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Interview with

HUGH E. LAW

May 15, 1982

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Interviewer: R. E. Marcello

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(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Hugh E. Law

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Date: May 15, 1982

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Hugh Law for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 15, 1982, in Austin, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Law in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of the Detach Finance Department, Schofield Barracks, during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941.

Mr. Law, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education-- things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Law: I was born in Corvallis, Oregon, on 3 September 1917, and I attended school in the Oregon public schools at Milwkie. I graduated from high school in 1935. I attended Pacific University and the University of Oregon for about two years. I got an appointment as a flying cadet in 1939, washed out at Allen Hancock College of Aeronautics in Santa Maria, California. I didn't want to go back home, so I bummed around the country for about three months, and when I sobered up, I was in the

Army and on my way to Hawaii,

Marcello: Do you recall where you joined the Army and why you decided to join?

Law: Yes, (Chuckle) I was bumming around the country, and I ran out of money, and I didn't want to go home. I called it reenlistment since I'd been in for about two months as a cadet, and I reenlisted at Fort Bliss, Texas,

Marcello: When did this occur?

Law: About March or April--I don't remember just when--March or April of 1940. I was, as senior man, was given control of taking a whole bunch of us recruits from Fort Bliss to Fort McDowell in San Francisco Bay. I was the senior man; I had two months' service,

Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Army as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?

Law: I just happened to be at an Army recruiter at Miami, Arizona, when I run out of money. I had a hangover and didn't have any more booze to ease it with--no more money to get any booze with. So I joined the Army--again--and I ended up at Fort McDowell, at which time I,, well, my folks came down to see me off when I went to Hawaii. That was in about March or April of 1940.

Marcello: At that particular time, how closely were you keeping abreast with world events and current affairs and that sort of thing?

Law: Probably as much as the professor of current events is at North Texas today,

Marcello: When you thought of the country getting into war at that time,

were your eyes turned more toward Europe or Asia?

Law: That's the reason I got into the Army. My mother's uncle was the ambassador...no, the equivalency of the Secretary of State to the Emperor of Chosen when my mother was a girl, and he told us that we would eventually fight the "yellow menace." is what he called it. I was brought up through my entire youth knowing that we would eventually fight the "yellow peril," is what they called it.

Marcello: Okay, describe what happens when you get to Schofield Barracks. I assume that you undergo recruit training there.

Law: Being prior service, it wasn't exactly like a training program would have been. I managed to get thirty-one years in the military without taking boot camp. I was the butt of all the dirty jokes and stuff that went at that time. The military at Schofield at that time looked like escapees from the hobo jungles along the railroad where I'd bummed; it wasn't exactly the choicest group of personnel that you'd run into.

Marcello: Can you expand upon that further? For example, you mentioned that you were the butt of jokes.

Law: Yes, I think all of the infantry groups at Schofield that went in as individuals at that time were the butt of the ones that we called "short-timer." They just had you do push-ups--all kind of crazy things--send you to the supply room to get a sky hook or whatever,

I'd been there about two weeks when, over at the gym on

Saturday, me and another kid that were recruits went down and looked at the theater to see what was going on, and then over to the gym. Sergeant...I can't think of the name now--an Irish name...he was working out. He had tried to get the other kids around there to box with him and they wouldn't, so I told him that I'd spar with him. I took my shoes off, my shirt off, and was just barefooted, with a pair of Army britches on. We boxed for about thirty minutes, and he didn't touch me. Reilly, I think his name was--Sergeant Reilly. He was a buck sergeant. After thirty minutes...boxed professionally for four years, so he couldn't touch me. From that time on, there was no more...I didn't have to go after the dishes in the mess hall or anything like that. They left me alone.

Then I got my transfer from Schofield down to...that was in the 35th Infantry. I transferred down to the 9th Signal Company...no, not at that time. I was put on the D,E,M,L., Detached Enlisted Men's List, and got my job in the headquarters for the Pacific Command, which was headquartered at Fort Shafter. I worked for Colonel...I forget. Anyway, when the war started, he went back to the Pentagon and became a general. He was a full colonel there in Hawaii. I made PFC there, and shortly thereafter, I transferred into the 9th Signal Service because I made a deal with Captain Warren E. Davis that I would take the Night Message Center slot in the...of course, you didn't carry your rate with you at that time, so when I transferred, I got busted from PFC back down to

private again,

Marcello: You had transferred in to the Night Signal Service?

Law: Night Signal Service Company at Fort Shafter. I took over and worked steady nights, then, from that time on and attended the University of Hawaii in the daytime. As far as I know, I was the only GI attending the university as a regular student in Hawaii at that time. As a matter of fact, I turned down getting promoted to corporal twice and to sergeant once so that I could stay on at night and attend the university,

Marcello: Awhile ago, you seemed to indicate that when you were up at Schofield originally, you were seeing the dregs of society.

Law: That's pretty much true in the line companies.

Marcello: What made you say that? In other words, what evidence was there there to give you that impression?

Law: Well, I think they took a great deal of pleasure picking on anyone that they found out had had some college or something of that nature. Until I got a chance to work out with sergeant,..

Marcello: Reilly?

Law: Reilly, I'm not sure that's his name, but until I got a chance to work out with him, why, they were giving me a rough time. After that, there was no problem whatsoever. If you remember, Schofield Barracks at that time was the center for athletics, whatever was going on--football, basketball, or whatever, and boxing. It was known as the "Pineapple Army." I found out later that Reilly was the middleweight champion and was homesteading at Schofield on the

basis of his sergeant's stripes, and all he had to do to keep them was to box. I guess he got shook up when I could handle him without him...and so I think he was glad to see me transfer down to headquarters at Fort Shafter,

Marcello: Athletics did play a very, very important role in the life of that pre-Pearl Harbor Army at Schofield Barracks, did it not?

Law: It certainly did, yes. But that's the only time I put gloves on, was that one time.

Marcello: I gather that in all the major sports, they would actually go out and recruit people to come to Schofield,

Law: I think that they offered them stripes if they found a guy that was pretty good someplace in some other unit that didn't have sports. This was my understanding. It's just my understanding that they did that.

Marcello: What particular courses were you taking at the University of Hawaii?

Law: Accounting and...I don't know...a couple of business administration courses. I don't remember what they were right now. It was possibly something like Introduction to Business or something of that nature, and I think one of them was in the area of economics. I'm not too sure what the title was. I'd have to go back and get my transcripts.

Marcello: What did you do when you had liberty, other than going to school at the University of Hawaii? How did your liberty routine work?

Law: The only time I was at the Army base was when I was on duty at

night, I spent most of the day down on the beach swimming, and I did a lot of hiking around the mountains and that kind of thing. I had nothing to do with the military at that time. Later, O'Quinn, who was a corporal there...actually, he was my boss in the message center. He was a corporal. He and I bought an outrigger, and I used it on weekends and stuff and when I wasn't in class and that type of thing. I used it more than he did. We left it down at Fort DeRussey. As far as I know, when I came back to the States, it was still there.

Marcello: What kind of work did you do in the signal center?

Law: I was night message center clerk.

Marcello: And exactly what kind of work did that entail?

Law: I'd go to work at about eleven-thirty and clear up all the incoming messages and make sure that they were into the signal shack, where the code clerks would send them out. If any incoming messages came in, I had to contact whoever they were for, if it was an emergency, or just file it through if it was routine. Then after about two o'clock, why, I was done, so I slept on top of the desk. I'd take my pillow up in my fatigues and would sleep there after about two o'clock. You had to get rid of all of the... burn the stuff that they didn't want out. One night I was asleep there, and General Short came in. "Smitty" was on duty in the radio shack, which was just through the next door, and "Smitty" asked him if he should wake me up. "Smitty" asked General Short if he should. He said, "No, let the boy sleep." That's the reason

I got the job nights, is because they'd had trouble with the guys not answering the phone, and the phone in the five or six months I was there never rang the second time. I always answered it right away. Captain Davis got some pretty good recommendations because they'd been having trouble with it before.

Marcello: How much contact, direct or indirect, did you have with General Short here at Fort Shafter?

Law: None, other than on the phone, just calling him and that type of thing.

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to deteriorate...

Law: I transferred up to Finance then because I couldn't continue at the University of Hawaii, and I had to drop out there. I didn't like the job, and I told the first sergeant what he could do with it, and I got busted again, and I transferred.

A buddy of mine, Lieutenant Klinger, at the University of Oregon had come over and was in the headquarters of the Hawaiian Department. He was going into Finance, and he knew Colonel Baldwin, and he knew Colonel Baldwin needed some clerks. He told me that I could do a lot better than staying in the Signal Corps if I'd go in Finance. So he he picked it up for me. I was on the track team at the University of Oregon, and Klinger played basketball there. We ran into each other around the gym a little bit and knew each other, but...and then when he ran into me as a PFC, why, I guess he tried to help me out and got me into Finance. So I moved up to

Schofield again, in Finance,

Marcello: Describe what Schofield Barracks looked like at that time from a physical standpoint. Now I know, of course, it was the largest Army post in the world. Describe what those quadrangles were like.

Law: Three stories high and four-sided. The rooms all,,the doorways all faced into the quadrangle. In the center of the quadrangle was a lawn, where you broke out at 5:45 in the morning for calisthenics, which in Finance we didn't,,in the infantry we did. Finance showed up at the office and went to work, and when we got through, whether it was three o'clock in the morning or whenever, we went back and fell in. When they started,,that's why they needed clerks. When they started sending all the units over to Schofield, they expanded very rapidly, and they had no finance clerks, and it was pretty difficult to get them. So one of the buddies that I had, K. W. Speking, is not the...he came after I did, and he's now the head of the Game and Fish Division in the State of Alaska. He was a congressman there,,but he was one of the fellows in our company. He was a state representative from near Anchorage, down on the peninsula, Kenai Peninsula, the peninsula that goes on down to Homer. He took my job when I left; I was chief enlisted clerk. I went back in the States in 1942 as a cadet and got my commission and spent the rest of the war flying,

Marcello: What kind of work were you doing there in the Detachment Finance

Department at Schofield?

Law: I was an enlisted pay clerk at the time of the attack, and Sergeant Howard Ledgerwood, I believe, was...anyway, he was above me and was an enlisted pay clerk, also. Incidentally, he and I are the ones that fired the first shots of World War II,

Marcello: We'll probably talk about that a little bit later on, so if I don't bring up the subject, please interject it where it belongs. Why was it that you were no longer able to attend the University of Hawaii?

Law: The conditions,, you could see it on the incoming messages and things that we were practically at war. One of the rumors was that the Japanese had landed on the northern part of Luzon and-- I'm sure you've heard this from some of the others--that they had kind of like a raid where they went in a day or two and then pulled out, I guess it was something like the British are doing in the Falklands today. Anyway, I never saw it in the newspapers, but that was rife around the organization there, that they had landed. We were put on alert immediately. The possibility of moving out was a rumor, that we might be heading for the Philippines.

Marcello: This was the question I was going to ask you awhile ago, when you were still assigned to Fort Shafter. During the closing days of your tenure there, could you see anything from the incoming messages to indicate that war between the United States and Japan was likely to occur?

Law: I think I'd written my folks before I'd left Shafter that we depended on the Navy if...from what I saw there, if the Navy couldn't take care of the Japanese, that we'd probably be over-run. Our Army operations was not up to repelling a Japanese invasion. I don't know whatever happened to that--my parents are dead now--but that letter that I wrote them at that time, I think, gave the sentiment that I had. It "warn't" but a few days (chuckle), but it staggered on for two or three months, I guess, something like that.

Marcello: In your conversations with your friends, did the subject of a possible Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor ever come up?

Law: Not as such. We were expecting the Japanese to move into the Philippines. That's, I think, the feeling that we had.

Marcello: So there was really no talk at all about the probability of a Japanese attack on the Hawaiian Islands,

Law: No. I think that we were pretty sure that the Navy would be able to...that we had the Navy out there to protect us.

Marcello: At that time, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind? Again, this is before the war.

Law: I had a friend during the last two or three months before the war--Asami Doi--who was a Japanese artist. This lady friend that befriended me--I became part of her family, I guess--she tried to get me married off to her niece for about three years. But I got to know her fairly well. She was an artist. As a matter of fact,

she's the president of the Honolulu Academy of Arts. She was from Portland, Oregon, and knew a lot of people in Portland that I did. Because of the relationships with soldiers at that time, I kept my tuxedo down at her place and spent the weekends with her and her daughter. Her daughter, I guess, was about ten, and she was about forty at the time. I seemed part of the family, I guess--pulled ticks off the dog and everything. Anyway, her niece, I was engaged to her for a while. I spent weekends down there, and she introduced me to all of her friends as "Mr. Law, who works for the government." Being a GI in Hawaii in 1941 wasn't the social status that you wanted to brag about (laughter).

Marcello: And this Asami Doi was of Japanese ancestry?

Law: Yes. I got to know him quite well. Eventually, after December 7, about the next week, why, he volunteered his services. He was working for the Army, driving a truck, a dump truck. They weren't discriminating against the Japanese in Hawaii like they were in the States--stateside.

Marcello: In general, as you look back upon life in that pre-Pearl Harbor Army, how would you describe the morale?

Law: Spit-and-polish. If the Army had wanted you to have a wife, they'd have issued you one. You don't do anything until you're told to do it. The officership's acceptance of the mental ability of the enlisted personnel was "zilch." It was like in, I suppose, a prison today, where you've got the warden and his assistants that are pushing and manipulating the prisoners around. That's

the way you get the feel about it--the enlisted people at that time. I think there's probably a good cause for it because most of the officers at that time were college people and well-educated, and most of the Army personnel...I'm speaking back in the infantry group. You get into Headquarters, and we had some pretty sharp people in Finance. We had some pretty sharp people in Headquarters. The MP's were the dregs. The MP's didn't have enough brains to pour water out of a boot. That's pretty much the way I felt about it. That's why I disassociated myself with them as much as possible.

Marcello: Let's talk about that weekend of December 7, 1941.

Law: That was the first weekend that I hadn't been downtown, staying with the Das family for, I guess, two or three months.

Marcello: Now this was the Das family?

Law: Yes, Mrs. Das, who was the president of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, was a real good artist. I've got some of her woodblocks at home now.

Marcello: Okay, why was it that you didn't go down that particular weekend?

Law: I think she had some kind of a meeting or something that she was going to, and I guess I could have gone, but she was going to be away, and,,,

Marcello: What did you do that Saturday?

Law: On Saturday night we went to a church. There were three of the members of the Finance Detachment there--Ward McNair, Corin Davis, and one other. Corin Davis and Ward McNair were homosexuals, but

They were,,McNair was a pretty good pianist. We walked over, and he was playing the organ in a church in Wahiawa. Then afterwards, I sent back to the barracks and went over to the branch exchange and had a couple of beers and went home and went to bed, I guess.

Marcello: You mention that these two men were homosexuals, What was the Army policy toward homosexuality at that time?

Law: (Chuckle) It was a "no-no," You didn't let anybody know that you were,

Marcello: What do you think would have happened to those guys, had it been known that they were homosexuals?

Law: I think they would have been kicked out of the Army--I believe.

Marcello: What do you think would have been the attitude of their fellow soldiers toward them, had they known?

Law: I don't think there was any,,everybody in the company knew it.

Marcello: Oh, I see. They did.

Law: Everybody in the finance office knew it.

Marcello: Okay, on a typical Saturday night, what would be the condition of the ordinary soldier who came back to Schofield after having been, let's say, into Honolulu or Wahiawa or whatever.

Law: Well, Wahiawawasn't that great, so most of the guys that wanted to get "bombed" went down to Honolulu. There were a number of whorehouses around, and they went down,,after payday, anyway--the weekend after payday, like the 7th was,,yes, it was about two weeks after payday.

You got paid the first few days for the prior month, and they

got paid with cash then. You didn't have checks or anything like they have now. The pay officer from the unit would take the money over to the unit, where it was paid out, and then he'd sign for it when he got there, and he'd come on back. Then they paid it out, and they'd have a card game in the Schofield Barracks area. In the headquarters unit and stuff like that, there was gambling, but not like there was in the line companies. I don't think there were very many of the kids in our unit that would get rid of all their money on payday night. A few of them in the infantry units would collect what all of them had gotten and go downtown and have a hell of a time.

Marcello: Prostitution was legal at that time in Honolulu, wasn't it, at least in certain places?

Law: It was open. Whether it was legal or not is a horse of a different color. I don't know. The girls that were prostitutes, that could come over, came over on Army transports, and they were inspected by Army medics. As soon as the war started, right after December 7, the only ones that they'd let into those whorehouses were military.

Another one of the homos that I ran into there--because of the two guys that I knew, I ran into him--"Cappy" Ricks, was a sergeant in a medical company. He was from Fort Shafter and was stationed at a medical center right there where the MP's would pick the guys up as they came out of whorehouses. They'd take them around and give them a probe right there. The

reason I knew him was that I met him through these two guys in our company, and he was also a musician. That's why they knew each other. He was from Duke University. His daddy was a medical doctor, and he dropped out of college and played professional music with the big bands of that time, then got in the Army.

Marcello: Awhile ago, we were talking about gambling, and I gather that gambling was a rather frequent pastime, like you mentioned, in the line companies.

Law: It was. The supply sergeant would usually run a game in his supply room on payday night, and in the day the day room orderly would usually run a game in the day room. I'm not about to let anybody have my money; I never gambled. But I knew that they were gambling there.

Marcello: Okay, so getting back to that weekend of December 7, you mentioned that you went to bed at a fairly reasonable hours, after having been over to Wahiawa for a while and then going to the PX and having a couple of beers. This brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941, and at this stage, what I want you to do is give me a detailed account of events as they occurred from the time you got up until all hell broke loose, and then beyond there.

Law: I guess about six-thirty or seven o'clock, I got up. Ledgerwood was there--Sergeant Ledgerwood, whom I mentioned before. He was the enlisted pay sergeant. We went over to the mess hall and had break-

fast. After breakfast, about 7:52 or 7:53, about seven or eight minutes before eight o'clock, we walked out on the compound area and were standing out on the sidewalk there, just out of the,, we ate at the MP mess hall because we were attached to them. This was the first time that I had eaten there, I guess, in three months.

Marcello: Your favorite people.

Law: (Chuckle) Yes, my favorite people. At that time, I didn't know they were going to be, but an hour later, I did. We were standing there, and I think it was either Staff or Tech Sergeant Lawford from Headquarters Company...he was Colonel Sandman's clerk. He was one of the clerks for Colonel Sandman, whose office was right down the porch from the finance offices. Colonel Baldwin, back of his desk when he sat there, there was a wall, and Colonel Sandman sat on the other side of that wall with his desk, and their backs were maybe three feet apart, something like that. This is where Lawford was.

He was standing there, and we were "chewing the fat," and here came some planes. Ledgerwood and I looked up and never thought anything about it, and Lawford...there hadn't been any shots fired or anything yet. Lawford looked up at them, put his hands on his hips, and said, "Well this is the end of the Japanese Empire!" I think that that should be in history someplace because that was before any shots had been fired, before any bombs had been dropped, or anything. He just looked up and said, "Well, that's the end of

the Japanese Empire!"

Marcello: Meaning that they had now started the war, and they were going to be defeated, and that would be the end of the empire?

Law: That is absolutely right.

Marcello: Did he say this in a rather matter-of-fact or calm way?

Law: Just very cool, with his hands on his hips. He just looked up and was watching them as this flight went over. There was, I guess, three, four, five planes that went over. I just figured they were Navy planes. Ledgerwood and I figured they were Navy planes.

But after he said that--and this was, I guess, about five minutes before eight o'clock--why, Howard and I took off. We went over about fifty feet farther, the same place, down to the MP supply room. I don't remember what we used, a boot or what, but we knocked the padlock off the door and went in. The planes were starting to strafe now, and you could hear the bombs hitting over at Wheeler Field, which was, oh, 150 yards, 200 yards from where we were, something like that. Just the housing was in between us. I broke open the rifle rack, and Howard broke open the ammunition chest.

Marcello: What did you use to break it open?

Law: I don't remember,,.just something we picked up in there. We knocked the padlocks off. He started throwing the bandoleers of ammunition out. I got the rifles, and we threw them out to the MP's that were standing out there like a bunch of dummies. Then

we loaded up, I guess it was probably about five minutes after eight o'clock at that time, when we got all of the rifles and the stuff out. Howard and I loaded our rifles up, and as far as I know, we were the only ones.

I guess it was probably five minutes after eight o'clock when a plane came over, and I shot at it, just as the major, the assistant provost marshal, drove up. He must have been the O.D. because he was in uniform, which is, . . . you never saw an officer in uniform on Sunday. So he had to be the officer-of-the-day,

When the major came up, why, he saw me firing the gun, and he said, "Arrest those men!" and pointed at us. All the MP's, of course, immediately grabbed us. There was about fifty of them around there. He came over, and I said, "Let's start shooting!" He still, I guess, didn't know what the hell was going on. I started crying, I guess, and pleaded for him to let me start shooting. About that time, another plane came over and strafed the area,

His staff car had driven off. He came up in a staff car there, two, three minutes after eight o'clock . . . three, four minutes after eight o'clock, something like that. His staff car drove off with the driver, and he, as I recall, pulled up the manhole cover and dropped in the sewer out toward the road, where the roadway went out of the quadrangle. I don't remember seeing him anymore.

These MP's scattered, and so they let us go. So my arrest was over. Howard and I had been arrested. We grabbed the rifles off the ground where they were, one apiece, and we ran out in front of the finance office on the third deck.

Marcello: Were you using the Springfield rifles?

Law: The '03 rifle. We ran up on the deck and shot at a couple more planes when they went by. If that MP officer had had any brains, he would have ordered the MP's to pick up the rifles and the ammunition that we had start firing. I don't know what ever happened to them, but I never had much use for MP's after that.

Marcello: So how long did you continue to fire at those Japanese planes?

Law: Well, they didn't stay at Wheeler Field very long. That was over in a short time. I guess by eight-thirty, things had quieted down where we were.

During the time when we were under arrest, the engineers dragged a water-cooled, .30-caliber machine gun on top of the barracks. I think, if you saw the film From Here to Eternity, you saw them. It was made in the same quadrangle where we were. Jones, I think, is the name of the guy that wrote that. But they got it all wrong because they did not have an air-cooled machine gun. The one they dragged up to the top of that was one of the old water-cooled with a jacket on it. They fired one burst off and froze the gun because it couldn't cool. So they got one burst off and probably didn't hit anymore than... I've used a .22 to hunt pigeons with when they're flying, and seagulls and crows, so I had

to hit that plane. He was too damn close to miss. But with a .30 caliber ball-point ammunition, you had to hit something that was...to bring it down. Hell, there's no way I could have missed a big target like that that close over it,

Marcello: So what happened, then, after the airplanes had left?

Law: I don't remember whether Ledgerwood had stayed with me or not, but we went over to Wheeler Field to see what was happening.

Marcello: In other words, nobody is still giving any orders, and nobody seems to be in charge back in Schofield.

Law: Oh, hell, it was rank confusion there in the engineers' area, I don't know what it was up at the infantry companies. Eventually, one kid got out there and gave the "attack" call on a bugle--"ta-tah-da, ta-tah-da, ta-tah-da (singing)--about five minutes after we fired the first shots here.

Marcello: This was on the bugle?

Law: Yes. He got out there a little after we were firing at the Japanese. I guess he woke the rest of the guys up.

Marcello: So what do you do at that point then?

Law: We walked over the Wheeler, which was just 150 yards...it wasn't very far, just through the officers' quarters there, over to Wheeler, and we saw where the planes had been strafed. They were lined up in perfect alignment, so all a plane had to do was just go down and strafe the whole bunch of them.

Marcello: What were your feelings when you saw that scene? Do you have a chance to be an observer under those circumstances?

Law: No it's very similar to the dream which I had from the time that I was about, oh, I guess, five, six, seven something like that.

Marcello: Do you want to put that on to the record? You showed me that piece of paper where you had written down those thoughts and so on, and I think it's kind of a pertinent part of the record, Could you just review that for the people who might read the transcript of this tape?

Law: Well, nobody will believe in extrasensory perception or whatever you call it, but my mother's family, practically all of them, see events before they come. Actually, I have for a time, that I know of, Two of them have come true already. The other two haven't. But by the time I was a small kid, I was having visions of airplanes attacking something down the hill from us. Like, I was standing on the brow of a hill, but I couldn't see what they were attacking over there. But I could see the planes coming around, and I can still see it; I mean, it's imprinted...it's the same as if I'd painted a picture on the wall. I've seen it ever since I was about five, six, or seven--I don't remember just when the first time was--of these planes attacking, and I was standing there watching.

This is the way I felt on the morning of December 7. I was seeing the same thing over again, except this time I wasn't asleep. I'd been seeing it for, I guess, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years, something like that, and so I guess it didn't shake me up. I knew what my mother's uncle told her, that eventually we would fight the "yellow peril," so I just accepted it, I guess. I wasn't

scared or anything like that. I guess I was big, dumb, and stupid, because when those planes were strafing, I didn't get a bit scared; and when those MP's dodged off and the major dropped into the sewer, why, all I did was pick up the rifle and started shooting.

Marcello: What did you do, then, once you got over there to Wheeler Field and you saw that destruction?

Law: I guess it was like waking up from a bad dream or something, I guess. The oil tanker--the one that they load planes up with gasoline--had melted down, and the metal had been burning so hard. There was still a lot of stuff burning around the planes and in the hangars there. The hangars had been burned out. It was pretty well-mangled. I'm sure there's pictures and stuff of that that's available.

Marcello: How long did you remain over there at Wheeler Field?

Law: That I couldn't tell you. I don't know. I imagine it was probably a couple of hours. I don't know.

Marcello: Did you not do anything at all while you were over there? Were you engaged in any kind of clean-up work or anything?

Law: No, there was nobody doing anything. It was just...confusion. People were running around, and the officers were coming in and stuff like that, but there didn't seem to be any planes around that they could do anything with.

Marcello: What did you do that afternoon?

Law: We got back together...Colonel Baldwin got up there then. He was staying down in Honolulu, but he got up there, and we were, you

might say, getting all the rumors in, that the Japanese had landed on the north side of the island and all kinds of stuff. (Chuckle) Of course, it didn't prove true, but I guess everything... we expected them to momentarily come through the barracks. Eventually, everybody got '03 rifles. We had those then, I got to keep mine; they didn't take it away anymore.

That evening, we had blackout, and we were all together, the whole Finance Department. There was probably twelve, fourteen of us, something like that, sitting around up in the area where the blackout was. Once in awhile rumors would come in that the Japanese were attacking again. There was planes... I guess what it was was the Navy planes flew in, and I'm sure you've heard about that. I think we shot some of them down.

Marcello: I'm sure you could have heard any rumor you wanted to hear that night.

Law: Oh, (chuckle) they were around, yes. They were landing on the north side of the island, and... (chuckle).

Marcello: Did you have reason not to believe those rumors, considering what had happened that day?

Law: Yes, as a matter of fact, I was considering getting as much food together as I could and heading back into the "boonies" because I didn't want to be captured. Up in Oregon, I had spent most of my childhood as an independent; I didn't mess around with the other kids. I was back in the woods and hunted and fished and sometimes stayed back there for a week or two by myself. I figured if the Japs

had to occupy and were coming ashore, I could hold out on my own as long as I wanted to.

Marcello: And you mentioned that you had done quite a bit of hiking and so on over there in Hawaii, too, had you not?

Law: Yes, I had climbed over the mountains there, down to Pali on the windward side. I'd bummed around the whole island and knew pretty much where the best places to hide out were. I'd been up on top of the highest mountain around there where you could look over and see the Kole Kole Pass and see the Navy...I'm sure you've talked to people who were in the Navy, and they had their big ammunition dump on the side away from Schofield Barracks, over the Pali, down into the Navy area there. I knew the whole island pretty well. I'd hiked all over it.

Marcello: I assume it wasn't too safe to move around that night, was it?

Law: We didn't move around any that night. Early the next morning, they took all of us people from Finance--we were attached to MP's--and me and another--I forget the kid's name--were put on a roadblock down at Aiea Junction, where the Curtiss had been hit, and, oh, I I guess we were about 150 yards from where the Curtiss went down. We were on a roadblock there, checking cars through and that sort of thing. That was on December 8, all that.

Marcello: So what kind of work, then, were you doing in the aftermath of the attack, let's say, in the days and weeks following Pearl Harbor attack?

Law: On the 8th and 9th we were on MP duty. The night of the 8th

(chuckle), I had no problem getting around myself. I'd start whistling anytime I wanted to walk after dark--whistling as loud as I could--and so they'd challenge you.

On this roadblock--this was about midnight, I think--a change-of-guard or whatever was coming down. Now on the night of the 7th, they told us that somebody hit a cow just a short ways from Aiea Junction there with an anti-tank gun; the Marines shot a cow because it didn't halt when they gave it a "halt." So this "shavetail" Marine lieutenant came by with a detachment that he had, and I halted them. I heard somebody coming, and I halted them. He came up, and he asked me how he could get down to where they shot that cow. I told him, and he says, "Well, it's not safe to go down there." I said, "Hell, I go down there all the time. All you got to do is start whistling or singing." And so he had the platoon strike up the Marine hymn, and they sang that all the way down there (chuckle). There was a lot of firing going on at night. I guess there were trigger-happy guys. That was the night of the 8th. He was scared to go down there.

Marcello: When you had a chance to reflect on the events of December 7, what kind of a feeling did you have when you actually came to the realization that you had dreamed all this before?

Law: (Chuckle) It was just a repeat of what I'd been going through for seventeen years. Of course, that never got beyond just seeing the planes circle and dive. I never saw the planes shot up on the runway. I never saw any of that. It just went that far, just seeing

these planes circle, dive, and the smoke coming up. There wasn't any noise. Of course, in the dream there was no noise or anything. It was just the planes circling and the smoke coming out.

Marcello: When was it that you finally left the Hawaiian Islands?

Law: Orders came back for all washed out flying cadets to reapply, and so I reapplied and came back to the States as an aviation cadet in...I guess it was the summer...about five or six months later, anyway.

Marcello: So it would have been the summer of 1942?

Law: Yes, sometime in the summer of 1942 because I got my commission in 1943.

Marcello: And then you spent the rest of the war in the Army Air Corps?

Law: Right, right.

Marcello: Which is another story, and maybe someday we can cover that portion of your story.

Law: Well, I'm also writing part of that up. I've got bits and pieces of it thrown together, too.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Law, you've given me a different slant on the events that occurred on December 7, 1941. Of course, we're always looking for new information, and I want to thank you very much for having taken the time to participate in this project.

Law: If you ever get a chance, now, Captain Melim was the finance officer that was transferred in right after the war, when Baldwin went down to the Hawaiian Finance Office in Honolulu. Captain Melim came up and took over. You ought to get in touch with him

because he's a native Hawaiian and spent all his life in Hawaii, I'm sure he can tell you a heck of a lot more about the conditions because he was...when they said, "Back in a year and a day," he was called in as a reserve finance officer, and he got promoted to captain, He was a first lieutenant, He got his commission as a R.O.T.C. officer, He could probably tell you about as much what happened as anyone.

Marcello: Well, again, I think that's a good place to end this interview, Thank you very much.