

#241(continued) RUSSELL MCCURDY, PART II

USS ARIZONA, SURVIVOR

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Russell McCurdy (RM): Well, we were talking about where I went and different places and I wanted to put in the fact that if my family, later on, sees this, or you know, or if my wife comes over here and I have never mentioned her or the children, that was a funny thing. And also my brother. I thought if I bring that in too, that I became a sole survivor because of my brother being killed in Germany just a few weeks before the war ended. I then became a sole survivor and therefore did not have to go to Korea. If you're familiar with that, if you're a sole survivor, you don't go back into combat. That's about it though.

Or were you going to ask me a question, or anything like that, before I start talking?

Robert Chenoweth? (RC): Well, why don't you just go ahead and -- actually, I'm curious as to what was your family's reaction at home? Your parents -
- were they alive?

RM: In December --- is he cutting yet?

RC: Yeah, go ahead.

RM: In December, the first word that my parents received in relationship to the bombing of Pearl Harbor was that I was missing. That come from the Navy department.

RC: I see.

RM: Then the next one was from a congressman, that I had -- that changed that I was wounded. Then another message that I was in the hospital. And the only wounds that I had was just the burns on the hand coming down the ladder. But if you could just visualize being at a state fair and the grandstand and the race track and all blew up at one time, and there's 50,000 people at the fair, that's what Pearl Harbor was. One mass confusion and just running over each other.

RC: When did you have a chance to talk to your family, to your parents?

RM: I never talked to my parents until 1943. But then she got another message from the Marine Corps, that I had been wounded and that I was all right, it wasn't serious. And then on about the eighteenth, they had passed postcards around at Ford Island and at the receiving ship. I sent several of those homes. And the first one she received was around the eighteenth of December.

RC: I see.

RM: So that's when my family found out. So when I came home in '43, my brother, older than I, he was in the European Theater. And at the -- a few weeks before the war ended, he was in the tank battalion, in Patton's outfit, outside of Berlin, and he was killed. And that was his third Purple Heart. And that left me as the only sole survivor -- I was not married as yet, and he had not been married. Therefore, in the military, the sole survivor has certain rights of not going into combat again and therefore I didn't go to Korea.

But then, along come -- after the war and everything -- I met a girl from Indiana. I was originally from Michigan, but I met a girl from Indiana and I married her. And we had two lovely children -- one named Allan, the boy. Our first child was Allan. We named him after my idol, who was Allan Chapley, my commanding officer on the *ARIZONA*. And the second child we had was a girl, Sandra. And they have several children. We have grandchildren now.

But while I tell you about how I searched and I didn't get married until 1951, that's ten years later. And I married a girl named Pearl.

So that was my story as far as the family is concerned. And my parents are now passed away, but my family has come out here first for the twenty-fifth. We come out for the silver of Pearl Harbor. Was the four of us. And then, in '91, after the children had been married -- both of 'em married two times, each of my children -- and we were fourteen when we come out for the fiftieth. And now this being the -- this particular setting being the fifty-fifth, I came by myself. And I'm glad to be able to tell the story there and did you have any questions that you wanted to bring up?

RC: No, that's fine. We're happy to have you . . .

RM: I certainly thank you very much.

RC: Okay. Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW