell you, you were going to a battleship and they gave you...

MM: These are battleship assignments. So, no that was a battle to replenish the fleet, in the battleship line. So that's the only thing we could put down, the navy was battleship. So we ended up with the *Tennessee*.

AG: So you were assigned to the *Tennessee*. What rank and what was your...

MM: Seaman second.

AG: Seaman second.

MM: Yeah, seaman second. They get rid of you down at the training station.

AG: And what was your assignment on that ship?

MM: FC Division. I didn't know what it was, but it was the FC Division. Both of us got assigned to it. And it turned out to be the fire control. And we were trained to be range finder operators, my brother and I and another. My brother was a talker, then the one that actually sends the ranges down. This is all manually, done manually. And I was a pointer. I used to train the—I

trained the range finder around. It's 180 degrees from the bow to the stern. It will turn 180 degrees. And that's all you need because they have a starboard and a port, so 180 degrees on each side covers 360. So but that's the...

(Conversation off-mike)

(Taping stops, then resumes)

**Don Fraser (DF):** Were you doing the range finding for the sixteen-inch guns or for all the guns?

**MM:** No, it was just the surface, surface range finder. And they decided what information they wanted done in the plotting room. The talker, my brother would send down the information. The range finder operator would tap on the—and that was the signal to send that range down.

**DF:** I see. So you were only interested in the target, not in the weapons system, per se?

MM: No, no, no. That's right. We were just—but we would be what assimilates the information and then sends it out as final to the guns in those days. Yes. And then they had a manual system there. Later on, it was all automatic. I mean, the plotting room was all—after we left Bremerton, it was all automatic. And you just, whenever you came to a range that you wanted to send down, you just press the button and it would go down to plot electronically. Yeah, she was a nice ship.

AG: Why don't you tell me about that ship? What were your impressions about the *Tennessee*, when you...

MM: It was a happy ship. It was a happy ship. Everybody kept to themselves. We were classed as a deck division. And then they had the, what they called the (chuckles) black gang division down. They don't come up during battle. They stay down there. They handle their part of the thing, like—well, I don't even, but I knew that ours was ranging and bearing and elevation. And I spent some time on the *Utah*. They sent me over to—our range finders were—they should've been taken off and discarded because when I

went on the *Utah*, you see, the *Utah* was a ragged ship. But boy, she had the best range [*finder*] on her, Carl Zeiss German finder on there. Boy, that was a beauty! ‘Cause all you had to do—what I liked about it, yeah, on our range finders, good for air, you know. We have to cramp our neck if they wanted to use the surface one, you know. But on the—I was sent over to the *Utah* as a range finder operator and when I got there, I wanted to stay! That range finder there, they had ‘em like a motorcycle seat. And when I elevated, I didn’t know what was going to happen. When I elevate, I turned with it, and I finally got the hang of it, but yes, I went out there to range for their battle practice, ‘cause—it was a beautiful range finder.

AG: Do you know why the *Utah* was better equipped at that particular point in time?

MM: Well, the poor *Utah* had to have something good going for her and she had that range finder.

AG: Why do you say that?

MM: Well, she was used to tow targets. She was used to tow targets. And the targets are only about a hundred yards away from this towing ship! And there could be a little error there that missed the target and hit the ship! It never happened, but there was a probability.

AG: Did you or others on the crew ever feel uneasy about that?

MM: Oh no. Well, we just went over there for a visit and fill out an assignment. I knew I was coming back, so...

AG: Oh, so you never really sailed with her?

MM: Oh yes, we did. She—we had to go out there with her. ‘Cause she towed the target but we had a range, if it was an air target, we had a range on that.

AG: Well, let’s get back to the *Tennessee*.

MM: Okay.

AG: Can you tell me about an operational day on the *Tennessee*, when you were preparing for battle?

MM: Well, we couldn't see. My brother and I couldn't see much because we had, they had a policy there that if you were in the range finder, once you locked in, you locked in. You report to plot and you're not to leave until you get secure from plot. So all I had was a telescope to look for and I was the only one that was looking through the telescope. The range finder operator would look through the range. He was surface, see. And on the targets, they used the target, the surface range finders.

AG: Prior to the attack, were you involved in a lot of maneuvers?

MM: We had come in, the *West Virginia*, the *Tennessee*, and the *Maryland* and the *Oklahoma*, had been out on a routine battle practice. And the *West Virginia* had trouble. She was supposed to come in first and tie up against the quay that says *Tennessee* on it now. And we were supposed to tie up alongside. Well in those days, you couldn't stand out, you know, especially a battleship, waiting out there. So we came in ahead of the *West Virginia*,

because she had had problems with her part of the target practice. So when we came up there, oh, on the fifth, I believe. Anyway, well, it was a Friday. The captain stayed up and was waiting for the *West Virginia* to come in, but he got a message from the port authority, what was he doing out there in the middle of the stream? And he told 'em, he says, "Never mind. We'll push you up against the *West Virginia* quay and the *West Virginia* can tie up alongside of you."

So that's what happened. We would've been on the port side if the *West Virginia* had been on time. And when, the only glimpse I got of any action, December 7...Sunday, you know, you don't expect this. And general quarters? Everybody was turning around looking at each other. General quarters on Sunday? They're waiting to hear liberty call. (Laughs)

So he—we ran up the ladder and I looked around and, my god, there was smoke coming from the *Arizona*. And the *West Virginia*, she had taken—a bomb hit from the *Tennessee*, on a turret of the *Tennessee*. Killed the *West Virginia* captain. The shrapnel from the *Tennessee*. And that's all I could

see. I mean, I saw the *Oklahoma* roll over and I told my brother, I says,  
“Tell ‘em that the *Oklahoma* is rolling bottoms up on the port side.”

And they all laughed! And my brother said, “No. She’s over. We can see  
the keel.”

And that’s the only action I saw there, I mean, you know, to report.

AG: What were you thinking?

MM: Huh?

AG: What were you thinking at that moment?

MM: I really, I was thinking if hell is like this, I don’t want no part of it! (Laughs)

No, it was bad, especially when you’re so close together. And I had friends  
on the *Oklahoma*. Yeah.

I guess that's all I can—after that, I was assigned—my brother—I came home from liberty, Waikiki, Cinderella liberty they used to call it. If you were married, you could stay overnight, but if you were single, you had to get on board ship at twelve o'clock at night. So I came back and then I seen my brother standing out there. And I says, "What are you doing up?"

And he says, "You've been transferred off the ship."

I says, "I'm not ready."

He says, "I got you ready!"

And I said, "Well, I don't want to go."

And he says, "You've got to go." He says, "I've got you ready and you're gonna leave."

So that's the last time I saw my brother. After a while, he came—they sent me up to Bremerton, Washington. No, they sent me to San Diego. From

San Diego, they sent me to Washington DC, Anacosta, for fire control school. And I was there about four months, fire control school.

All we had to do was go to school. So they had three schools. They had school going twenty-four hours a day and I asked one of the sailors, “How can they go? How can the instructors go that long?”

He says, “They have three sets of instructors.” And he says, “And what we gotta do is we gotta find—if we’re number one, we gotta find number two and number three, so that we can group ourselves and rent one hotel, one apartment for the three of us, and then we each have a key. When we’re ashore, you know, then we can use the hotel.”

And boy, that—it was an apartment. And that’s how we got away cheap, you know. Because if you had to go hunt one every time, it wouldn’t work, but we did get lined up with three different classes and it worked out beautiful. It worked out beautiful.

AG: Mr. Magdaleno, let me take you back...

MM: Okay.

AG: ...to December 7.

(Conversation off-mike)

MM: What is it, gray hair?

--: No, it's a thread.

MM: I'm coming apart at the seams!

(Laughter)

(Conversation off-mike)

AG: Okay, we're going to bring you back now to the morning of December 7 and we'll have him ask a couple questions. I have a couple questions.

DF: So you were somewhere in the ship when general quarters was sounded?

MM: Oh yes. I was in, like on a compartment, the fire control compartment.

DF: Before general quarters was sounded?

MM: Yes. That was...

DF: Oh, the berthing compartment.

MM: The berth, yeah, the compartment. That's where we slept. That's where we ate.

DF: Okay.

MM: Yes, that's where we were.

DF: And then when you went from the berthing compartment to your battle station, do you remember what, some of the things you said and some of the things you heard and some of the things you saw?

MM: Well, you're taught, in those days, you're taught that when general quarters, you drop everything else and you go to your battle station, period. And that's what we did.

DF: Had you been in the rack or were you up...

(Conversation off-mike)

END OF TAPE #1

TAPE #2

MM: ...really, I'm comfortable.

(Conversation off-mike)

DF: Okay. If you can—let's go back to the berthing compartment, the FC berthing compartment there, right before general quarters was sounded. Do you remember what you were doing? Were you sleeping or...

MM: Well, I was lying down. Sunday, you could, you know, stay in a while. But after we heard the alarm, then we had to start rolling up our—and my—you hang, in those days—I don't know what they do now—you used to hang your hammock from the ceiling. The overhead they called it. And then they had these big bulges on the side of the ship and that's where the hammock—after you tied it down, you put the hammock in that locker. And then that would be out of the way. But I wanted to—I had a bad back and I'm sorry I didn't have it taken care of because the corpsmen told me, he says, "If you don't have it taken care of, then," he says, "it's going to cause you a lot of trouble later on in life." And sure enough, I got a cane here and it's painful. It's very painful.

So I still remember my service number. (Chuckles) 3-8-2-2-4-4-0. And my brother's was the same thing but 4-4-1.

DF: When you went to your battle station, had you had time to dress?

MM: No, because the range finder operator, the range finder, you know, the one that taps the—he was up there in his shorts! And he was half-asleep. He says, “What in the you-know-what are we doing here having fire control drill?”

And I says, my brother says, “Open up your eyes man!”

And he says, “Oh hell, let's get out of here!”

He wanted to get out! But you couldn't get out after that. But that's the only thing I—after you got in there, all you saw was the water, you know, and all the range finder operator saw, the little things going like that. And he didn't want to talk, so you tap on the tube and you would pick it up. And my brother was the one that would train us around.

See, they have arms that stick out about six feet on each side and if you're out there and that platform is less than six feet wide. If you're out there and they send around—they were preparing for something. They wouldn't do it then, but if you were out there in a modern range finder, and you had a stray signal, nothing is going to stop it. If you're out there and it swings around, it's going to throw you over the board. So that's why we, they said once you lock in, you stay in 'til you're secured from plot. And they were drilling us in that to begin with, you know. 'Cause they said, they knew that the *Tennessee* was ready to go into the navy yard, but the December 7 altered that, but still we got to go. We got to go. Yeah.

AG: Now you said you witnessed or at least could see the *Oklahoma*...

MM: Yes.

AG: ...rolling over.

MM: Yes, that's the only—see, 'cause they only could \_\_\_\_\_ like that and it was on the port side.

AG: Were there any other ships on that side that you witnessed damaged?

MM: Oh yes. Yes, the *West Virginia* was aft of the *Oklahoma*. And I think the *California* was aft of the *West Virginia* quite a ways back.

AG: What did you see?

MM: And the *Solace* was—I couldn't see back there.

AG: But what could you see on the *West Virginia*, for example?

MM: On the *West Virginia*, just the only thing that I saw was the, going up the ladder, I saw all the glass and I later learned that it was a bomb hit from the *Tennessee*'s turret that killed the *West Virginia* captain.

AG: Was it on fire?

MM: Huh?

AG: Was it on fire?

MM: Not that I could see. And I was—I had to man my station so—no, it was—you were lucky to live through it, I'll tell you. You were lucky to live through it.

AG: How long did you man your station? When did you actually, when were you able to leave your station and what did you do immediately after that?

MM: Well, we didn't leave 'til about twelve o'clock. We were up there quite a while. 'Cause they were helping other guys, sailors that had been, you know, were in worse condition than we were. We didn't suffer too much. Just two, as I remember right, two bomb hits. One of 'em hit either turret three or turret four and I had a friend in there that was a range finder operator talker. And the bomb was a dud. It went through the turret—the turret on top is about six inches thick. It went through that and he was

standing up, because the talker, they have to stand up. And the bomb came and the fin of the bomb cut his arm going down. That's all he got. And it made a hole and it was a dud. But he got, that's what he got, he got cut on the arm here. He was lucky he wasn't over four inches more, because it would've killed him! And his name was—I had his name on—but we used to go ashore in Hawaii there all the time.

AG: Did you leave the ship that day?

MM: Nobody left the ship! Unless...

AG: So you were on the ship...

MM: ...it was in a coffin or going to sickbay.

AG: You were on the *Tennessee* the whole night.

MM: Oh yes.

AG: So the morning of the eighth...

MM: Yes.

AG: ...you woke up on the *Tennessee*. Tell me about the very next day. Were you able to get above decks and see anything?

MM: Well, being in deck division, we were, but we didn't have to. And I chose not to. So I don't know why they classed it as a deck division, but they're the ones that take care of the decks up there, you know, even if you're sleeping down there. If you're a member of that, bingo, you go. You have to turn to with them.

AG: Was the *Tennessee* capable of getting under way? Or was it damaged beyond that?

MM: No, it was capable, but she was hemmed in with the *West Virginia*. We had to clear the *West Virginia* off first. And after they cleared it, then I think, I don't remember just how it happened, but we were on our way. We went

out of the harbor and we thought we were going out on a exercise. But we were on our way to Bremerton, Washington, to get re—...

AG: Repairs.

MM: ...remodeled. And they got rid of the basket type mastheads, the old erectors. We came back just like a brand new battleship. And I came back on that, but after I had gone ashore in Pearl one night, I came, you know, and I saw my brother out there. And I think I was only there for, came back for one day, and then they shipped me back to go—I told my brother, “Why in the hell don’t they just leave me up there and let me catch a train to Washington, D.C.?”

God, but that’s the navy way. (Laughs) Like they say. So I had to go back and then I had to go transcontinental to Washington, D.C. And it was good duty, but one thing I remember there in the school. God, that school was, the building was so tall. And they had this big, big announcement man looking down at you, you know. Oh. Oh, I’ve never—it’s, phew, it was

huge. And they said, “Take all you want, but eat all you take,” that’s what the message. So...

AG: (Coughs) Pardon me.

MM: I remember that picture. Man, it was—I’ve never seen one like that. I’ve never since seen one that big.

AG: When the *Tennessee* got under way, after the attack, what kind of information were you getting on board ship as to what had happened and where did you think you were going?

MM: There was no information. Good morning, hello, and all that, because everything was going to be considered classified.

AG: What was the scuttle?

MM: Huh?

AG: What was the crew saying?

MM: Well, grumbling. (Laughs) Grumbling, yes. But we were happy we were going back to Bremerton. I don't know how long we were there, but my brother and I ended up there later on, you know. And I was still there and I met a welder and we would go down from the barracks. In the morning, we'd get up at six o'clock in the morning and have breakfast and then march down from the barracks to where the ship was docked, the *Tennessee*. And we were assigned fire control duties. That was a fire extinguisher. And you were what you call a fire watch. And we met up with a welder, turned out to be a very good friend. And my brother, my older brother had known him in Los Angeles, 'cause he had worked there at a pipe company on Avalon with him, but he had moved over to Bremerton when the war broke out because he figured he could make more money back there and he did. So when we, when my brother and I met up with him, he used to—you know, they didn't have babysitters then and they used to work Saturday and Sunday, you know, at all times. And there was no day off for them until they could accumulate some time. And then when they accumulated, they couldn't use

it. Well, I wasn't much for liberty myself and one night we were talking, he says, "I sure wish I could take my wife out for a—," and they had a baby.

And I said, "Well, hell, I'll stay. I'll stay here if it's all right with you," and boy, he jumped at it!

He says, so he called his wife, he says, "Yeah, we're going." He says, "Manny's going to stay here with Sue."

So I stayed with her. I wasn't much for liberty, because they just drink and I didn't drink. And smoke and I didn't smoke.

AG: I need to ask you one more question about...

MM: Go ahead.

AG: ...about Pearl Harbor...

MM: Yes.

AG: ...and your shipmates on the *Tennessee*. Did they ever feel or did you ever think that an attack like that at Pearl Harbor was possible?

MM: No. No, we thought we were secured, so did the President [*Franklin Roosevelt*]. But we slipped up someplace.

DF: You sort of went through this once already, but when you, did you see the *Oklahoma* turn?

MM: Yes and I saw it turning over.

DF: You saw it turn over?

MM: Yes.

DF: Did you see people aboard the *Oklahoma*?

MM: No, not until she was completely over and then other people started tapping on the keel there and I think they had burned two holes through there to go. They have double bottoms, so they went through the—as I can surmise that they were getting, you know, men in there to look around. Well, one guy, he was a very religious man. He came over on the *Tennessee* after it rolled over. And he told me, he says, “Well, you know,” he says, “I was there in the bottom, close to the bottom,” he says. “And of course I’m up on top now and I’m trying to get out,” and he would swim down and by the time he got to where he was going to get out, he told me later, he says, “I chickened out and I came back.”

There was some air—he did that about three times and, “Finally it dawned on me, well, heck, this time, I’m going to go out and I’m going to try to get out.”

And he got out. He got put on the *Tennessee* with us. He told me that yarn that he finally did get out. He was a very religious guy. And he says, “Well,” he says, “on the third time,” he said, “I’m going to go and take my chances,” and he was lucky to get out.

He swam on the deck of the battleship, hand over—I says, “Did you swim?”

He says, “Yeah, upside down,” he says, “’cause I was using the structure of the ship to get over here.”

So he got out and he came on board the ship and he was assigned to our division. He’s a good guy.

DF: During the attack, was *Tennessee* firing her guns?

MM: No. No. You couldn’t use the main battery and then we didn’t have much of an AA [*anti-aircraft*] battery. There were single barrels, manually. No automatic yet. But when we came out of Bremerton, we were automatic. They installed a brand new forty-millimeter quad in the center, forward of the forward director. And we—what is your name, sir?

(Conversation off-mike)

DF: So *Tennessee* was not able to fire its guns during the fighting?

MM: I didn't hear any firing. They were busy trying to clean up the deck and helping, you know, where they could. 'Cause we were still upright. Yeah, that was a...

DF: You said that, you made a comment that hell would be as bad as that, or something to that effect.

MM: Uh-huh.

DF: I wonder if you could try to remember when you traveled from the berthing compartment to the fire control position, to your battle station...

MM: Yeah.

DF: ...what you may have seen when you were above decks and not yet locked in. What do you remember seeing?

MM: Well, going up the ladder I saw these things.

DF: What did you see?

MM: Well, I saw where the bomb had killed the captain of the *West Virginia*, that I didn't know for sure, but I could see the shattered glass. And it was just to my left, you know. And but the *Oklahoma* was the one that—she really turned over, man. Oh, any questions?

AG: Where was your brother at that time? Did you locate him immediately?

MM: He was in my, we were in the same battle station.

AG: The same battle station.

MM: He was the talker.

AG: Okay.

MM: He would relay the information vocally, 'cause we didn't have electronic yet.

AG: So he was there. You manned the station together at the same time.

MM: Yeah, we were assigned to the same battle station. And then this boy from Texas, he was the range finder operator. I was the pointer, my brother was a talker, and Goss was a range finder operator.

AG: So very briefly, other combat that you saw before you got out of the navy?

MM: Just fighting those chairs, I guess. No, I got assigned to the *Springfield*, coming out of school, fire control school. I was assigned [*as a*] fire controlman third class, to the *Springfield*. And I stayed on that 'til, I guess 'til the end of the war.

AG: Did the *Springfield* see combat?

MM: I beg your pardon?

AG: Did the *Springfield* see combat?

MM: Oh yes, yes.

AG: Where?

MM: She was a light cruiser and bombardment of Kiska and...

AG: Up in the Aleutians.

MM: Mm-hmm.

AG: How long were you up there?

MM: I forget.

AG: Well...

(Conversation off-mike)

AG: Yeah, have you visited the *Arizona*, USS *Arizona* Memorial?

MM: Oh yes. We've been here three times, at least three times before.

AG: What are your feelings every time you see that memorial? What do you think about?

MM: You don't think, you just, you know—it's an eerie feeling. It's a—'cause I knew some sailors on there. I knew some sailors on there. In fact, I wanted to get assigned to it. We didn't get assigned to it.

AG: How do you feel about that, when you look up on that wall and see that those fellows did not get out? You wanted to get on to that, assigned to that ship. Does that ever go through your mind, how lucky you might have been?

MM: Well, fate. I don't want to use the word lucky 'cause—but fate. My brother has never been back there though. He—and he put in a lot of—I think he stayed in twenty years and he put in a lot of time, but he never gone back. We were thinking of bringing him this time, but he's worse off than I am and my son couldn't handle both of us. Yeah.

(Conversation off-mike)

DF: You were present at the surrender ceremony?

MM: Oh yes. Yes. On the *Springfield*. Yes.

DF: What do you remember of that?

MM: I remember there was a lot of people there and I couldn't see what I wanted to. We couldn't go ashore. We were on the ship, as ship's company. And we couldn't go ashore. I didn't see them, the *Missouri* Memorial until after the war was over, after we came back and she was brought back as where the

signing took off. We stood on the plate where the signing took off then, but that's about all.

AG: You know she's here now?

MM: I know she's here for keeps now.

AG: Do you plan to visit her again?

MM: Not this way, because I can't get around and they go through the whole ship and I couldn't take that. But my son will take my place. (Laughs) Did Marie go with you last time?

(Conversation off-mike)

MM: Huh?

--: At the decommissioning ceremony.

MM: Yeah, at the decommissioning.

AG: Well, Mr. Magdaleno, thank you for your time and I know it's a long interview but we appreciate your input and the memories that you have been able to share with us.

MM: Okay. Thank you for listening to me. Cut! (Laughs)

END OF INTERVIEW