

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

#294

ANDREW HOOVER

RECEIVING STATION, PEARL HARBOR, SURVIVOR

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 7, 1998
BY JEFF PAPPAS**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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**USS *ARIZONA* MEMORIAL
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

Jeff Pappas (JP): Okay. The following oral history interview was conducted by Jeff Pappas, for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial, at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 7, 1998 at two p.m. The person being interviewed is Andrew Hoover, who was at the PH Pearl Harbor receiving station on December 7, 1941. Andrew, for the record, could you please state your full name, your place and date of birth?

Andrew Hoover (AH): My full name is Andrew Hoover. I was born in Winona, Minnesota, January 6, 1922.

JP: All right. Did you grow up in Minnesota?

AH: I grew up in Minnesota 'til I was seventeen, when I graduated from high school. I joined the navy in February of 1940, February 13, 1940. After serving six months in the CCC's, Camp 706, Lanesboro, Minnesota.

JP: Okay, let's go back a bit. Before your time in the service, growing up in Minnesota, tell me about that. Tell me about growing up. Tell me about grammar school and high school.

AH: I went to a little grade school at the town of Stockton, Minnesota. And there were probably forty people there. They had two rooms, first to fourth grade in one room, the fourth to the eighth grade in the second room.

JP: Now tell me, where is Stockton, Minnesota?

AH: Stockton, Minnesota is seven miles west of Winona, Minnesota, which is on the Mississippi River. Mississippi.

JP: So it's eastern Minnesota.

AH: Yeah, very eastern. Yeah.

JP: Mm-hm, very good. Continue.

AH: When I was growing up, we lived on a little sixteen-acre truck farm in Stockton.

JP: Sixteen—a truck farm?

AH: Yeah, it was a truck farm. My dad raised vegetables and melons and stuff to sell in the town of Winona. He was a pretty good gardener and he put his boys to work very early. I had two older brothers and I was six and seven years younger than the two older ones.

JP: Now what is a truck farm though, specifically?

AH: A truck farm is where they raise tomatoes, sweet corn, cabbages, carrots, all types of vegetables.

JP: So your dad a farmer?

AH: Yeah.

JP: By trade, did he...

AH: He was a railroad man, worked on the railroad in Winona, Minnesota.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: And he would drive back and forth and most of the time he worked from three to eleven at night.

JP: Now, what railroad was that?

AH: That was Chicago Northwestern Railroad.

JP: Did he do that part-time or full-time?

AH: No, he was full-time. Full-time railroad worker and then part-time—he put his boys to work to do the truck farming.

JP: Now, did your family own the farm?

AH: They were buying it. They lost it during the depression in 1931. They lost it. They owed [1100] dollars on it. No.

JP: Was—had the property been in the family for generations, for some time?

AH: They were buying it on monthly payments and my dad got laid off from the railroad, could no longer make any payments and we were just barely existing on the little truck farm. And I think he was paying something like 35,000 or something. And it wasn't 3500 he lost for it, he lost it because he couldn't pay 1100 dollars for it. We had no money, no money to pay it.

So then we moved to Winona, Minnesota and I was in the sixth grade when we left Stockton and moved to Winona. And I went into the junior high school, seventh grade in Winona, Minnesota and finished my high school there.

JP: Well, give me some more specifics about your parents though. Your father's full name and your mother's full name.

AH: My father's full name was Andrew Hoover. My grandfather's name was Andrew Hoover.

JP: Where are they from? Where are they descendants of?

AH: They were distant cousins of Herbert Hoover, President Herbert Hoover. And they originated back in the Pennsylvania area and I think that the original ones, probably my grandfather's father or somewhere there, probably were Tories, 'cause they moved to Canada. And my grandmother and grandfather had lived in Canada and came to the United States when they were small. My grandmother came when she was nine years old and my grandfather was the first plumber in the state of Minnesota.

JP: Now this was on your father's side of the family?

AH: My father's side of the family.

JP: How about your mother?

AH: My mother's side of the family goes all the way back to Sir Francis Drake and one of my mother's male ancestors was in the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Revolutionary War.

JP: Now what was your mother's maiden name?

AH: Her name was Moody. That was the family name.

JP: And her first name?

AH: Her name was Virginia. That happens to be the wife, my wife's name also. A second generation of Andy and Virginia.

JP: Now, it seems to me that you've done some genealogy on your family.

AH: I have. Just a little bit here and there.

JP: You're interested in that?

AH: I'm very much interested.

JP: Why is that?

AH: Well, I think these things kind of follow in generations. My relatives were involved in the military and stuff. One of them fought in the War of 1812. And I think, I had nothing to do with it, and I didn't find it out 'til later, but I think generation after generation are tending to volunteer and fight in the wars.

JP: So that there's a family history in regards to a civic responsibility to fight for one's country.

AH: That's the way I think about it.

JP: Did you think about that then, though, back in the 1930's?

AH: No, I did not. I also had a brother that was in the National Guard that went over to Europe during World War II.

JP: Well, tell me about your brothers and sisters.

AH: I had a brother died when he was four years old. He was the oldest one of the family. Then I have a brother who is still living. He's eighty-three years old. He was with the navy guided missile program from its inception. He was an engineer, had a college education. He lives in Ventura, California. He's retired now.

I had a brother, Roy Hoover, who was in the National Guard in 1940 and went into the regular service and went over to Europe. I don't know what he was in the actual fighting or not. He never did tell me.

And then I have a sister, Lorna, who was older than I was, and she is married to a man and they are in Alaska. I think they had six or seven kids. They're up there and the kids are up in Alaska, in Anchorage.

And beyond me is my sister Neva in Minnesota. She was married to a farmer back there. And he is long dead from lung cancer. He was a smoker. This older brother is dead too, Roy, from lung cancer.

Then I have a younger brother, Gerald, who was just at the age to go, at the end of World War II, to go into the navy, but the war ended. They discharged him and he got into the Air Force before it was the Air Force. It was the Air Corps. So they—it was in the army then. So then they transferred him from the army to the Air Force, so he has been in all three. He lives in Ronan, Montana.

JP: So how many total siblings?

AH: There were actually seven of us. There are five left, two have died. The oldest is eighty-three at this time.

JP: Well tell me a little about Winona, Minnesota in the 1930's.

AH: Minnesota, Winona, Minnesota in the 1930's, they had a factory; it was called Watkins Products. And it produced pepper and cinnamon and some drugs and some household stuff. And then they had the railroad and a

couple of small candy factories and stuff. And they had a beer brewery that brewed Bubs Beer, B-U-B-S, Bubs Beer. They put out one half-gallon bottles, which they called picnic bottles. They were about this big around and they sloped, straight-sloped to the top. Yeah.

JP: Was there a heavy German influence there?

AH: There were a lot of German, a lot of Polish. I think it was about three-fifths Polish, maybe a fifth of German and the rest were just mixed ancestry. And Winona, Minnesota sits between what had been an old riverbed—it was now a lake—and the main Mississippi River. See, it was at one time that was an island. Yeah.

JP: Very good. So you graduated from high school.

AH: I graduated from high school in 1939.

JP: We're going to stop there.

(Taping stops, then resumes)

JP: You had explained to me, or you were explaining to me a little bit about your hometown of Winona, Minnesota.

AH: Yeah.

JP: You had graduated from high school there. And what year did you graduate?

AH: I graduated in May 1939. There was absolutely no work you could get. I was trained for retail selling in the stores and they said, "We don't have any jobs for you."

JP: You were trained? Was this a training program from your high school?

AH: Well, we took, in high school we took special courses. I spent about two or three months in a hardware store and I dusted every article that was in the whole store sales area. I dusted every item in there. And I done such a good

job—a woman came in one day and wanted to buy a washing machine and all the clerks were at lunch. So I proceeded to take over and start selling her this washing machine. And so they told me, when I was through with my training, that they didn't have a job for me.

JP: Was this one of the new electric washing machines that they were...

AH: Yeah, yes. They weren't too many years along then.

JP: Yeah.

AH: In 1939.

JP: Right.

AH: So when I came back from the service, they offered me a job, but in the same hardware store. They told me when I came back, there'd be a job there for me. But I couldn't—it was only paying a couple dollars an hour and the clerks had been there twenty years only still getting the same pay.

JP: [*After*] high school, had you thought about joining the service then or was this...

AH: I decided to try it for the Civilian Conservation Corps.

JP: Oh, that's right.

AH: See.

JP: Now, what year did you join the CCC's? The Civilian Conservation Corps.

AH: It was in 1939, a month after I got out of high school.

JP: Yeah. Talk about that.

AH: Well, the CCC's, I went to Rochester, Minnesota for my induction and then they hauled us by bus to Lanesboro, Minnesota. And we lived in barracks and we wore khaki like the soldiers did. And we had army officers over us.

And then we had education officers and we had some of the cooks were trained in the army.

JP: Well, before you explain that, what, how did you hear, how did you know about the CCC's?

AH: I had this older brother who had been in the CCC's.

JP: Oh.

AH: And neighbor was in the CCC's. But they, somehow they were able to stay more than six months. See, we were only supposed to be allowed six months in there. So I went in as a—they called you privates, you know. And I think we got thirty dollars a month and we had to send twenty-one of it home or something. Okay, I started a little savings then. And my brother, older brother was working in a hotel as a clerk or something. And he got a chance to go to work for the government in Washington D.C., so he borrowed what money I had in my savings and went to Washington D.C., as a—and he worked for the Bureau of Standards. And he was, at the time he was sorting quartz crystals, that was his first job. He ended up as an engineer with the national—with the navy's guided missiles program.

JP: So you're in the CCC's now.

AH: Yeah.

JP: And you're in Minnesota.

AH: Yeah.

JP: What were you doing for the CCC's?

AH: We would go out in the morning in trucks and work on big work trucks. And we would go out to different farms that had contracts with the CCC's to do resodding and we would put in rocks, and then we would put sod between these rocks. And we would have plows to plow the sod on fields and stuff. And we'd roll it up in balls and take it out and lay it and stuff.

JP: These are private family farms that you're working on?

AH: Yeah, yes. It was for—there were a lot of washing of gullies and stuff in these farms. And we would clean 'em up and make 'em so there was no more erosion. It was erosion control. And then on some projects, they would actually build monuments and things for the farmers.

JP: Interesting.

AH: Yeah.

JP: So you spent six months in the CCC's...

AH: Yeah.

JP: ...working...

AH: I got out of the CCC's in December 1939. I went to work for a short time, putting up ice on the Mississippi River. They were cutting ice—it was the middle of wintertime, very cold. And I was working in an icehouse, filling 'em up with ice, solid ice. And they would take certain cakes of ice and haul 'em off to the corner and fill the cracks and stuff. And my job was, I was the one that would swing the ice cakes to the guys filling the cracks.

JP: Remember what company you worked for?

AH: I have a notion it was probably for one of these big meat companies. Yeah, I don't know what it was. I don't even know if they're in existence now.

JP: Oh, you were cutting ice right out of the Mississippi.

AH: They were cutting ice right out of the Mississippi. They had all tracks like that would bring the ice right to the icehouse and then they had a sloping thing that would take it down in the house.

JP: Now this was...

AH: And when it got in there, I had to grab it with a pair of tongs and swing it to 'em. When I started the first night, I just had shoes, I didn't have any way of—and I'd grab a 500-pound cake of ice, and it would swing me. So one of the old-timers said, "I'm going to fix you up. When I go home to lunch, I'm bringing you something to put on your feet."

He gave me a pair of things to put on my feet and I started swinging those cakes and I blocked the guys in the corner. They're the ones that had to do the work. So it worked out real well.

JP: Well, then you went on from there.

AH: Yeah. Then it was time to join the navy.

JP: Okay. So by this time though, had you been thinking about joining the navy?

AH: I had thought about it because one of the fellows from our hometown had come home on leave and my dad had heard about him and he talked to my dad and my dad passed that information on to me. And so I asked my mother and dad, I said, "What would you think about it if I joined the navy?"

And my dad says, "You know, when I was a kid, I wanted to join the navy."

I said, "Great, how about it? Would you sign for me?"

JP: Were you seventeen at the time?

AH: I was eighteen.

JP: Eighteen.

AH: I was eighteen then. I just eighteen. I was eighteen the sixth of January 1940 and I joined the thirteenth of February, 1940.

JP: So where'd you sign up?

AH: I signed up in Rochester, Minnesota and then I had to go to Minneapolis, Minnesota to take the exams and stuff. And then Rochester, Minnesota is forty-five miles from Winona. My father worked on the railroad again. He's back on the railroad after he got laid off and got back. And we had all moved to Winona. And so I used his pass on the railroad to go to Rochester. And then I was only there one day and I told them I want to sign up. And they sent me home and then they sent me a letter or something to go to Minneapolis. And I went to Minneapolis for the first examination and I had rode up with a guy from Winona that was going on a grain truck, hauling a load of grain up there. And I didn't realize that he was going to wait for me. So...

JP: So you had to find your own transportation...

AH: Yeah.

JP: ...from home up to Minneapolis.

AH: I had—no, they didn't give me anything. Yeah. So I got up to Minneapolis, took my examination and not knowing this guy was going to wait with his grain truck, I got out to the edge of Minneapolis and started hitchhiking. And I couldn't get a ride to Winona. But I did get a ride to Fairbault, Minnesota and south to Mankato—I think it was Mankato, Minnesota. So I took that and when I got down to Mankato—it was a bad move—and when I got down to Mankato, Minnesota, it was very cold. And I'm out on the highway and some old farmer came along and seen me there by my light jacket. And he said, "Why don't you come home with me and you can sleep in the barn?"

So I said, "Okay."

That'd be out of the cold, anyway. He said, "You can't get a ride out here at night. There ain't no traffic tonight."

JP: Now at this point though, you were traveling from Minneapolis back home?

AH: I'm supposed to be going back to Winona. So I went with the old guy. And he said, "Well, it's going to be too cold for you to sleep in that barn. You come in the house. I got a spare bedroom."

So in the morning, he said, "There's some oatmeal and stuff. You cook me some oatmeal and stuff and I'll go out in the barn and do the milking."

He didn't know I had been around barns too. And so I looked in his cupboard and cooked him some oatmeal. And then when I got through eating breakfast, he took me out to the highway and here comes along some of the guys I had been in the CCC's with.

So they said, "Come on down to Lanesboro with us. We got a bunk down there. You can sleep overnight and then you go back to Winona."

So he said, "One of your buddies is sick down there."

Well, the guy, I went down to Lanesboro and seen this buddy of mine that was in the hospital, I had been to CCC's with. The next day I caught a ride back to Winona on a bread truck and they'd been looking for me for three days. I guess I took a couple of days down there.

JP: Interesting. So you're back at home and now you're preparing to go off.

AH: I'm getting ready to go off and they've got a letter to come to Minneapolis again. And then they sent me by Pullman, at night, from Minneapolis to Great Lakes, Illinois for training.

JP: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

AH: And Great Lakes, Illinois, I was there for two and a half months, took all my training and stuff. Couldn't march worth a darn, so they put me in the bugle squad.

JP: Had you had any experience playing instruments before?

AH: When they'd have an inspection day, they said, "You put that bugle up to your lips as though you were playing, but don't you make a sound!"

(Laughter)

JP: So they put you in the bugle corps?

AH: Yeah. So then I graduated from training station. I got a week home of leave and I came back to the training station after I had a little leave, boot camp leave. And there were a lot of the best ships were signed up for. The carriers, everybody wanted the carriers. So I signed up for Hawaiian Detachment, and they put me as to go on the USS *Astoria*. And we were shipped all the way across country by rail to Long Beach, California. And when we got to Long Beach, California, some of the ships were there and some of our ships were over in Hawaii. So I was put aboard the USS *Utah* for two weeks and, as a transfer. And I stayed on there and stood duty and everything and worked on it. And my duty, most of it, was going out in a boat, patrolling the harbor at night. I think we patrolled for six or eight hours, 'cause it was kind of an alert thing about something there. We patrolled all around the harbor.

The USS *Utah* did not have any guns on it at the time. It was used as a target ship. They are guys here today that were on there.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: This would be off the record, but there was a guy on there was getting, being circumcised. This captain that was on her at the time wanted all his men to be circumcised. So this guy got circumcised and he got a little excited and ripped the stitches off. Left the guy in pretty bad shape. (Laughs)

JP: Yeah, maybe we can talk about this a little bit later.

AH: Yeah, better put that on the side!

JP: (Chuckles) Yeah! Well, so you're on the *Utah* and you're patrolling.

AH: Okay and then from there, there was the USS *Savannah* came into Long Beach and I went aboard the USS *Savannah* to go over to Hawaii. Well, we

went across there and they put us in the—I think they had us in bunks in the hangar deck, which is a huge, you know, just like a big room under the deck.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: And then they had doors like, and the ceiling would open up, and let ‘em pick the planes up. And in this hangar deck, it was really rough because that’s right near the stern of the ship and all of the screws and everything are pounding there. And these guys would get seasick and they had a big barrel in the middle of the room for these guys when they got seasick to go over and—and they’d line ‘em up in the morning and these guys would walk out, stand in line and then whenever they’d [*got done at the*] barrel, they’d go to the [*line. They were seasick.*]

Finally I got seasick. Well, you’re under the—the air was not very good down there.

JP: Yeah.

AH: So I went up from there to Lahaina Roads, Hawaii, on the USS *Savannah* and the *Savannah* was not going into Honolulu, or into Pearl Harbor, so I was transferred to USS *Neosho*, which is an oil tanker.

JP: Where were you transferred at this point?

AH: Lahaina Roads.

JP: At—okay.

AH: I’m at Lahaina Roads and we transferred from the *Savannah* to the *Neosho*.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: The *Neosho* hauled us into Hawaii. It’s all night time. They had a nice spot for us, bunk up on the deck. And next morning, we woke up, we’re at the sub base in Honolulu, in Pearl Harbor.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: Well, I woke up to the mynah birds singing in the trees and the palm trees around and I think that's the first time I'd ever seen palm trees. And then I went aboard the USS *Astoria*. And I was put in the Second Division on the *Astoria*, which that division worked on the quarterdeck and area there. And then they had the eight-inch guns. [*It*] was their gun station. And I was trained as a—first I was trained as a powder handler down towards the magazines, and then I was put on the eight-inch guns as a second loader. And what a second loader does is he picks a bag of powder out of the—I forget what they call 'em. It come up, where the powder comes up. By the bag, holds it above his head and when the gunner gives you the all clear, the gunner wipes his arm across the plug of the breach, that means that the breach is clear of fire and it's ready to fire. You throw your—you put your bag of powder down in the tray. There's a rammer came and pushed it in. The rammer has already pushed the shell in the front when he gives the clear, sign. That's after he gives the clear. I would handle the thing that put the rammer in.

JP: Well, how heavy are these bags of powder?

AH: These bags of powder, they trained you on forty-five pound rubber—they were kind of rubber thing. But a regular bag only weighed about forty pounds. So when you take a regular powder bag out of there, you had to go up flying up there like that. You had to hold those up there for a minute or two at a time, see.

Well, one day we were loading and we were using actual powder and the gunner give me the all clear signal and then he started to take another look. And when I threw the tray into the breach, I cupped him right side of the head. It drew blood, but it didn't—it kind of knocked him a little silly. But our officer in the back was watching. He had phones on and was watching. He had a window up where his part was. And he said, "Continue firing. Continue firing."

So we continued firing, his blood running down his head. He had taken a second look. When he wiped that across, that's the signal, throw that tray in, with the shell.

JP: So you were on the *Astoria* at this time?

AH: Yeah.

JP: At Pearl and you're training as a gunnery personnel.

AH: I was trained as—yeah.

JP: Okay.

AH: And then my workstation was just painting and stuff like that.

JP: Now, when was this? What time of the year was this? What year?

AH: Oh, I was on there from May of 1940 to November 29 of 1941.

JP: So you spent almost a year and a half on the *Astoria*.

AH: Yeah, I was there—it was over a year and a half.

JP: Stationed at Pearl.

AH: It was stationed at Pearl, but it would be out at sea about as much as four weeks at a time and then come back to Pearl and refurbish and stuff.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: And then when we went back to the States in 1941, I went on leave for thirty days and when I came back, they put me in a new division. It was called the Fifth Division. And we had anti-aircraft guns. At the time, I think they were called pom-poms and we would train on those. And I was put as leading—now, this, I've made seaman first class, I think in September of 1940. I'm already a first class seaman. The following May, I'm put on as leading seaman in the Fifth Division on the USS *Astoria*, because they had no petty officers. I was second in charge of deck division, no petty officers. Had no rating. I was seaman first.

JP: So now, heading toward Pearl though, you're transferring once again.

AH: Yeah, okay.

JP: So morning of the attack, you had been transferred.

AH: Yeah, okay.

JP: You were going to your new assignment.

AH: Yeah.

JP: Let's stop there and we'll continue on it with a new tape. We've got to put a new tape into the camera. So let's pick it up—you get your orders, now you're transferring to another ship. And let's pick it up from there when we put the new tape in.

AH: Okay.

JP: All right.

END OF TAPE #22

TAPE #23

JP: So, at this particular point, you had served on the *Astoria* for about a year and a half, it's getting to late 1941 now.

AH: Yeah.

JP: And now you've decided, apparently you've had the choice to transfer. Tell me about having a choice and what happened.

AH: Well, I didn't know it 'til later, but the day I transferred, they told me that I was scheduled to be the first person to go to officers' training school off of the *Astoria*, 'cause I'd done such a good job on there.

JP: Excellent. Mm-hm.

AH: So I'm at the receiving station. It was the 29th of November when I transferred. The morning of December 7, everything was normal for the six days, seven.

JP: Well, let's talk about the receiving station first.

AH: Okay.

JP: You had decided to transfer and you're going to officers' training school.

AH: Yeah.

JP: And now you're—when did you get to the receiving station? Explain to me what a receiving station is at Pearl and where it's located.

AH: The receiving station was a large barracks where they kept men who were being transferred from one ship to another, or one station to another. And it was located just inside the main gate of the navy yard at Pearl Harbor, between Merry Point and the main gate.

JP: Excellent. When did you arrive there?

AH: I arrived there 29th of November.

JP: Okay. So now you've got—you were about a week now or so...

AH: Yeah.

JP: ...before the attack.

AH: All I do is eat, sleep and...

JP: (Chuckles)

AH: So the day of the attack came and I had eaten breakfast. I was an early riser.

JP: Okay.

AH: And all of a sudden we heard all this noise of planes. So I went over to the door and I witnessed these torpedo bombers coming through with their torpedoes against the battleships. And I witnessed one torpedo plane, which dropped its torpedo as it was machine gunning, and there was a motor launch out in the middle of the harbor.

JP: Well, give me, first of all, explain to me what's the visual, what are you looking at, at this particular moment? What can you see, as far as Battleship Row? Give me a relative position.

AH: I'm looking across water—there's an area there, you can look right across the water and you're looking at the whole line of battleships.

JP: Okay.

AH: It's—the bay widens out somewhat there. This guy's machine-gunning, and I can look at the planes as they go over. They're only a couple hundred feet off the ground. I could see the pilot and I could see the red ball on the side. I could see the torpedo underneath the plane. (Coughs) I don't have any kind of weapon. I don't even have a rock. I even looked around for rocks to throw at 'em.

So this is—there's a plane getting ready to drop his torpedo and he's machine-gunning, and there's a motor launch out there, forty-foot motor launch. And I see two guys in the motor launch, one dives to the starboard side, one dives to the port side. The guy that dove to the starboard side died at that point. The guy that dove off the port side, he was, from the *Pennsylvania*, he swam ashore and went back aboard the *Pennsylvania*.

JP: And you're watching all of this happen.

AH: I'm watching all this. And I watched the *Arizona* blow up. I watched the *Arizona* blow up.

JP: Was your position at the receiving station under any fire at that time?

AH: There was no, there were no bullets or anything coming in through there. It just seemed like they were just after everything else.

JP: So you're sitting in relative security, watching this whole thing from a distance.

AH: It was amazing. All the noise and everything going on and the explosions and—'cause every time a plane would go over there, you would see explosions, you know.

JP: What did you think? What was your first impression? Did you want to do something? Did you want to go somewhere?

AH: I wanted to do something, but I had nothing to do it with.

JP: Right. How many days from that particular point, from the seventh, you were to transfer, how many more days were you going to stay there at the receiving station?

AH: I was only supposed to stay there probably until the tenth.

JP: That's it. So three more days, you're...

AH: Three more days.

JP: ...you're transferred.

AH: I would've been transferred.

JP: Was that the average length of someone that was staying there at the transfer station?

AH: Yes.

JP: Receiving station?

AH: On some occasions, their ship would be out to sea and they couldn't transfer that way. So they would, their ship that they transferred to would come back in and they might be there three or four weeks.

JP: Is this receiving station a large facility?

AH: It was a facility that I think held about 500 beds. There was about 200 or 250 on each floor. They had a nice dining area and a, you know where they prepared the food and stuff. And then they, in part of the dining area was split and it was recreation area.

JP: Now, how many people, how many soldiers—I mean, sorry, servicemen, were there at that morning?

AH: It was quite full. It was probably 300 or 400 at the time.

JP: And these men were from all different sorts of ships.

AH: All different sorts.

JP: All different experiences they had.

AH: Some of the ships would send their crews there when they were in there for overhaul, their crews would not stay on the ships. The destroyers especially.

JP: So many of the men that were staying there were actually, were serving on ships that were at Battleship Row.

AH: Yeah. Not on that Battleship Row. On the ones the destroyers and stuff were in for overhaul. They had a—Pearl Harbor at that time had a huge repair facility, which the Japanese didn't touch. And it was ready for repairing the ships that did get hit.

JP: Right.

AH: That was one of the best things that happened, that they didn't touch the repair facilities and they didn't bomb the oil storage tanks.

JP: Right.

AH: They never touched an oil storage tank and they're full of...

JP: So now you're standing, you're watching this happen.

AH: I'm watching it happen.

JP: You're picking up rocks to throw rocks at the planes.

AH: I couldn't find any. I went looking for the armory. I knew they must have an armory there somewhere. Well, I got to the armory was—it was on the second floor—and somebody had broke the door and there was nothing in there. It was...

(Taping stops, then resumes)

JP: Okay. So now, you're at the receiving station and the attack is now under way, it's in progress.

AH: Yeah.

JP: And you find some pals and you get yourself a flatbed truck and you head someplace.

AH: We headed through the navy yard and I didn't even, I had no idea where the driver was going, but he took us to right beside this dry dock where the USS *Pennsylvania* was sitting, was in, and the USS *Cassin* and *Downes* were—I don't know if they were ahead of it. I think they were ahead of it. And the destroyers were set side-by-side in there and then the *Pennsylvania* was behind it.

JP: Right.

AH: And so I went up the gangway on the *Pennsylvania*, across the deck. There wasn't any officers to stop you or to say anything to us. The gun crew on the anti-aircraft across the deck—I think there were two. They were like this on the deck. They told us, "Get below, here they come again!"

JP: Now, what ship is this now?

AH: This was on the USS *Pennsylvania*.

JP: This is on the *Pennsylvania*.

AH: There was a doorway right behind the gun crew. I went through this doorway. It was in marine quarters. There was a marine standing in there, knew what he was doing, but he said, "Go through that door."

So I went through the door and they closed the door behind me and dogged it down.

JP: Dogged it down?

AH: I guess.

JP: Well, explain that to me. What does that mean?

AH: That means you close it and you put a thing so it can't come open again unless it's open. There's a handle on each side of the door.

JP: Okay.

AH: Then I just got down to the next deck. There was a ladder there to go down.

JP: Now, how familiar are you with the *Pennsylvania*? Had you ever...

AH: I had never been on.

JP: ...on the *Pennsylvania*.

AH: I had never been on.

JP: So do you know where you are in the ship at this time?

AH: I have no idea where I'm at. Just that I'm in the Marine quarters, I knew that.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: 'Cause there's a Marine there and I could see the Marines, one or two back in the—I could see the bunks.

JP: Okay.

AH: I figured, oh, it's gotta be a Marine quarter. He was getting ready to go on watch, shining a shoe. When I got down this next deck, I turned around to help—there was a belt with ammunition coming through. This canister ammunition, it's high, about that high. It's got the whole shell and everything inside there.

JP: Now, is this for the turrets or this for...

AH: This is for the anti-aircraft guns.

JP: Okay.

AH: Just then there was a loud explosion. The lights went off and everything shook. The bomb had hit in that room I had come through. It hit right where that marine was standing. It killed the guys I had come aboard with and a total of thirty-five people, including most of the gun crew on the anti-aircraft gun outside. There was...

JP: What section of the ship is the...

AH: It was in mid-ship's.

JP: Okay, mid-ship.

AH: Mid-ship's, yeah. About that time, a chief came through. I think there was some battle lights came on. It was just a dim light. And a chief came through and he said, "I need some men to clip fifty caliber ammunition."

I thought, gee, there's a job I can do.

JP: Yeah.

AH: So I went with the chief and he put me in a small room, and I had a metal thing with a handle on it. I would put it like that, put some belting in, push—and shells—push it and it would push the shells into the belts. And there were men carrying the fifty-caliber ammunition from my clipping it up to the guns.

I met a man, or met many years later who was actually carrying that ammunition up.

JP: Remember his name?

AH: His name was Nate Lieberman. He was here, lived here in Las Vegas. That's where we met, in the Pearl Harbor Survivors.

JP: Mm-hm.

AH: There were others there too. I knew another one in Montana who had been in that line of carrying the belts. We would make these belts six feet long, approximately six feet long, of each of the shells would be just in all laid together. And we would throw, I would—I didn't have any instructions how to load 'em, just they threw, kept carrying ball ammunition, which doesn't have any tracer. And tracer ammunition, I would grab a handful of tracers, put 'em in a thing and then I would handful of ball and throw 'em and they were belted, move it on in. Do it again.

JP: How long did you do this for?

AH: I done that, I don't know exactly how many hours. It was probably three or four hours. When I was through, the chief told me that's enough. I looked around and the room was filled with empty cartons, like this.

JP: Empty cartons of?

AH: Of ammunition cartons.

JP: Shells?

AH: Empty, yeah.

JP: Empty shells.

AH: And I asked the chief, “How many did we clip?”

He said, “You clipped 10,000 rounds.” So then the chief said, “You better go up topside and help clean up.”

I went up topside and there wasn’t anything there except I picked up a couple pieces of the bomb out of the door I had gone through earlier and I looked in the hole where the bomb had hit. It stopped at that deck and blew up, blew completely up. And there was a hole probably three feet across, tapered in a cone shape, down, and steel had gone down that far without breaking.

JP: Now, you’re on the deck of the *Pennsylvania*?

AH: Yeah.

JP: And you’re looking around you.

AH: Yeah.

JP: What do you see?

AH: That there was just a lot of damage to that particular room. And that they’ve cleaned all the bodies up and everything. And I go out on the deck and there’s an officer of the day out there and there was a quartermaster out there. And I saw—so I go up to the quarter, the officer of the day and I told him, “Sir,” I saluted him and I said, “Sir, I am not a member of the crew here. I came aboard to help out during the attack. I have to go back to the receiving station.”

He said, "We'll take care of that later. Go down to the dock and help passing ammunition down there."

So I went down to the dock and they had so many people there you had to practically squeeze to get in between passing this ammunition. So I seen a—this is ten or eleven o'clock and I'd spent all morning, I'd been there, so I said, "Well, I got to go to the head."

So I seen a bathroom up on above. It's kind of a little slope to the area. I went up there and went around and in the door and used the bathroom. And then I headed back to the navy yard to the receiving station. When I got back to the receiving station, there was a man with a clipboard out there, mustering some people, so I stopped there and seen him. And he said, he got through, and I asked him if, I said, "You didn't call my name."

And he said, "What's your name?"

And I told him. He said, "No, this is guys going to the different ships, emergency transfers to the different ships. You have to go up to the second floor to the office and see them because you've been listed as missing in action."

So I went up to the second floor and told them where I had been. And they accepted it as—that was okay. And I went down to my bunk, where my bunk was and my blankets—I didn't have any blankets. And there, you need, at night, you need about one blanket or two blankets, you know, that's all you have over you. So I went around looking if I could find where they had went, where they had gone, and I found somebody had three blankets and I took one of his. That's all I had. They had used my blankets to wrap around men coming off the USS *Oklahoma* and were covered with oil, and they brought 'em to the receiving station to give 'em showers and put these blankets around 'em until they could get their showers, see, 'cause they were full of oil.

And so then this is the afternoon of Pearl Harbor. So that evening, I finally got something to eat and got everything straightened around. That evening, they asked me to go up on the top of the building to man machine guns up there. Well, as soon as I stuck my head out of that hatch they had up there,

with the white clothes on, they immediately yelled at me, “Get off this with the white clothes!”

So I went down below and looked for somebody to find me some dungarees so I could go back up there. And then I—when I went up there, they didn’t need me any more. They were—but there was a lot of shooting going on that night, all over the harbor and all over the area around there, machine guns and anti-aircraft guns and stuff. And that’s about all I remember for December 7.

JP: Well, in that case, we’ll finish the interview there.

AH: Okay, okay.

JP: And I thank you very much for your story, Andrew.

AH: Okay. Yeah. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW