

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

#286

RICHARD H. GARTY

CAMP CATLIN, SURVIVOR

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 6, 1998
BY DANIEL MARTINEZ**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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Daniel Martinez (DM): ...a family and how you ended up in the corps and things like that.

The following oral history interview was conducted by Daniel Martinez, historian for the National Park Service at the USS *Arizona* Memorial. The taping was done at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 6, 1998 at two p.m. The person being interviewed is Richard Garty, who was at Camp Catlin with the United States Marine Corps on December 7, 1941. For the record, Richard, you go by Dick or do you go...

Richard Garty (RG): Dick usually.

DM: Okay, Dick, for the record, could you state your full name?

RG: Richard Harold Garty.

DM: And your place of birth?

RG: Chicago, Illinois.

DM: And the date of birth?

RG: November 9, 1923.

DM: Could you please tell me what you considered your hometown in 1941?

RG: Chicago.

DM: Chicago.

RG: Right.

DM: Great town.

RG: Yeah.

DM: Just was in Chicago a couple of times this year.

(Conversation off-mike)

DM: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your family. You come from a family of how many children?

RG: Well, I have two sisters. One five years younger and one seven years younger. And they both live in the Chicago area.

DM: Okay.

RG: Yeah.

DM: So you had two sisters and yourself. There was a family of three.

RG: Yeah, right.

DM: Was your father and mother alive...

RG: Yeah.

DM: ...during the time of you growing up?

RG: Yes.

DM: What did you...

RG: My father was a steel mill worker.

DM: In Chicago?

RG: In Chicago, yeah.

DM: That's pretty tough work.

RG: Yeah.

DM: And what did your mother do?

RG: She was a homemaker.

DM: So she took care of all the children?

RG: That's right. Right, yeah.

DM: Now you grew up through the depression.

RG: Right, yeah.

DM: Tough in Chicago?

RG: Yes, it was. My dad had hurt his back and we were on relief, you know, and he was laid up. It was quite a deal on my dad.

DM: Did you go to work to support the family too?

RG: Yeah. I delivered newspapers just like a lot of other kids.

DM: What kind? What newspaper?

RG: *Chicago Tribune*.

DM: The big one?

RG: Yeah.

DM: What part of Chicago did you live in?

RG: At that time I was living in Harvey, Illinois.

DM: Okay.

RG: Which is just one of the southern suburbs of...

DM: Right.

RG: ...of Chicago.

DM: Where did you go to grammar school?

RG: I went to Myra Bradwell Elementary School in Chicago.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: On Burnham Avenue, I think it was.

DM: Okay. And high school?

RG: High school, I went to Thornton Township High School in Harvey, Illinois.

DM: Okay, and what was—did you play sports?

RG: No. Well, some. I played some baseball and I was on the swimming team.

DM: Okay.

RG: Yeah.

DM: And what was your favorite subject in high school?

RG: Girls.

(Laughter)

RG: No, I didn't have any favorite subjects.

DM: Okay. You grew up in Chicago. It's kind of a tough life. You get out of high school and you look at yourself and say...

RG: Actually I didn't finish high school. I joined the Marine Corps in 1941, in July.

DM: How old were you?

RG: Seventeen.

DM: So your parents signed the...

RG: Yeah, right.

DM: And you figured the best education for me is to get out of Chicago and join the Marine Corps?

RG: Yeah.

DM: Why the Marine Corps?

RG: Well there was six of us guys always hung around together and one day while I was working downtown Chicago at the time at the Boston Store, we all rode the train down together. And we got off the train and the guys says, "Come on, we're going to join the Marine Corps," and they hadn't discussed it with me. So we all went over there and all five of those guys got turned down and I got taken. (Laughs)

DM: Is that...(laughs).

RG: Yeah.

DM: Life has its irony.

RG: Yes it does.

DM: Now, did you know how tough an outfit the Marine Corps was when you enlisted or...

RG: Yeah.

DM: And you thought you were tough, or you thought...

RG: No.

DM: ...this might toughen you up?

RG: No, I didn't think of that at all.

DM: What was the attraction?

RG: The attraction was I knew about the Marine Corps, but the six of us were going to go join the Marine Corps together.

DM: So you were going in with your buddies...

RG: Buddies, yeah.

DM: ...and this was going to be a big adventure.

RG: Yeah. One of 'em got in the Marine Corps after the war started and he come in my outfit as a replacement.

DM: Is that right? What's the chances of that?

RG: Yeah, that was pretty slim.

DM: Now, they took you from—where did they train you at? Where was boot camp?

RG: I went through boot camp in San Diego.

DM: Okay. What was that experience like?

RG: Oh, it was stressful, as all people will tell you when they went through boot camp, pretty stressful.

DM: Sergeants have...

RG: They were rugged but fair.

DM: Rugged but fair.

RG: Right. They didn't beat us up or cuss us out.

DM: But they squared you away?

RG: They squared us away, right.

DM: What was your favorite thing in boot camp?

RG: I don't know. Shooting a rifle, I guess, firing a rifle.

DM: You liked the shooting?

RG: Yeah.

DM: What was your least favorite?

RG: Geez, I don't know. I don't think I had a least favorite.

DM: None of the obstacle course, none of the KP duty or any of that stuff?

RG: Oh, I didn't get KP duty until after boot camp.

DM: Okay. Now, when you get out of boot camp, they assign you. Where did you get assigned?

RG: I got assigned to thirty days mess duty.

DM: Okay.

RG: (Laughs)

DM: But they didn't send you off to school, they didn't send you to...

RG: I was supposed to go, after that I was supposed to go to radio school.

DM: Okay.

RG: But I didn't get to go. 4th Defense [*Battalion*] was there. It got to San Diego from Cuba.

DM: Mm-hm.

RG: And they needed replacements and I was one of the replacements that went with the 4th Defense [*Battalion*].

DM: Okay, so you went for the 4th Defense Battalion?

RG: Yeah, in November.

DM: Okay.

RG: And went aboard the [*USS*] *Henderson*.

DM: Okay. The troopship *Henderson*.

RG: Troopship *Henderson*, nine knots downhill.

(Laughter)

DM: And that was, so that was a slow cruise from...

RG: Yeah, I don't remember how many days it was. Took us about five, six days, something like that.

DM: She was a pretty old vessel, wasn't she?

RG: Yeah, it was a World War I troopship too.

DM: And you were bound for Hawaii?

RG: No.

DM: Okay.

RG: We were bound for Wake Island yet it wasn't a—it was a well-kept secret, almost, you know.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: So we didn't get to go, of course, we didn't go to Wake Island. They pulled us into Hawaii and unloaded our ship.

DM: Okay.

RG: That last week in November.

DM: Well, not for the fate, you may have been one of those immortalized at Wake Island with that other defense battalion.

RG: That's true. Yeah.

DM: Do you ever think about that?

RG: Yes I do. In fact, I'm thinking about it. I read this article, *Pearl Harbor Revisited*, by Harry Elmer Barnes.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: And he tells about quite a bit about it in here. And one of the things, if I may quote out of here.

DM: Sure.

RG: That, "...as a result of research by staff at some leaks from intelligence officers in 1941, Thomas Dewey, the Republican candidate for the presidency had learned during the campaign of '44 that President [*Franklin Delano*] Roosevelt had been reading the intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages in the purple and other codes and was aware of the threat of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor at any time after November 26, 1941, but had failed to warn the commanders there, General Walter Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, in time to advert the attack or meet it effectively."

Now the story of Admiral Kimmel and General Short is probably well-known.

DM: Right.

RG: How they both got court-martialed for it and all that.

DM: Right.

RG: And eventually...

DM: Well, they were charged, they were never tried.

RG: Charged. That's right. And so on, but then Dewey found out later on that he wanted to use that information, that Roosevelt knew about the attack as early as April of 1941.

DM: Right.

RG: And a lot of people talked him out of using it, 'cause he said that he would be compromising the war effort by telling the Japanese...

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: ...that we had busted their code.

DM: Right.

RG: And a lot of people said, "Well, the Japanese didn't care that we knew their code, because they didn't believe it."

DM: Right.

RG: They thought their code was invincible.

DM: Right, as all code people think.

RG: Yeah.

DM: Now, you end up coming over on the *Henderson*, and you were going to go to Wake Island, but you're diverted to Honolulu.

RG: Right.

DM: Did you go to marine barracks when you went there?

RG: No.

DM: Or where did they put you?

RG: That's where we went to, up by Salt Lake, in the sugar cane field.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: Wiped out the sugar cane, pitched tents and all that stuff and built a camp.
And...

DM: Called?

RG: Eventually it was called Camp Catlin. At that...

DM: Who was Catlin?

RG: I have no idea.

(Laughter)

DM: Now, that doesn't sound like luxurious accommodations in Hawaii.

RG: No. We lived in tents.

DM: Right.

RG: And the morning of December 7, I was on mess duty again. And I was on the back porch of the mess hall peeling potatoes.

DM: Now, was this for any disciplinary reasons, or did they just...

RG: No. Just because I was the usual kick in the butt...

DM: ...suspect?

RG: ...mess man.

DM: Now, were you a PFC [*Private First Class*] at the time?

RG: I was a private.

DM: Okay.

RG: PVT, yeah.

DM: PVT.

RG: Yeah.

DM: The night before the attack, actually fifty-seven years ago today.

RG: Yes.

DM: What, did you go out on liberty or did you stay at the camp, or what was that day like and that night like?

RG: You really want to know?

DM: I really want to know.

RG: (Laughs) I went out on liberty with the rest of the guys and we went down on River Street and had a ball and getting drunk. Come back and we're shooting craps in the shower and all that. And about when dawn was about to break, I had to go on mess duty. So I was up all night.

DM: Now let me make sure I got this straight. You go—how did you get down there? Did you guys go by the train or do you go by bus, or cab?

RG: Where, into Honolulu?

DM: Yeah.

RG: I have no idea. I don't remember.

DM: You don't remember that. But somehow—now, the drinking...

RG: Maybe we went on a bus. I'm not sure.

DM: The drinking didn't start before you got there, right? (Pause) It did. Well, okay.

RG: (Laughs)

DM: So maybe that's why the recollection's a little foggy.

RG: Yeah, right.

DM: So you end up—did you go to the Black Cat first or did you guys have a favorite bar you liked to go to?

RG: Well, I don't remember the names of the bars or any of that stuff, but just that we—as being all, just turned eighteen, I was lucky to get a drink, you know.

DM: Yeah. Now they have some wonderful accommodations on River Street.

RG: Yeah.

DM: The Cottages and the New Senator. I'm sure—did your fellows ever have an opportunity of seeing these accommodations and partake in some of the hospitality?

RG: Yes, yeah.

DM: And that was what Saturday night was all about?

RG: That's what Saturday night, the day after payday...

DM: Okay. And—well this is kind of portrayed in a very casual manner in the movie *From Here to Eternity*.

RG: Yes.

DM: We all know what we're talking about here.

RG: Yeah.

DM: That was a rather quick visit usually to those places. Is that right? Or did you guys stay and drink and...

RG: True. No, that was a quick visit.

DM: A quick visit?

RG: A quick visit. In and out.

DM: And after that...

RG: Move it along. There's other people waiting. (Laughs)

DM: Yeah, and after that anxiety is relieved, you guys...

RG: Yes.

DM: ...continue drinking and...

RG: Well, maybe we messed around there in town a little bit and then we went back to the base and had a crap game in the shower.

DM: Yeah? How'd you do in the crap game?

RG: Ah, I won a couple bucks I guess, I don't know.

DM: Did you stay up the whole night?

RG: Yeah.

DM: And you had mess duty starting at what time?

RG: Six o'clock, I guess it was. Five-thirty. Five-thirty, I guess it was, six o'clock.

DM: So you U.S. Marines were pretty resilient guys. I mean, that's all night and...

RG: Oh sure. I was only eighteen years old back then.

DM: Okay. So...mess duty starts. I guess you guys are getting for the day's chow.

RG: Yeah, I was peeling potatoes.

DM: Peeling potatoes. Good staple.

RG: Yeah.

DM: When did you realize on that fateful day, December 7, 1941, that it was not going to be a normal Sunday in Hawaii?

RG: When that first plane flew over our camp, strafing, on his way to bomb into the harbor. We were right in their line of flight, going into the harbor from the north. And he strafed our camp as he went through and we said, "What the heck is going on here?"

DM: He strafed your camp?

RG: Yeah.

DM: Now, let me ask you this, Dick. If I was to send you a map of the Pearl Harbor surrounding area, could you mark on a map where Camp Catlin was?

RG: Sure.

DM: Okay. I'll do that because it'll be important to know. Did you think some crazy army pilot had messed up? Or what did you make of it?

RG: We thought it was the army having maneuvers.

DM: Mm-hm.

RG: That's what everybody said. We thought it was the army having maneuvers until we saw the red meatballs on the wings of the plane.

DM: Now, what did this strafing do? Did it hit anything or anybody?

RG: I don't know. Didn't hit us.

DM: But you could see the...

RG: Yeah.

DM: ...bullets?

RG: We heard it. You know.

DM: You heard it?

RG: And then as we watched the plane, then we saw the other planes coming in and everything was starting to go to hell down there in the harbor.

DM: Could you see the harbor from where you were?

RG: Yes, yes.

DM: Now, when you saw these planes, you saw the rising sun on these wings?

RG: Mm-hm.

DM: And you knew who it was?

RG: Yup. We finally realized who it was, yeah.

DM: Now what happened next? Did the sergeants take over and get everybody assembled, or what...

RG: Yeah, everybody was running around. Everybody was running around in circles there for a while.

DM: Screaming?

RG: I don't remember anybody screaming.

DM: Cursing?

RG: Yeah.

DM: Yeah. What'd you do?

RG: I don't remember. You know, it's very hard. I know the mess sergeant said, "You guys stay here. You gotta get the chow ready." I remember that. So I had to stay at the mess hall.

DM: Feel like throwing some of those potatoes at those planes?

RG: Well, I ran over to my tent and got my rifle. I was one of the few still had a rifle.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: 'Cause the guys that come from Cuba, their rifles were all packed up. And I had a rifle and ten rounds of ammo.

DM: Did you let 'em have it?

RG: And I shot all ten rounds at one, at couple of planes that went by and I don't know if I hit 'em or not. Of course, I probably didn't.

DM: Was your feeling one of anger at that time? Do you remember your, you know—'cause these guys, this was a surprise attack.

RG: Yeah, I guess it was. I would say, yeah. Kinda angered.

DM: Let's take—the raid lasted two hours. During that time, did you guys move out? Did you stay put?

RG: I stayed put in the mess hall, yeah.

DM: Mm-hm.

RG: At my job, yeah.

DM: Now, what—from that place of being able to see Pearl Harbor, you could probably see Battleship Row, right?

RG: Yes.

DM: What was the—if there was one thing that comes to mind when you're watching all of this, was there a certain moment in that attack that would be ever frozen in your mind as strongly visual?

RG: Yeah.

DM: What's that?

RG: When we saw the ships being hit and all that smoke coming up, flames and smoke coming up, wondering how are we ever going to get out of this. Then I saw some of the ships that kind of got going, you know. I said, "My gosh, how'd they get out of it?" you know.

DM: Right.

RG: And then we were up above the harbor and the tank farm was down below us and aft, there was a tank farm down there. I said, "Oh, if they ever hit that, it's going to blow right up here."

DM: Right.

RG: Yeah, I sort of was thinking that.

DM: Did you ever fear for your life during that time?

RG: No. I don't think so.

DM: Were you scared?

RG: Yeah. I was scared, yeah.

DM: And these ships that looked so graceful and so large...

RG: Yeah.

DM: ...were mortal?

RG: Yes.

DM: You knew a lot of men were getting killed down there, didn't you?

RG: Yeah. Not as many got killed as we thought did though.

DM: It looked a lot worse?

RG: Yes, it looked a lot worse than it was as far as casualties.

DM: Right.

RG: I mean, of course the *Arizona* is the one that got the worst of it.

DM: Did you see her blow up?

RG: Yes.

DM: What was that like?

RG: There's so much smoke and stuff you couldn't tell, really, from there, what ship it was or anything.

DM: Did you see the explosion at all?

RG: I think I did, yeah.

DM: Yeah. Was it noisy?

RG: It's kind of a hazy memory yet now.

DM: Right. Was it noisy? Lots of gunfire, these airplanes screaming overhead?

RG: Yeah. Yeah.

DM: One survivor said to me that he had never seen so many airplanes in the air. That it was just like they were everywhere.

RG: Yeah, they were.

DM: Do you remember that like that?

RG: Right, they were all over. Later on in the war, I saw a lot more than that.

DM: Yeah. When the attack subsided, what did you think was going to happen next?

RG: I really don't remember what I thought. I just wondered what I could do next, you know.

DM: Yeah.

RG: Where are we going to go.

DM: And where did you go eventually?

RG: Well, within a few days—and I'm not sure of the date. I've been trying to find somebody around here that knew the date so I could tell you but. It was either the—it seemed to me the twelfth of December.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: We went out heading for Wake Island to reinforce for the Wake convoy, and I was on the USS *Tangier* with the rest of my “F” battery.

DM: Right.

RG: And we went out there and housing, sleeping down on the deck of the ship.

DM: You were part of a relief force?

RG: Yeah.

DM: [*Vice*] Admiral [*William*] Pye was in charge of that at the time. See, because Kimmel had been replaced. Kimmel wanted to relieve Wake.

RG: Uh-huh.

DM: Did you guys know what was going on at Wake?

RG: No, we had no idea. All we knew was we went aboard ship that we were going out to Wake Island to help ‘em out and that we had supposed to have been there at that time.

DM: How many men were going with you? The whole...

RG: I don’t know. I suppose the whole battalion, which would have been about a thousand men at that time.

DM: They could’ve used your help out there.

RG: Yes.

DM: Do you know what happened to ‘em?

RG: Yes and I know some of the guys that were on Wake Island that come back after being prisoners-of-war.

DM: I had the privilege of going to Wake Island with those guys the first time they returned.

RG: Is that right?

DM: Yeah. And I was wondering what do those men mean to you, that stood out there and defended that place?

RG: What do you mean what they mean?

DM: How do you...

RG: Well, they were victims of circumstance.

DM: Right.

RG: They had—they were there because that was their duty station and they got caught in it.

DM: I suspect—Dick, the question I'm asking...

(Taping stops, then resumes)

DM: Those guys, the Wake Island is referred to as the Alamo of the Pacific. I mean, these guys stood up against incredible odds.

RG: Yes.

DM: Are they part of Marine Corps history that's indelible?

RG: Oh yes, very definitely. And I think that if our battalion could've been there when we were supposed to be there in the beginning, we might've done a better job out there against the Japs coming in.

DM: Yeah.

RG: We would've had a heck of a lot more men there. We would've had more guns there.

DM: Right.

RG: More ammo.

DM: But that wasn't to happen. And you guys were sent back...

RG: Yeah.

DM: ...before you could relieve 'em.

RG: Right.

DM: How did you guys feel about that?

RG: Well, from what I understand, that the pilots on the *Saratoga* almost had a mutiny because they weren't allowed to go ahead.

DM: And how did the marines feel?

RG: Well, we just doing our job. I mean, okay, we were supposed to go there and we didn't get there. And we're going back, well.

DM: But you guys deep down in your hearts knew what was going to happen to them, right?

RG: Yeah.

DM: They were either going to be killed or they're going to be captured.

RG: We thought they were all killed.

DM: Oh, long after the event?

RG: Yeah. On our way back, we were discussing it, that we knew Wake Island had fallen, until we heard the actual news of it later on, that we thought they'd all been killed.

DM: Do you think that, after all these years, do you still have some anger or any feelings about not relieving Wake?

RG: Well, like I say, that's why I read you that part about Roosevelt knowing. It was all a big conspiracy to get us into the war, to get us out of the depression at that.

DM: And then at Pearl Harbor, you were perhaps were the sacrificial lambs there?

RG: Yeah.

DM: That's a feeling that's not uncommon amongst some survivors.

RG: Mm-hm.

DM: After, Dick, the war starts, and you guys get sent back from relieving, trying to relieve Wake Island, what happens to your unit and what happens to you? What do you do the rest of the war?

RG: Well, in March, went aboard the [USS] *Crescent City* and we had one other ship with us. I can't remember the name of it now. And we went down to the New Hebrides.

DM: Okay.

RG: We got there in the last part of March '4[2] and set up our guns there at Éfaté, New Hebrides. And started building an airstrip. We were working just like Seabees.

DM: So you were building the airstrip as well, huh.

RG: So that they—and got it built and then of course they were using that airstrip there to go up to the canal, you know.

DM: Right.

RG: To get the Japs up at the canal. And we also went up to—I think it was in June, June or July of '4[2], we went up to Espiritu Santo and started on another airstrip.

DM: Were you in combat at any of this time, or...

RG: Well, we didn't have any air raids down there on Éfaté, but we did have some raids up there in Espiritu Santo. We even got shelled by a submarine one time.

DM: Wow.

RG: But very light, I mean nothing you could speak of as combat, you know.

DM: Now, in 1942, America finally gets a chance to strike back at the Japanese. The Doolittle raid is in April. In August of that year, we land at Guadalcanal. The marines land there.

RG: Yes.

DM: When do you get—did you, at any part of the war, get involved in this invasion business and land?

RG: Go out in—when the heck was it? —1943, I guess it was. We went up, we went out of port. We had gone to New Zealand for R and R and then we went up to Vella Lavella.

DM: Okay, sure.

RG: You heard of that?

DM: The *Honolulu* got its bow blown off there.

RG: Pardon?

DM: The USS *Honolulu*, the cruiser at Pearl Harbor, got its bow blown off there.

RG: Yeah. Okay, we went up to Vella Lavella as a defense battalion, go in and make an amphibious landing, which that wasn't our forte, you know?

(Laughter)

RG: And at that time, we got hit by so many air raids...

DM: Right.

RG: ...that *Time* magazine even wrote it up and all that, you know that we had—I forget how many now. I got a clipping on it at home but...

DM: Lots of bombings?

RG: Lots of bombings, yeah.

DM: You know, Dick...

RG: Kamikazes and everything, yeah.

DM: Tell me this, I mean most of the people who'll listen to this, including myself, have never been in an air raid. What the heck is that like?

RG: It's like you want to dig all the way through the ground down to the other side, to get away from it. You hear them screamers coming in at you, you don't know where to go.

DM: You don't know where those bombs going to land?

RG: No. And if you're on a gun crew, the only thing you do is you just grit your teeth and keep passing that ammunition into the gunner or whatever you're doing, you know, shooting the guns.

DM: Yeah. Sounds like a terrifying experience.

RG: Yeah.

DM: In 1943, that year passes, 1944, what happens to you during that? That was a critical year.

RG: Forty-four, I was back in the States about the middle of '44. Went back to the States, went to camp, resumed my school again.

DM: Okay and what was your rank at that time?

RG: I think I was a corporal.

DM: Okay.

RG: Yeah, I was a corporal.

DM: You in a rifle company then?

RG: No.

DM: Okay.

RG: Never was in the rifle company.

DM: What were you in?

RG: I went back to Camp Lejeune, [*North Carolina*] and I went to telephone lineman school, I went to radio school. I went to motor school and I forget the ones I went and I was supposed to be in the 52nd Replacement Draft, would have gone to Okinawa, except that I had a couple of wisdom teeth that had to be pulled, so they pulled me and pulled my teeth.

DM: Uh-huh.

RG: Stuck me in what they called JASCO, Joint Assault Signal Company.

DM: Okay.

RG: And I went to school under that and learned how to fire, call fire from a destroyer and a cruiser, or whatever.

DM: Right.

RG: And from there I went to Hawaii again, back right up to Camp Catlin.

DM: Okay.

RG: And we were...

DM: A little déjà vu, huh?

RG: Yeah. And we were slated to go into Kyushu.

DM: Invasion of Japan?

RG: Yeah.

DM: Wow.

RG: And I was supposed to go in under rubber boat off of a submarine to call gunfire. Yeah. Minus two or three on D-Day, you know. And luckily Harry Truman saved our life, you know.

DM: What do you think would've happened in an invasion of Japan? I know it's speculation, but what'd you think, as a...

RG: Well, it would've been a lot more people killed than what those atom bombs killed.

DM: Yeah, on both sides.

RG: Americans and Japanese.

DM: Are you of the opinion that the atom bomb may have saved your life and many other...

RG: Oh definitely.

DM: ...many Americans?

RG: It had to have saved my life because I was in that, I was supposed to go in there D-Day minus three and call naval gunfire. I wouldn't have survived. I know that. That's why I say I'm living on borrowed time.

DM: Dick, I'm going to ask, I want to ask you this question. The Pearl Harbor Survivors, of which you're a member, when did you join the Survivors?

RG: Well, I joined it—I don't know. I think it was 1958 or somewhere around there.

DM: Early on.

RG: Yeah. As soon as I found out about it, anyway.

DM: Yeah.

RG: I didn't even know there was an organization.

DM: Why did you join?

RG: Well, because it was something that of my past, my camaraderie, to keep Pearl Harbor, the memory of Pearl Harbor alive and as we say, if we forget it, we're going to repeat it.

DM: And the slogan, I guess, of the survivors is to, "Keep America alert. Remember Pearl Harbor."

RG: Right.

DM: That's the legacy, isn't it?

RG: Yeah. If you forget the past, you'll repeat it, you know.

DM: What's Pearl Harbor mean to you? After all these years.

RG: After all these years, well, I'd rather not say something now.

DM: Is it personal?

RG: Yeah. It's derogatory. Skip over that.

DM: Okay. What's the legacy of Pearl Harbor for this nation?

RG: The legacy? I just, what I just said, is that if we forget it and let it go...

DM: So if we don't keep our defenses up...

RG: That's right. We don't keep our defenses up and remember how people can take advantage of you, they will.

DM: So then...

RG: You can't leave your guard down.

DM: There's an abstract lesson in all of this.

RG: Yes.

DM: And all those guys buried at Punchbowl or at the *Arizona*...

RG: Yeah.

DM: ...how do you feel about those guys?

RG: Well, I helped carry some of those bodies up to Punchbowl on the night of December 7. I...

DM: Oh, you mean in Halawa Valley, you mean the first burials?

RG: Yeah, wherever we took 'em. I don't...

DM: Yeah, it's Halawa Valley.

RG: I remember they're saying, "Go on this, get on this truck and go down to the harbor. You're going down there to help collect."

I said, "Okay," I didn't know what he meant when he said collect.

DM: What was that like?

RG: Oh, we went down there and collected some of the bodies and took 'em up for burial, you know.

DM: Was that pretty bad?

RG: Yeah. You know, we were in such a state of shock at that time, we didn't, you know, you just did what you had to do and you didn't think about it too much.

(Conversation off-mike)

DM: Is there anything that we didn't cover that you wanted to talk about?

RG: No, I don't think so, just that I stayed in the Marine Corps. Well, actually I got out after World War II, and then I went right back in again. Because I went back to Chicago, it was too rugged for me. (Chuckles)

DM: Fought in Korea?

RG: I went to Korea, yes. I went to Korea in 1952 and through '53. And I also went to Vietnam, 1970 and '71. Then I come back and I got out 'cause I had thirty years in by then.

DM: Thirty years.

RG: And one more thing, the Marine Corps issued me my wife. She was a sergeant in the marines.

DM: I'll be darned.

RG: Yeah.

DM: Well, I'd like to thank you for this interview.

RG: Okay.

DM: You did a great job and it shared some light on Camp Catlin that I had nothing on.

RG: Yeah, that's okay. And I have no idea who Catlin is.

DM: Well, I'll try to find out for us.

RG: Yeah.

DM: Thank you very much.

RG: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW