

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY J. BULTMAN, JR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Michael G. Johnson: This begins an interview with Henry J. Bultman, Jr., on November 17, 2006, with Mike Johnson and ...

Shaun Illingworth: Shaun Illingworth. Mr. Bultman, thank you very much for coming up to New Brunswick today. To begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

Henry J. Bultman, Jr.: ... I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 2, 1920. ... [To] give you an idea, in those days, most of the babies were born at home. That day, my dad went around pulling all the shades down; he didn't want the little bastard to see his shadow. That's Ground Hog Day. [laughter] That's the only joke I tell in the whole thing. [laughter] ...

SI: Can you tell us your parents' names?

HB: My father was, of course, Henry J. Bultman. My mother was Lucile Dawkins Bultman.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your father's family background?

HB: My father was a mortician. My brother's a doctor. I only have one brother, one sibling, and Dad's joke about that was that ... any mistakes Leon made, that's my brother, he could correct. [laughter] No, the Bultman Mortuary; there's basically five mortuaries in Louisiana, or in New Orleans. There's Bultman, Tharp, Eagan and two others I can't [remember], but they're now all owned by one ... corporation, and the last I knew [was], in talking to my brother, who's still alive and lives down there in assisted living, where that ... the funeral parlor was under water. [Editor's Note: Mr. Bultman is referring to the flooding of New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina in August and September 2005.] I don't know whether they're going to repair the place or not. ... You see, New Orleans was a French city and, in those days, if you died, the whole family was put up during the funeral, in other words, they bedded them, they fed them, until it was all over. So, they had a pretty big establishment in all funeral homes down there. Now, I graduated from high school, Alcee Fortier High School, then, I went to Tulane and took chemical engineering, graduated from there. ... At that time was when the first draft started and I didn't want to be [in the] Army, so, I tried the Marines. ... When I went in to take the exam, they asked me to pass the eye exam and I flunked. So, I figured I was going in the Army after that. ... So, the Navy came by looking for service people and I applied there. The only thing [was], this time, they said, "Read the chart with your right eye," and I went ahead and read it and they said, "Now, read it with your left eye." I went ahead and read it. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Mr. Bultman indicates that they allowed him to read it with his right eye again.] So, I read it with the same eye twice and I passed. ... Then, they gave us orders and sent us out to Cal Tech, where we took an aeronautical engineering course. After the course was over, they gave us a choice of where we wanted to be shipped, and, of the 108 that were in the class, most of them were picking the United States, someplace in the United States. Bill Tenhagen and I decided we're going to see something else besides the United States. So, we said, "Anywhere outside of the country." So, Bill and I were stationed in Hawaii. Two went out to Midway and two went out to, well, one was in the Philippines, but it was spread out through the Pacific, and that's where we started. ... We were going out there and I got orders to get aboard the *Indianapolis* [CA-35] and we took the *Indianapolis* out to Pearl and, from Pearl, we were stationed then on Ford Island. ... Ford Island, as you know, is the airstrip that was in the center of the harbor, and

all the battleships and heavy equipment was usually tied up right around Ford Island. The only access to Ford Island was either the ferry or a fifty-foot motor launch. Now, how far do you want me to go from there? [laughter]

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your duties at Ford Island, before the attack?

HB: Okay. You see, before the attack happened, actually, six weeks before the attack, every Sunday, there was a mock raid. I know that the (minions?) in charge knew something was up, as far as the Pacific was concerned, because there was a whole lot of problems. We knew that [President Franklin] Roosevelt wanted the United States in [the] war. How he was going to get us in, we could see it coming every day, when he cut off the oil to Japan, when he cut off all the salvage material. Everything was cutting them off at the knees, but we didn't know anything about them having broken the code or anything else. So, they were preparing, in that they had mock raids, in which the carriers would launch so many planes and they'd come in and strafe, like they [the Japanese] were strafing and whatnot. So, every Sunday, if you had the duty, it was a pain in the ass to get up and have to do it. So, this [day], on the 7th, when it happened, Bill Tenhagen and I were in the room and I woke up to go to the bathroom. ... All of a sudden, the siren went off and Bill said, "Do we have to get up? We don't have the duty," and I looked out the window and I says, "Yes, you got to get up. This is real." [laughter] So, that's how it started.

SI: In the previous raids, what had your duties been when you did have the duty?

HB: You went to your battle station, wherever you were. Like, we were in assembly and repair, we had to go down to the buildings, secure everything, watch for anything, have work parties ready to do whatever there was. ... I had a lot of ordnance, so, we could swing dollies with vices on it and put machine guns on it, if we wanted to, but, even before that, Bill Tenhagen and I organized what was known as the "Seaman Guard." We had twenty-five sailors, one armored carrier, not an armored [carrier]; ... it was almost like a pick-up truck, really, and we had all '09s, the old rifle. We had about three BARs, one Lewis machine gun and a fifty-foot motor launch. [laughter] So, when December 7th happened, that night, everybody was by the motor launch, because, if they'd landed, we were going for the hills. [laughter] That's about the way it was right then. ... That day, when it happened, the first thing I did was, going to step out of the building, by that time, the planes were coming over Wheeler Field, which was up the pass [Kolekole Pass], and they were strafing. We got back in, fast, and Hugh Gribbin, who was the torpedo officer on the station, had a pick-up truck and he said, "You want to go over with me?" "Why not?" We got in the truck and went down to where we were supposed to be, at our battle stations, and waited. That was the first time we were issued a .45. My .45, you'd pull the sear back and it stayed in the back position, because it had so much Cosmoline grease on it. You had to get rid of that before it'd even operate. So, then, we got some aviation gas, got a big tub, threw all the guns in the tub until they soaked out, [laughter] but ... there was very little that you could do with the [weapons]. We weren't prepared. That was it. I don't know whether you want this on the record. If you want to turn it off, I'll tell you.

SI: I will turn off the tape.

HB: Okay.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: You participated in these mock raids in the weeks leading up to December 7th. How well did most men react during the actual attack? Did they follow what they were supposed to do?

HB: Oh, yes, because, on every raid, we either lost an aircraft or we lost [personnel]. If we lost an aircraft, we lost an individual. We also lost some civilians, because, in one of the raids, the plane went into 1010 Docks [pronounced “ten-ten”], which was ... across the way, and there were civilian workers there and they were killed. I mean, it was gruesome, truthfully, but ... it was worthwhile for anybody to get into it. That’s the only thing that could’ve happened there, but ... you’re flying propeller-driven planes, in those days, and you had a lot of problems, too. [laughter]

SI: You said it was gruesome. In your job, would you have to go into a crash site and attempt to recover the planes?

HB: ... When you were attached to the base, any crash, ... there was crash officers that had to go over. If you had the duty, you had to go over and do it. It’s just like, on December 7th, the battleships were all sitting on the bottom, the guys there were stunned, truthfully, because I had to go aboard each battleship and get rifles from them, because they weren’t doing any good there and we could use them on the shore, if anything happened. If, during your watch, they would report a body came up from one of the ships, you had to go out on the fifty-foot motor launch and retrieve the body. I mean, that and the aircraft accidents, ... that was your duty. If you got it, you ... took two medics with you and out you went, that was all. I don’t know of any other things that you could say, that we just got into it. That’s all. You did what you had to do when the time came.

SI: You said that you were driven to your battle station. Had it already been hit by then?

HB: Oh, yes, it was going on. [laughter] Yes, no, because Hugh Gribbin ... left us off at our place, and then, he went to the oil depot, where he was [stationed] there. ... The history tells you he is the one, I don’t know what kind of medal he got, but he got a medal because he cut one of the oilers away, so [that] she could get away from where she was. I know he got a medal for that and I don’t remember anything more than that right now. It’s too long ago for me to remember it, really, but I know he got a medal for the action he took at the time, and your job down there was to control fires. The PBYs had been hit on the ramp down there and they were burning. We didn’t have bulletproof tanks. I mean, the bullet went through it. It was like, if it didn’t ignite, it was like a shower of high-test gasoline coming out. So, you had to organize crews to get the planes out of the hangars, get them away from the hangars, so [that] everything didn’t burn to pieces. ... There were, I guess, four or five movies that have been made; about four of them stunk. One of them, *Tora! Tora!*, [*Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970)] was the closest thing to actual facts. The rest of them were romances and whatnot, but *Tora! Tora!* told you the true facts of what was going on. It was a horrible day, yes, but you’re twenty-one, you’re invincible, nothing can hurt you. [laughter] ... No one was wounded on the island. Even though they were strafing,

they ... hit no one. The only guy that got hurt was a Marine, I don't know, a first lieutenant or whatnot, stumbled into a trench running away when they ... came to strafe, and he got a big cut up on his knee, but that was all. ... Other than that, the island got damaged, the water supply was cut off and things like that, but nothing else. We turned the whole mess hall into a hospital.
...

SI: Was the mess hall on Ford Island?

HB: Yes, oh, yes, everything. We were a complete unit.

SI: We are now looking at a map you brought in with you today.

HB: ... To give you an idea, this, this is Ford Island. BOQ was right here; that's bachelor officers' quarters. This was the administration building and A&R [assembly and repair, was] always in this area. ... These are the battleships that you see here. Now, ... we left here, [the BOQ on the northwest point of Ford Island]. We had to drive here, down here, all the way, [the southeast point of Ford Island], and he dropped us off, and then, he went back in this area, here. I think fifteen, [a numbered location on the map], is the, yes, *Neosho* [AO-23], fueling ship thing, the one he cut free, and you can see these are the paths, [arrows on the map], that the planes took to come in and strafe and drop and whatnot.

SI: The BOQ is on the north side of the island.

HB: Northwest side of the island.

SI: You drove to the southeast side.

HB: Southeast side.

SI: Then, you drove along "Battleship Row" to the A&R section, which was on the south side of the island.

HB: Right. See, these, [the ships], are not tied to the island. These are big, concrete pads that they had that [the ships] would dock up to. They had, on both sides, these pads. ... On this day, they just happened to have them all in a row, on one side.

SI: What went through your mind as you drove past "Battleship Row?" How did you feel?

HB: As we went by, the *Arizona* [BB-39] blew and we saw metal flying. We didn't know what the hell it was. You just assumed something. They were blowing things up. That was all. The ships were on fire. You've seen the smoke that came up [in photographs]; that was that way for practically three weeks. ... Then, after the three weeks were up and the fires were out, they had, on the shoreline along here, big winches, in which cables went out to certain of the ships, trying to right them. ... The divers would go down, patch the hulls, and then, they'd start pumping them out. ... All night, you could hear the winches, maybe taking up a quarter-of-an-inch at a time, if they could even take that much, but they all had to be unified, so that they wouldn't snap

cables and everything else, to try and get the ships back together, back up, so they could take them to dry dock and whatnot and get them back in service. Also, there was a lot of work being done on men that were trapped below water, sealed in those things; very few of them got out, too. ...

SI: How much time elapsed, roughly, between you and your friend hearing the alarm and leaving the BOQ and getting down to your battle station?

HB: Oh, I'd say a half-an-hour at the most. It was just to determine whether we were going to be able to get down there without getting shot up. ... See, [to] give you an idea, after it was over, ... any of the men that were aboard ship had to come ashore and the closest place to swim is Ford Island. Now, when I left my room in the BOQ, I had all my uniforms in it. That night, when I came back, the closet was empty. The only thing left was a jockstrap hanging on the door. I mean, guys came in, they were oil coated, so, they just dropped the clothes, took any clothes they could put on, after they got a bath, tried to get some oil off of them, to get out. It was funny, because you'd see a seaman first class in an admiral's coat, [laughter] but you did what you did. That was all.

SI: Once you arrived in the assembly and repair area, what did you start to do?

HB: Assembly and repair? We checked the buildings, no fires, sent work parties to get fire extinguishers, [got] everything lined up in case anything happened, then, went down to Squadron 8A, which was at the far end, where all the planes were being shot up, helped them pull planes out of the hangars. ... At that point is when the ordnance men grabbed the air-cooled .30s and .50s and used them in vices [mounted] on work carts, but there was not much you could hit, because you can only fire an air-cooled gun a very short period of time and you've got to shut it off and let it cool, and everything else. If you're up in the air, it's different, because the velocity of the plane and the air across it will keep it cool, and we didn't have any water-cooled [machine guns] or any antiaircraft guns that we could use there. But, it was just to save whatever you could, get the bad stuff out of the way and let it go down the tube. Now, I saw a lot of sights. I saw, like, the *Shaw* [DD-373] blowing up. From where I was to where the *Shaw* [was]; where is the *Shaw*? The *Shaw* was, I think, twenty-one.

SI: We are looking at the map Mr. Bultman provided.

HB: ... Nineteen; nineteen was the *Shaw*. That was like a train, railway thing that they'd put a destroyer on, in the water, and then, they could take it up this ramp and they could work on it. Well, they hit the *Shaw*'s forward magazine and I have never seen a Fourth of July or anything else [like] when that thing blew; got to say it was beautiful, because there was all kinds of rockets going off. ... The *Shaw*, after the 7th, they put a false bow on her and she was sent back to the States. While she was on her way back, they built the bow there. When she got back there, they welded it on. I don't know how many months it took them, but [they] turned her around and she was put back in service. The *Pennsylvania* [BB-38] and two other destroyers were in dry dock over there and they were badly damaged. The first air raid was over. When the second attack started, the *Nevada* [BB-36] started to back down. She was the only battleship that had any steam and they got her going, and she started back down the channels. When they

passed where we were, [the A&R area] right here, when she was starting down here, the Japs dive-bombed her. ... I could see guys where they needed to shave on the ship, they were that close, and she got hit so many times that she grounded herself over there. We had two repair ships in the harbor and they got to firing real fast. I think the loudest cheers I've heard at football games. But you've never heard a cheer [like] when the first plane got hit, Jap plane. ... I think it was, I can't be sure, but I thought it was, one of the repair ship's five-inchers that hit it. Then, there was a destroyer that came down this channel here for that one single-man sub. ... He went so fast by it, dropping depth charges, and then, went aground and backed off and went right on out the harbor, but he sunk the sub. There was just so many things going on. ... I guess that destroyer came after the second attack. ... The second attack came about an hour afterwards, and then, I had duty. I was sent to the mess hall, trying to help the wounded and get them loaded, so [that] they could go over to the main hospital, over in the shipyard. ... I got in there and you saw guys with the guinea tees that had been flash burned and it was just a solid blister, with the shape of the shirt or the tee, just had been burnt off. ... One guy said to me, "I want a cigarette," and, unconsciously, I lit a cigarette for him, stuck the burnt end in his mouth and grabbed it, real quick. He said, "Don't worry. I can't feel it. I just want the taste." I mean, there were some awful looking things there. Guys went through torture. That was the first time sulfa was used, too, on burns, and I saw two or three of them afterwards that I knew, that your skin turns all white after the sulfa is [applied] and it heals. You could see where they had been burned.

SI: These were guys coming in off the ships.

HB: Yes. It's the only place they could go, was to us first, because it was to land. We were the only place they could come to.

SI: In rough numbers, how many men were put into this makeshift hospital in the mess hall?

HB: How many? ... Say you got, shall we say, a basketball court full of tables that they served the mess on; all those were full. The floor was full. Guess? ... I have no idea, really. It's just a pile of people and all the corpsmen did the work and they had, anybody else that could help was there to assist them, to take care of them. That was it.

SI: What did you use to transport people from Ford Island?

HB: Fifty-foot motor launches, and then, when the ferries got in operation, we could ... put them aboard the ferry and take them over there.

SI: Was this after you had secured everything down in the PBY area?

HB: That was secured by [then]. I moved up there in the afternoon. ... That night, I had the watch and we got reports that were hairy, that we thought that the whole Jap fleet was coming on in. I mean, they made the biggest mistake in their life; they could have taken the islands. But, they were coming in, [according to the rumors], and that's when Tenhagen said, "Get relieved over there. We're getting the twenty-five-footer ready." [laughter] ... We finally got stationed in the area between the PBY squadrons. This was where all the fuel was stored. [Editor's Note:

Mr. Bultman is referring to his map of Pearl Harbor.] So, the Skipper told us that we were going to take and form a perimeter around the fuel dump. ... They were afraid of the Japs on the Islands, outside, [that they] were going to try and do something, if the ships were coming in, [so] that we could stop that. So, we sat on the fuel all night. ... That night, five planes from the *Enterprise* [CV-6] came in and, to be truthful, the guys didn't have a chance. I mean, everybody was trigger-happy. There were five F4Fs, fighter planes. The cone of fire just went up to one point. All four or five of them were knocked down. They were friendly-fire, but it happens. You can't help it. One of them got down and landed on Ford Island, one guy bailed out, one went over in Ewa, burning. ... I don't know whatever happened to the other two. But, they shot at anything. It wasn't safe to be anywhere. A Marine was by the water tower. Somebody saw the shadow and blew him away, just one of those things. It was just a hairy occasion. All I know is, I'm eighty-six years old right now and I'm happy I'm still here. [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that you went on the battleships to get the rifles.

HB: Yes.

SI: Was that that day?

HB: That was between. ... In-between, you got orders to do one thing, you got it done, you went and did the next thing that they ordered you to do. For instance, the first part was to get to A&R, secure it, and secure the squadrons from fire, and everything else. The next one was to get the rifles. The rifles were done. I don't know. We had, for our food, an apple that day. That was all. You didn't think about food and, after that was over, then, we went to the mess hall [to help with the wounded]. I mean, one step at a time. I went back to the room and I had kept the same clothes on for six days, because there was nothing else to wear. You just kept it that way.

SI: What do you remember about going on the ships? What do you remember seeing?

HB: In one ship, ... for instance, I got on the *West Virginia* [BB-48], who had settled straight, and they were working. There was no [despair]. They were putting every bit of effort into ... salvaging whatever they could and they didn't [stop]. You go to another ship, I don't remember which one that had rolled over, they were sitting on the side. They were defeated. They were just like, ... "How could it happen to me?" They had no one that let it go. Then, I went on the other side of the island. We had the target ship *Oklahoma* [BB-37], I think it was; ... oh, the *Utah* [BB-31]. It was a target ship that they would take out and drop fake bombs on it and everything else. It had been torpedoed. It rolled over and we couldn't find anybody around there. They had left it, because there's nothing they could do there, but, then, the *Raleigh* [CL-7] was a real old, light cruiser, four-stacker. A fish [torpedo] had gone right through it and they were working like dogs. They'd pump out one end, pump out the other, and kept trying to keep her afloat. There was nothing but work going on. There was no two ways about that.

SI: Did you get a chance to rest at all at the end of the day or was it just constant work for the next few days?

HB: You keep going. I think, on the second day, ... we did get breakfast and we got a hot meal at night. That was going good and, by the second night, everything had calmed down and you could do something. You could find out where you could find another pair of pants to wear and things like that. [laughter] ... You assume normal routine where possible.

SI: What were you told that night, or the next day, about what was happening and what would happen to you, in terms of if relief was coming or not?

HB: No, no. There was no relief, unless somebody came out and gave you relief, no, but a human being takes and does what it has to. After it's over, then, you worry about it and get tired. ... There was too much excitement and too much everything else going on. You were just lucky you're alive. On the third day, they happened to bring in one of the Jap planes that went down in the harbor and they were pulling it up on one of the ramps and some sailor says, "I'll take his boots. Don't cut 'em."

SI: Before the attack, what had you thought of the Japanese? Did you view them as a threat? Did you think they would ever get that far?

HB: I don't think we ever thought about the Japanese that much, until the last six weeks. ... During that six weeks is when they started making models ... for recognition and just about the last six weeks was all concentrated on that kind of [thing], what was going on there, but, as far as the Japanese, other than I told you that Roosevelt, we figured he had to get into this, because he had to help out Europe. ... It still is a known fact that, we had wireless ... and whatnot, but ... after they broke the code, they sent an airmail letter that came during the time that the raid was on. Now, how the hell are you going to [explain that]? It was [that] they wanted us in the war and we were the guinea pigs. That's the way we felt about it, anyway, and then, after that, we went through the same thing that England did, and everything. All the automobile lights were painted with a little, bitty strip in the middle that ... the lights would come through. The blackout was on. Then, operations started of all kinds of conditions. That's all.

SI: In the six weeks leading up to the attack, do you recall any concern about saboteurs or fifth columnists?

HB: Oh, they had talked about it, ... but it was more in the Army region, because they were all around. I mean, you have [Army installations], oh, I don't have it here, but all around this establishment. Now, the navy yard is right here. Over here was Hickam [Army Airfield]. Up the valley here was Wheeler [Army Airfield]. Over here was the Marine Corps airbase, [Ewa]. All in there, that perimeter, they started to more or less patrol, security taking and everything else. Here, [Ford Island], they'd have a hell of a time getting through all this, and then, getting through the water. I don't know what they could do, come in there? So, it didn't affect us as much as it did the Army and the Marines on the outside.

MJ: How was the morale on the island before and after the attack? Was there a feeling of defeat or was everyone ready to go?

HB: Everybody was ready to go. ... The only defeat was on isolated ships, where they were hit so hard on the 7th, the first day, and that, [they] got over it. For instance, on the night of the 7th, I had a chief that could double-talk his way out of anything. ... Guys had gotten guns and had dug in alongside the airstrip and we had to go get those guns away from them, because that's what I'm saying; anything moved, they shot at [it]. ... He'd go there and he'd double-talk them and, while he got their attention, I'd grab the gun and take it away, get the guns away, but everybody was going to fight to the last person left on the island.

MJ: When the attack happened, did you act under fire the way you anticipated you would?

HB: ... You did whatever. I don't even remember thinking about that, truthfully. All I know is, we had a job to do and you just went and did it. That's all. ... I don't know how other to express it than that. You saw [that] most everybody wanted to do something. They wanted to pick up the slack wherever it was possible. There was no backward thing or scared or anything else. We were afraid that the Japs were going to come there, and then, it was, "How were we going to defend the place?" yes, but, other than that, no.

SI: In the following days, were you involved in any of the rescue/salvage missions on the ships in the harbor?

HB: No. That all went to the shipyard personnel. See, Navy Air is separated from the ships and the repair ship part of it, and that was all done by the navy yard that was there. ... They had charge of that. ... Actually, we weren't allowed in the area where they had all the things trying to right the ships and everything else. They kept you out of there as much as possible because, not only that, if those cables snapped ... they could decapitate you, cut you in half or anything else, because there was so much strain on them.

SI: Can you describe how the A&R section was set up? Did you have men under you?

HB: In other words, you had the skipper, and then, he had his exec. You had the personnel department, you had engine overhaul, you had the accessory division, which was my division, [in] which we had all the instruments, we had all the oxygen, we had all the propeller repair, we had the parachute [rigging], we had, I don't know [what else]. ... Then, they had the structural part of the division, and then, from the structural part, they had the assembly division, where ... a plane was taken completely down, reassembled, and then, they had the test part. Bill Kane was an Academy [US Naval Academy] man and he did all the test flying, he and two other guys. In other words, after the plane was completely overhauled, he was the test pilot. My boss was Jack Arnold and he supervised anything I did, gave me the orders to do it. [As a] matter-of-fact, you had collateral duties, which was, I had to work for Bill at one time and, if you remember James J. Braddock, he was the heavyweight champion, he came out there, out to Pearl, and put on an exhibition. ... Kane had me arrange the set-up of a boxing ring and whatnot, so that we could have some entertainment, things like that. It's strictly military life that was going on. After, once it was over, everything started to generate, only thing [was], on a wartime basis, more than [on a normal basis]. Honolulu, I guess, was considered the prime duty, if you could get it, because it was a wonderful place to be. I know, when we got there, there were no high rises. The Aloha Tower was the highest building in the place and I think that might have been three

stories. ... I don't remember for sure. They had two hotels that were more than three stories high, but, other than that, there was Waikiki Beach, Diamond Head and whatnot. I have one little story I can tell you. One week before December 7th, we had planned to go and hunt pheasant on Kauai and they set the date as December 7th. ... Bill came to me and he said, "You're going to have to go a week earlier." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, that's right after the Army-Navy game," and he said, "We'll go then instead, and I got the duty on the 7th anyway and, if I got the duty, you got the duty." [laughter] So, we went and we took off in a [Grumman G-44] Widgeon. A Widgeon is a twin-engine, both land and sea plane. We had five guys in the plane, five shotguns, and we rendezvoused over Makapuu Point, which was the rendezvous of the Japanese planes the D-Day of December 7th. ... It was only lucky that he had the duty, that we had to push it one week in advance, or we'd have been chopped meat on December 7th. [laughter] We got to Kauai and started walking the cane fields for pheasants. What good shots; ... they were like on spokes of a wheel, where we all got to the middle about the same time, and one poor pheasant went up. We all fired, never hit the pheasant, but the shock stunned him. [laughter] There were good times, too. It wasn't all horror and whatnot. It was horror to see and for the guys that got burned. That was most of it, burns, and shrapnel from the torpedoes, and they drowned, because they couldn't get up above deck. It was horrible that way, but I guess we were a lot more resilient than I am right now, I'll tell you.

SI: Did you lose anyone that you knew or had been friendly with?

HB: Oh, not that day. I lost them in the Army over in Europe, a lot of my friends.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE-----

SI: This is side two of tape one. You were just talking about your friends.

HB: Yes. Well, they were killed over there. You lose a lot of friends. At that time, I know we had 107 that went to Cal Tech, it was the first aeronautical engineering school that they gave, and forty-eight, I think it was forty-eight, years later, I organized a reunion. ... We had, oh, thirty-five couples attended and it was great, because ... I arranged it so that the forty-eighth reunion was Cal Tech's fiftieth reunion, something like that, and they helped us out and everything. ... We continued that for every two years for the next six years, and then, it got so that there were so few left, they decided to forego it, but, once you got in a group like that, or anything, you were buddies. You were just as interested in their welfare as your own.

SI: You had some experience with the pre-war Navy, but, then, most of your service was during the war. How would you compare the two, being a naval officer before Pearl Harbor, and then, during the war?

HB: ... Before the war, [when] I was out there, it was extremely good duty. There was more brass and polish. I mean, every Saturday, ... you were in dress whites. You had to parade on the airstrip, the whole division had to be there, and you were graded on that. I mean, it was spit-and-polish at those times. The uniform even changed after the war started. They went from khaki to gray. When we first saw the new uniform, we wanted to know whether they were a new bunch that were coming in to help us in this war. [laughter] We didn't even recognize them. So, things

like that, but, I mean, the war eased up on the Academy, so-to-speak. I mean, before the war, the Academy was “lord and master” of anybody. Anybody that wasn’t an Academy man was an officer, but he was one step lower than the Academy. Afterwards, they had to use us. I mean, the numbers grew. So, it went that way.

SI: How did that take shape? How could you tell that you were being treated differently from an Annapolis man?

HB: It’s the way the Academy boys work. That’s all. There’s *esprit de corps* in that group.

SI: Was it reflected in the assignments you were given?

HB: No, it’s just a general feeling. Luckily, I tied into two of the best in Arnold and Kane. They were first-class. You got others that, ... pardon me, were pricks. Other than that, ... if you could haul your own weight, there’s nothing they could do about it.

SI: Your own career seems to reflect how the war affected the Navy’s rating system. Normally, an officer would not have advanced from an ensign to a lieutenant commander in the amount of time that you did.

HB: No, no. ... See, I was 107351. I think I was, in the Navy, the one-hundred-thousandths, in that ... range. So, I got in on the very bottom floor. After that, they came in in droves, like, my brother came in two years later. He was an LCT [Landing Craft, Tank] man and he went all the way to Saipan and whatnot, all out there. I had a good friend, [whom] I didn’t lose during the war, was Colonel Dumas, who was in the Army. He had been head of the ROTC at Clemson University and Dumas came through Pearl on December 9th. ... I went down to the dock to see him and, if you’d see Hugh Dumas, he was six-foot-two, ramrod, little Hitler mustache. He went out to the Philippines and he fell when Corregidor fell and he spent three years in Japanese prisons. I saw him in Alabama, where he lived, oh, about two years after he got back. You wouldn’t have recognized the man. He was bones, skinny, no teeth, and, after I saw him, and he told me of a few of his experiences, which were awful, he died. They just couldn’t take all the punishment that they got in the Japanese prisons. But, no, I worked with the Japanese in business afterwards. We built physical testing instruments, for plastics, paper, textile, and whatnot. ... One of our customers was a very large Japanese firm and they got all our equipment put in the University of Tokyo, on display and whatnot, for use. A lot of people were really against the Japanese people. I never was against the Japanese people. I was against the hierarchy, because the people go along with whatever they’re ordered to do over there. If you didn’t, you were dead. It’s just like, when we go to war, we’re going to back the President all the way, from the beginning to the end. Over there, if you didn’t back him; we could complain, and we do a lot of complaining here. Over here, you didn’t complain, or you’d lose your life. [laughter] No, it’s odd, because I got to [learn], in meetings with these people, [that] they really didn’t know about Pearl, until, oh, this is, say, fifty years afterwards. They didn’t acknowledge it.

SI: They would not talk about it.

HB: Oh, I brought it up and it's really a hush-hush subject. I don't like to talk about it. I think they were just, would have apologized, if they knew how.

SI: You did not have any apprehension at all about working with the Japanese.

HB: No. I had apprehension, yes, but I figured that they were put in the coals just like anybody else, and I don't know how else to explain it.

SI: Do you remember how you felt about the Japanese at the time?

HB: You mean on December 7th?

SI: Yes, and during the whole war.

HB: Kill them; anything to get the war over with. Since then, ... since I moved down the [Jersey] Shore, ... on December 8th is Our Lady's thing in the Catholic Church, [the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary], and my wife and I went there and a young priest got up on the altar and said what horrible people the United States were for dropping the atomic bomb on Japan. ... I said, "Margie, I'm leaving. Good-bye." She says, "No, stay, stay, listen," and he went on and on. So, finally, just before Mass was over, I went out in the vestibule and I stood there and I waited. He walked out. I said, "Father, come here." I said, "Did you do your homework?" He said, "What do you mean, 'Do your homework?'" I said, "Did you? Do you know why they dropped the A-bomb?" "What do you mean, 'Why?'" I said, "Look, Father, I was at Pearl, I was at Eniwetok, I was at Kwajalein, I was at Tarawa." I said, "They dropped it to save a million lives." I said, "The Japs attacked us; we didn't attack them." I said, "You owe this whole congregation an apology, because you are stupid." About that time, I got a tap on the shoulder. He says, "When you're through with him, I want him." I mean, these are things that people don't understand. I still don't think they understand now. ...

SI: You mentioned also that you have seen the movies that have been made about Pearl Harbor. You particularly thought *Tora! Tora! Tora!* was a good movie.

HB: Only one.

SI: Is it difficult for you to watch these things?

HB: [No]. I don't know why. For a while, I guess, when it was first over, it was a little difficult, but, no, I have no qualms about looking at it.

SI: Obviously, December 7th and the days following were very hectic. There were a lot of activities related to the raid.

HB: Yes.

SI: How quickly did it get back to normal?

HB: I'd say by the third week it was back to normal, except for the repairs going on in there. ... [By] the third week, I mean, you're back to your normal routine. I mean, things are messed up and you're working on all of them, like, out there, it was still burning, the oil was still burning, coming from those ships. They could put it out and it would come back on and everything else, but, no, you went [through] your full routine right after that, because you had to repair ships and get them the hell out of there.

SI: When did you begin to notice an increase in the workload and the forces coming through?

HB: It was a long while, not until the Battle of Midway, because we were [in] short supply on everything. I mean, everything went to Europe. What we got was Navy and we had three carriers, the *Yorktown*, the ...

SI: *Lexington*?

HB: *Lexington*, and what was the other one? *Enterprise*. Those three were the only ones that we had left out there and they had to be kept up-to-date and they would have troubles and whatnot. But, things started to [pick-up] when the first new cruisers and new battleships [arrived]. You start seeing them come, we knew production was going, but, no, it was just hope that they didn't come and get us.

SI: You had been through this raid, then, you must have heard about the Philippines falling and Wake Island. How did that affect your morale?

HB: ... As that *Tora! Tora! Tora!* told you, Yamamoto, when he said that, "[We] woke up a sleeping giant," they woke up a sleeping giant, and that's just what happened. People were going to stand up and fight. There was nothing they [the Japanese] were going to do to stop them [the Americans] now.

SI: You left Pearl Harbor Naval Air Station in September of 1943.

HB: Yes.

SI: Can you describe what your duties were and some of your activities between December 7th and when you left? Did you continue in the ...

HB: Assembly and repair. Every time a carrier came in, the planes were dumped, they were serviced, they were overhauled. We were overhauling PBYS, overhauling anything. It was just service, assembly and repair. That's [for] all of [the] aircraft for the fleet. That was our job. Of course, we had different collateral duties, like, ... you had to take care of the BOQ and you had to take care of this [or that]. You might be movie officer, you might be something else this time. ... You had your holidays, when you could go ashore, and you took advantage of them when you did, but, no, nothing really changed. It's just [that] your routine changed a little. ... One thing might have been more prevalent at one time [and] was not so much this time. The idea of shore leave all the time was cut down, ... but the morale was always good, couldn't be better, I don't

think, even on all the islands out in the Pacific, the farther ones out, the ones that I got to, because I went from New Hebrides all the way up to Eniwetok. It was all, "Go, go, go."

MJ: Did you get Christmas Day off that month?

HB: You don't have any day off, unless you're not on duty. ... Christmases, you could go to church and whatnot. There's nothing there, but, I mean, you only did, ... on your days off, what you had, and you rotated. ...

MJ: What did you do on your days off?

HB: Go to the beach, [laughter] go down in Honolulu and walk around, anything to get away from it. That's all. No, during the week, I got in more times than I usually did, because I went with a number of people to take and judge the schools for making model airplanes, silhouettes. They were all painted black, ... for identification purposes, because, aboard ship and whatnot, they would hold classes. They would jerk one up and say, "What is it?" ... I mean, that was it, and then, ... you did that. I did a very short tour of duty over on the other side of the island, in Kaneohe Bay, and that was another PBY place. That was strictly patrol planes over there. That's where I hurt my knee; well, not the first time. The first time was playing ball at Cal Tech and I hurt it again at Kaneohe. ... Then, I came back to Lakehurst and I blew it all the way out, ... but it was strictly a military life. That's all it was.

SI: Would you describe it more as a nine-to-five job?

HB: No, you don't have a nine-to-five job. You're on duty. The only time you're not on duty is when you have shore leave. That's it.

SI: What about in terms of when you were actually doing the A&R work?

HB: That shrunk. See, A&R in Honolulu had a rough time getting personnel. Matter-of-fact, for the last six months, the Skipper made me personnel officer, also, and I had to listen to all the woes of the guys, the civilians, that were working out there. ... What you got was, in the United States, they'd promised people exorbitant pays, because they were going in[to] a war zone, to come out and work in the assembly and repair office, or in the navy yard. ... When they would come [out], ... they were housed, done everything for, and then, they would come and bitch to you that this was going wrong, this was going right and everything else. So, I think about after five months or something like that, the Skipper came by and said something. I didn't look up. I says, "Convince me," and he says, "I think you've been at this job too long." [laughter] ... No, but it was rough. ... They were having box makers being instrument men, and they couldn't be. So, you had to set up an assembly line, so that he only did one thing. He put this together, right, one thing together, and that's the way you did it. When I got to Pensacola, I got the first WAVES that were shipped in and I lined them up. ... I looked at their records. I said, "You were a teacher?" She says, "Yes?" I says, "Well, you're in charge," and we set up an assembly line that way, with the WAVES. ... Then, one day, this WAVE comes in and she says, "Mr. Bultman, you've got to come down to the head." I said, "Wait a minute," I said, "Chief, come with me." Got down there and she says, "Now, stand over there." The Chief and I stood there

and she kicked one of the doors and five feet came down. They'd all been sleeping in there. [laughter] ... I put them on report. So, by the time the court-[martial] comes up, the WAVE officer from Washington came down and the Skipper ate me out. He says, "How could you put anybody on report when this woman's in town?" I says, "Told you what they did." I said, "That's all I could do," but those are the kind of things that you run into. It's normal operations. You've got human beings to deal with.

SI: How did you feel about working with the WAVES?

HB: No problem, not anymore; I've got three daughters. [laughter] They can browbeat me, too.

SI: You said you set up an assembly line. What were they actually doing?

HB: In other words, you had to take an instrument and you had to completely disassemble it, replace worn parts, reassemble it, calibrate it, and then, put it back in the aircraft. So, ... some of them would start off by disassembling all the parts and putting them in little, bitty boxes that you keep [parts in], go down the line. The next person would ... find the worn ones, get rid of them, put the new ones in it, and then, they would start [to] assemble [it], putting them back together again. Then, the last operation would be [to] test it before they were taken over to the plane, just like the props. You had both electric props, to change the torque of your propeller, and you had the hydromatic, which was oil-governed. So, you'd take them apart. You had to take it, polish them up, anodize them again against saltwater, and reassemble them, and then, put them back on planes. For the oxygen, there were always different specs coming out as to how you were going to do it, because there was one thing where they had a bottle that they wrapped with cord and they found out that they could use liquid oxygen in that bottle. ... It would be much safer, because a bullet could go through that and it would just slowly leak. When a bullet'd go through an oxygen [gas] bottle, it explodes. So, ... you just did the normal routine of what you were supposed to. That's all. Luckily, there was no bullets flying there.

SI: You set up this assembly line with the WAVES. Roughly how many WAVES were you managing at Pensacola?

HB: I think there were twenty-five of them at that time.

SI: Did you also have civilian workers then?

HB: Civilian and enlisted. It's a mixture of all of them.

SI: How many people were you in charge of there?

HB: Usually, it was about close to three hundred.

SI: Just in the A&R section?

HB: Yes; even more than that at Pearl. There was; I can't remember. It was a goodly number, though.

SI: At Pensacola, when you were in charge, how did the WAVES, the civilians and the enlisted men get along?

HB: You always had problems, just like you have problems with any human being put in a confined thing and having to work together. Somebody's going to bitch if somebody thinks they're getting more than they're getting. You just play it and hope you can smooth it over and, of course, you had to always write the reports up as to who should get this and who shouldn't get that, like, I had a chief by the name of Gorski, who was five-by-five, and he must have had a neck like this, [very thick]. ... The word came out, said, "Every morning, the whole division had to exercise." He came to me. He says, "Mr. Bultman, you going to buy my pants and shirt?" I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "If I've got to exercise and I start splitting them, who's going to pay for them?" [laughter] I mean, comical things like that, but they do it. I had the battery shop and a kid would come in there and he said, "I need some more dungarees." I said, "Why?" He says, "The acid spilled all over you [me]." I says, "Oh, Jesus." I mean, these are the kind of problems you get. You've got to just take care of it when it comes. That's all.

SI: Did most of the people under your command have some sort of mechanical training or background, or did you have to train many of them from scratch?

HB: Well, that's what I said, that they were shipping box makers as instrument people. Some had it, some didn't have it. In the Navy, the Navy trains its own personnel, as far as enlisted is concerned, but, when you hire civilians, they have a grade that's given them by Civil Service. ... That's a hard thing to take and bump into the military system and correct. I don't know how it is today. ...

SI: How did both the enlisted men and the officers feel about the civilians? Was there any resentment or did you get along?

HB: To the civilians?

SI: Yes.

HB: They bitched about them, just like the civilians bitched about the enlisted men. I mean, that's the reason I said, "Enlighten me," to the Skipper, because I would sit up there and wait for them. It was almost like a line would come [to my desk], start in the morning, and especially when you took over the personnel job. I mean, you could lose your good mind on some of the stupid remarks that they make.

SI: Did it ever evolve into any ...

HB: Fisticuffs?

SI: Yes.

HB: Yes, I imagine. I didn't see too many, because the Chief, my buffer, would get into it before they could get too far.

SI: I have seen, in other areas where civilians and military personnel worked together, that the civilians made much more money and it would really get on the servicepersons' nerves.

HB: It depends on the personnel, truthfully. ... Give you an idea; certain enlisted personnel would go up in grade and, if they were a constant troublemaker, you could see [that] their record is almost like the stock market, up and down, up and down, up and down. Same thing goes anywhere. They can get to a high peak, and then, do a jackass thing and knock them all the way down again, like, one of my collateral duties was defense attorney for guys who were put on general court-martial. So, I had to defend a young man for oral sodomy and I got over and I presented twenty-six witnesses. He got a clean acquittal, couldn't be in two places at the same time, and on the board of the thing was an attorney from California. ... He came down afterwards. He said, "Mr. Bultman, why don't you give us the last guy first and forget about the first twenty-five?" I said, "Why don't you get an attorney to be defense counsel, because I'm an engineer? All I know is, I can take you step-by-step until I know you're going to be convinced." [laughter] Then, I sat on the board and it's a little different than our jurisdiction that we have, [the] jurisprudence that we have here. They don't have a book for them which says, "If you've done thus and so, you can get a minimum of this much, a maximum of that much." It's whatever the judge determines and reg it. Well, in the Navy, ... you have the head of the board and it's a five-man, usually, thing, and they usually look at the junior officers and say, "What do you think he should get?" [laughter] It's hard to take it, sit and tell somebody that you're going to do things. ... We had one case where the guy fell in love with the girl and she was cheating on him. So, he took the Lewis machine gun and shot the house up. Well, what are you going to do to the poor guy? He's going to get in trouble for that? I mean, different things like that. It's an experience I can never go back and relive, but I can remember it. That's it.

SI: Was it at Pearl Harbor or Pensacola that the guy shot up the house?

HB: Pearl, in Honolulu. Shore patrol brought him in.

SI: Did you often have to go out and rescue your own men from either the shore patrol or the civilian police?

HB: No, no, like, Cruz was the chief in charge of the parachute loft and he was the one that was always making chief and going back down to seaman. ... When he was with me, ... he forged a liberty pass and got loaded in Honolulu. ... His time is up and I called the loft and I said, "Where's Cruz?" The answer was, "He's ashore. He got liberty." I says, "He didn't get any liberty." I said, "Get him on the phone, you know where he is, and get him back here." So, about ten minutes later, I get a telephone call. It was Cruz. "Mr. Bultman, this is Cruz." [Editor's Note: Mr. Bultman imitates slurred speech.] I said, "Yes?" I said, "You've got to beat the shore patrol to get here, so, you'd better get your butt in here." He didn't make it. [laughter]

SI: How well did you get along with your chiefs? How much did you rely on them?

HB: Your life depends on it, kid. They're the backbone. There's no two ways [about it]. They know as much about the Navy as anybody does. ... For instance, in the parachute [training], ... the few times we ... were able to jump, we would go over to ... Wheeler Field and bail out of a DC-3. ... If you lost the ring [attached to the ripcord], because, usually, you took the ring, when it came off, slid it over [your hand], so [that] it's hanging on your wrist. We had a little Spanish guy that was with us and he pulled his chute and it started to trail. Now, he has a chest pack on that the Chief packs. So, when he saw it was trailing, he got scared and he pulled the other one. Well, just as he pulled the other one, the other first one blossomed. So, he's trying to hold this one in and he lost two rings. So, two rings is two cases of beer. [laughter] So, everybody that jumped, including me and everybody else, that night, we would go over to the quarters and ... drink beer and talk. ... That was the difference between, shall we say, the Navy after December 7th and the Navy before. I don't think there was as close an officer-[enlisted] man relation as there was prior to that.

SI: Many men have said that there was more of a division between the enlisted men and the officers before Pearl Harbor. The line was very clear and you did not cross it.

HB: Sharp, yes. Afterward, it wasn't, because we were all civilians, as I was, "US Naval Reserve," thank God. [laughter]

SI: Your job was very technical in nature.

HB: Yes.

SI: Did you feel that you were always supplied with what you needed to get the job done?

HB: There were SNAFUs all over the place. For instance, ... when I left Pensacola, I came up to Pioneer Engineering of the Bendix Corporation for a two-week's course in the fluxgate compass, and that was ... in Philadelphia and we were taught what materials we needed, what supplies should be furnished and everything else. You can lay all this thing out and, if it doesn't follow through, you're using any kind of equipment you can to get it done. Things sometimes worked beautifully, sometimes don't; depends on where you are.

SI: What would you do to make-do with what you had? Can you give us an example?

HB: You salvage, salvage from one to the next, to get it to work. That's all.

SI: As the technology changed, you received training to keep up with the technology.

HB: Oh, yes, definitely, definitely.

SI: Would they teach you where you were or would they send you on these trips?

HB: No, it depends, like, I was in Pensacola, ... going to be shipped out to COMMARGIL, which was the command staff for the Marshall-Gilbert Islands [campaigns]. They wanted somebody that could go to each of the PB Y squadrons in that area to help them out. So, they

trained me, before I left the States, to go out, but most of the times, in Pearl, they had classes and whatnot for different people there.

SI: Would the training focus on repairing these devices, the new compasses or other systems, or would you actually be installing them and integrating them into the aircraft?

HB: Both.

SI: Both?

HB: Yes, because you're overhauling. You take them apart and you repair them and you put them back together, and then, you install it again.

SI: What do you remember about how the technology changed while you were in the service? What are some of the advances that stand out in your memory?

HB: You have bookshelves ... with engineering changes of equipment and everything else that had to be incorporated. ... If the carrier came in and dumped the planes off, all those that hadn't been corrected prior to ... when she took off the first time had to be done, if you had the time, before she was going out again. That's all. You just kept up with the times. It's just like your automobiles and your automobile industry, as far as the dealers here [are concerned]. If there's certain changes that have to be done that they haven't made in the factory and they finally come up, they've got to make them at the agency.

SI: How long were you at Pensacola before you were sent to the COMMARGIL staff?

HB: Six to eight months, something like that. Then, I went back out in the Pacific, then, came back to Lakehurst. "Tell Mother, 'Take your star out of the window. Your son is in LTA [lighter-than-air].'" [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that you were trained before you went out to COMMARGIL.

HB: Yes.

SI: Where did that training take place?

HB: Well, it was in Philadelphia.

SI: Okay, that was the Bendix training session.

HB: Yes.

SI: You went out to Honolulu, and then, you were sent further west.

HB: Sent to [the] Marshall Islands.

SI: Which island did you get to first? Was it Eniwetok?

HB: Eniwetok, no. We were on Ebeye. Ebeye was in an atoll of the Kwajalein group. Ebeye was where the staff of [COM]MARGIL was stationed. We had no trees on the island. [laughter] It was a coral island. I mean, it was just a place of duty. The PBVs came in there and we had a squadron there. ... I don't have a picture. You asked about liberty. When you're out there, you get one liberty. You get in a boat and you could go to another island where they have trees and you play ball. [laughter]

SI: Can you describe what the facilities were like out there and if your duties were any different?

HB: Well, we lived in a tent, we ... did our own wash, we made our own washing machines, we grew vegetables for ourselves. We had a mess hall and we had Australian lamb, day in, day out, morning, noon and night. [laughter] You'd go in there and they'd say, "What's for breakfast?" "Baa." [laughter] ... Again, it was in combat. What the heck? You can't expect to have anything else but that.

SI: While you were stationed there, what was your first objective?

HB: Objective was to get the fluxgate compasses in all the patrol planes. The second was to see that they had the facilities for repairing them, installing them and calibrating them, and you figure you're starting with Espiritu Santo, way down south, all the way up the chain to Eniwetok, and the carriers were now pulling into Eniwetok and dropping the planes off, so, ... you got work in that area, too. ... Everything moved out another step, and this was before they went into the Philippines and any of that came up.

SI: Where you were stationed, how far were you from wherever the combat zone was at that time?

HB: It was all over there. They could have come there. ... Actually, a lot of the fighting out there was sea battles and you've seen [them], there's the write-ups of those, Coral Sea and whatnot, but they're all in that area. Wherever the Jap fleet decided to go, the Americans did the same way.

SI: What I am aiming at is, were you ever in danger of air raids? Did you ever go through an air raid?

HB: There weren't any, but we could have been [attacked] at any time. I was down in Tarawa and went up to Bougainville, when the battle was still in the pass up there, because we had a squadron that was in the base there. ... I know, at night, we slept in slit trenches and you know these Sikhs that they have in India, big six-foot guys? ... When it got dark, you'd be in the slit trench and these guys had nothing but loin clothes on and, that night, ... they'd take up off for the pass, all alone. I got on a plane going from Bougainville to Noumea and I was the only white man on that plane. They were all Sikhs. ... They took out one of these five-gallon cans of peaches and he took this bayonet of his, with two fingers, took the top out, stuck a peach and

stuck it in my face and said, “You want it?” “Damn right I want it.” [laughter] Oh, they were big people, I’ll tell you.

SI: Did you have much interaction with other Allied forces?

HB: Yes. ... Well, at Pearl, we got the different ships [that] came through there, tied up. We saw them. We had “Mutt and Jeff” at one time. I remember, ... off of one of the English ships, ... certain of the piers that were off of Ford were like “Ts” and the causeway came down, the gangway came down, on one end of one pier, and these guys were loaded. ... I never got a drink, but I always wanted to get one, because the English served whiskey aboard ship, and these two guys must have been loaded. [laughter] They came down that thing, right off the pier, right into the water. [laughter] There are a lot of funny experiences you’re reminded of and whatnot, but, no, the Aussies are a lot like Americans. The English are more reserved, but what the heck? I forgot the English ship that went out to the Pacific and was sunk out there, near Shanghai or in that area.

SI: *Prince of Wales*?

HB: I don’t know whether it was the *Prince of Wales* or it was a cruiser that was out that way.

SI: While you were out there on Ford Island, it was pretty Spartan living. Were you able to keep in contact with home?

HB: There was always mail coming in. No, I guess your fun time was when you walked out along the water and you’re looking for cat’s-eyes. Cat’s-eyes are ...

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

SI: This continues an interview with Henry J. Bultman, Jr., on November 17, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. You were telling us how you would look for cat’s-eyes.

HB: Cat’s-eyes, and I found two and, after I came back [from] there, with a short stop in Pearl, I got into Honolulu and I got a jeweler to make two earrings for me. I was going to show them to somebody, I don’t know who at that time, took them to my room and, the next thing I know, they disappeared. [laughter] ... The fish out there, ... their colors are dramatic, I’m telling you. They’re beautiful. We had one PBY-2 that was wrecked out there, that they just left it there. It was almost like a raft for somebody to [use]. You could sit on it. We had one guy out there sitting on it and this octopus came up and put one of its tentacles on it. [It was like] you were seeing [one of] these cartoons of him walking on water, [laughter] that’s how fast he got back to shore, scared to death. There were a lot of funny things, a lot of good things out there. You remember the good ones and forget the bad ones, as much as you can.

SI: Were these PBYs that you were working on doing search-and-rescue type operations then?

HB: No. They were all doing search. They were looking, always. In other words, you’d start at one island and the PBY would go out so far, swing, come back in. ... Each one would have a

segment. They were looking for the Japs all the time, because that's a big, wide-open thing, like I told you. The reason the fluxgate compasses were there [was], you could leave one island and fly two degrees and you'd miss that goddamn island coming back, and then, where are you? You're in nothing but big, old ocean. My cousin came to Hickam Field in a P-38, and he had the P-38 with the seventy-five-[millimeter cannon], I think, in the nose, and I went over to see it, because I'd never seen a '38 and the two props, the "Y," and one of them's hanging. ... I looked at one of them and it's dripping oil and I know he's got a hydromatic prop, and I asked him, I said, "Aren't you going to get somebody to stop that leakage?" He says, "Why? All it'll do is freeze in that pitch. I'll fly it that way." I said, "Yes, but there's a lot of water out there." I said, "Jack, for crying out loud." He says, "They tell me, 'Ditch it.'" I said, "Yes, but who's going to pick you up?" That was the Army's [way], but he lived through it, because I saw him after the war. [laughter]

MJ: Were you able to keep in touch with your brother at all?

HB: My brother came through Pearl. That's the first time I had seen my brother in a couple of years and, [as my] kid brother, he didn't drink. I took him to the officers' club. I never saw somebody drink so much in my life. [laughter] He says, "I need a piece of equipment." I said, "I'm not going to tell you how you're supposed to legally get it, but I can tell you, you send your chief down and find it. Pick it up and walk off with it and suffer the consequences afterwards." [laughter] ... That's the first time I saw him, when he went through there, in two years. Then, he came back. He's now living in New Orleans, still there. He's ninety-five percent blind. He was an internist and he's living in an assisted living, with the rest of the blind internists.

SI: How long were you out in the Pacific the second time?

HB: The second time, about a year.

SI: You were just going from island to island.

HB: Yes.

SI: Which island were you on the longest?

HB: Well, Ebeye, E-B-E-Y-E, yes. That was the staff's island. I was there most of the time, but ... they had planes that flew [all over]. Why, you could pick up some guy going somewhere, bum a ride, to get to the next place. I got down to Guadalcanal and the airport manager, so-to-speak, or whatever you want to call him in those days, came to me and he says, "Mr. Bultman, where did you get your orders?" I said, "They were just ordered to me to come down here and check out your PBYs." He said, "We had no indication, and you know, if that ever got to General MacArthur, he'd have a conniption fit." I said, "Well, you can tell him now. Here's a copy of it," but, no, it's like anything else. ... I don't know whether I showed you this, but ... I got to a point [where] you kept a thin copy of everything else, ... of all your orders and whatnot. The second copy, they were yours. That thing is since '41.

SI: For the record, we are looking at a notebook, about two inches thick, filled with papers and copies of orders.

HB: Yes. You just hang onto them.

SI: Even though it was wartime, there was still a lot of this military bureaucracy that you had to deal with.

HB: Oh, definitely. “You’re in my territory.” That’s the reason that we always got Australian beef, because all the ships brought everything to MacArthur.

SI: How did you and your men feel about the Army, and MacArthur in particular?

HB: I didn’t like the bugger. [laughter] No, I thought, look, ... if you saw those pictures when he went into Mindanao, getting off of a landing craft, I heard, I don’t know how true it is, that that must have been rehearsed three or four times before. I mean, he was all show. I mean, everybody under him did all the goddamn work. That’s the way we felt about him.

SI: Being in the staff area, did you interact often with the higher brass, or at least see them?

HB: Oh, you rubbed elbows with a lot of them. I mean, I bumped into “Bull” [Admiral William F.] Halsey. I bumped into a number of them, talked to them, but they’re all just human beings like we are. They just have a different job than we have. That’s all.

SI: What do you remember about meeting Bull Halsey and some of the other higher-ups?

HB: I have very little recollection right now, if you want to know the truth. [laughter] ... We got in and said, “Howdy,” and whatnot. Something else was going on. He was secondary. [laughter]

SI: While you were out there, you were based on Ebeye, but you would be sent to all these other locations.

HB: Yes.

SI: Do any of them stand out in your memory as being particularly memorable or strange? You were always at the same job.

HB: Well, on the island of Apamama [also known as Abemama], they had a disease in which it looks like a ringworm. ... The chickens had it, the pigs had it, and, especially, the bare-breasted women had it, [laughter] and it was the most ugly-looking thing, and I asked the guy who was [in charge]; I’m trying to think of what they called his title. ... He took care of all the natives, moved them, so [that] they didn’t conflict with the Army and whatnot, and he told me that they were trying, at that time, arsenic, to cure it, and it did a good job, supposedly, but I asked him, “How did some of the natives get to be redheaded?” and he told me that, at one time, there was a Norwegian redhead down [there] that was a missionary. [laughter] I said, “Well, he did his job

good, I guess.” I have other pictures. I have pictures of churches that were put up in Noumea, in Tarawa, and whatnot, that I happen to [collect]. I didn’t take them, but ... somebody had them down there and I asked him [for a copy], bummed one off of this guy and one off of another.

SI: When you went into places like Tarawa and elsewhere, how soon after the battle to take the island would you get in there?

HB: Well, as far as the Marshall Islands [are concerned], I was only a week behind the invasion, but, [for] the others, it was long afterwards. The only one that was still going on when I was there was up into Bougainville, near the gap up there.

SI: You would see the aftermath of the battles for the Marshalls and Bougainville.

HB: Yes, that’s it. I never got, thank God, any more [combat] after December 7th, where I saw enough bullets flying.

MJ: Were you receiving any news of the war in Europe?

HB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. When you stood duty, I mean, the Teletype was always on, ... the communications system was always there. You could always pick up [news] and there was a lot of scuttlebutt that was going on, that you didn’t know whether it was right, wrong or whatnot. You hope that you get the right poop, but we knew we were surviving and, if we were surviving, then, they were doing as well as we were, we thought, from what we could hear, because, ... I think, for the first year-and-a-half after December 7th, everything was questionable, operating with three little carriers against about fifteen, as far as the Japs had, until the production started to catch up. Then, everything started to generate.

SI: When did you have the feeling that the turning point had been passed?

HB: I guess when I left the Marshall-Gilbert Islands. ... Well, first of all, Midway was the biggest turning point. We knew something big was going on in the Pacific, because ... A-20s, from the Army, came and landed at Pearl and we installed torpedoes in the bomb bays of the A-20s and, [when] they had to land those things, they only had, I think, twelve inches between the nose and the torpedo when they landed. So, they had to really grease them in. We also put automatic turrets in a lot of the PB2Y-2s that went out. They didn’t have them. They just had the swivel mounts. I mean, when you’re doing rush work to get certain things like that done, you know that things [are] being really generated, and then, after it was over, I saw ... the TBF that came back on nothing but the automatic pilot. ... I could never count the number of holes that were in that plane. I don’t know how it ever flew back, truthfully, but that was the difference in aircraft out there. Our craft was sturdy, could take shot, where the Japs’ were light, the most beautiful finish on the outside, no rivets showing or whatnot, faster than hell, but they learned to make a pass and keep going, use all the speed there was afterwards.

SI: In your work, did you get a sense that some planes were more sturdy or reliable than others?

HB: Yes, oh, yes. ... I got to fly on the old Sikorsky, which was a patrol plane at the start of the war, which was fabric wings, and then, they were phased out when the PBYs came in, and then, the PBYs changed. Each one [model] changed radically, as to ... how good they were. Then, the fighter planes that we repaired were F4Fs, and then, the F6Fs, and then, you got some dive bombers, the SBDs to the SB2Cs, and then, you got torpedo planes. From the TBDs, which were only 125 miles an hour and like sitting ducks, they got the TBFs, that had the turret in the back and everything else. It's the thing that "Old Man" Bush [President George H. W. Bush] flew. ... Everything, you could see improvements. The Brewster [F2A Buffalo] fighter, which was a beautiful looking thing, looked like it was a racer, an aircraft racer, big engine, looked like it was flying strictly on the engine, but the wheel system was terrible. They folded up more times than they knew what to do with. You saw all the changes coming. When they were coming rapid, as you say, you just had to keep up with every change that there was.

SI: Would you have any role in instructing the pilots on how to use the new equipment, or was that conducted separately?

HB: ... The only time I had any [involvement] that way was on the fluxgate compasses, but [not in] the overhaul and repair of the general aircraft, because fluxgate compasses were new at that time. The old magnetic compass was giving them trouble.

SI: You mentioned that you and everyone else, before December 7th, felt as though FDR wanted us to get into the war. How did you feel about that? Did you feel as though that was the right thing to do or were you against that?

HB: Well, you remember, you see, I later became a political entity, [laughter] but we knew that we were helping them, [the Allies]. We were furnishing them everything. We were giving them lease-lend [lend-lease] destroyers. We were doing everything else and we knew that Hitler was a bum, so, we were trying to get rid of him, but ... Roosevelt had said that none of our boys were going to ... go to war. Now, he made that promise and he had to get out of it some way and he got out of it by letting them attack Pearl. That's the sum and substance of the whole thing. ... At least my feelings have always been that way.

SI: How did you feel about Roosevelt during the war?

HB: As I asked one kid, he was about nine years old, I said, "Who's the President?" He said, "Roosevelt." I says, "Who was the President before him?" "I don't know. Was there ever a President before him?" [laughter]

MJ: How did you feel when Roosevelt passed away? Was there widespread sadness?

HB: Oh, there was sadness, sure, but remember when they had that conference at Yalta? There was a good friend of my father's that took shorthand and he took shorthand at the Yalta Convention and he heard the Russians talking. ... I don't know whether he could speak Russian or what it was, but they said, "You're dealing with a dying man." They figured he was dying then.

SI: In-between your tours in the Pacific, were you ever able to get back to New Orleans?

HB: Yes. I got back for, I think it was Christmas, before I went to Pensacola, because I came back on the *Louisville* [CA-28] some time in November, I guess it was. She was going for overhaul and I got a ride back on her and I went from there to New Orleans. From New Orleans, I went into Pensacola. I got five days, I think, or something like that.

SI: What was it like to see your family during the war? Did you stay with them?

HB: Oh, sure.

SI: Before the tape started, you showed me the telegram that you sent to them after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They must have been worried about you.

HB: Oh, yes.

SI: What was your homecoming like?

HB: No, I don't remember, today, ... exactly what happened. I just know I went home. That was all. [laughter]

SI: Do you remember seeing any differences in the city or in your neighborhood?

HB: Oh, everything changes. I mean, even today, I'm anxious to get back to New Orleans, to see what she looks like now, after [Hurricane] Katrina hit, because I was in New Orleans when we could jump off the front porch into about a foot-and-a-half or two feet of water, when I was growing up, and then, they made the spillway, which was up the river, which ... prevented flooding from the river, but Katrina came in the opposite way, and they had been dodging a bullet for a hundred years. It just didn't work this time. That's all.

SI: This is a different topic, but do you remember any of the storms that you lived through?

HB: Oh, yes. We had horrible storms, but, as I say, we dodged a bullet. We had floods. In New Orleans, believe it or not, we used to have canals and we used to ride our bikes down in them. Then, they covered them over and those canals were big enough that you could drive a car through them and, see, I was later mayor of our town, in New Jersey ...

SI: Springfield, New Jersey.

HB: Yes, and we had terrible floods there and I'd have to go around and see the people and you'd go in their cellar and they'd have marks on the wall for each time it flooded, how high it came. ... I was in New Orleans and I had another guy that was on the council [who] was down there with me and I took him into the tunnels and showed him the pumps and the pump wouldn't even fit in this room. It's too big. I mean, they had tremendous pumps to keep the water out of there. ... I was telling Bob Planer, I said, "Bob, this is what keeps New Orleans dry. ... If they don't work, we're going to drown. That's all." [laughter]

SI: Do you remember the flood in 1928? I believe it was 1928. [Editor's Note: Shaun Illingworth was referring to the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927.]

HB: I was eight years old, can't be sure.

SI: What do you remember about the Great Depression and how it affected your neighborhood?

HB: Well, I can remember, Mr. (Benanado?), ... in those days, was the corner store and my mother would send me down to Mr. (Benanado's?) to get a certain thing and he'd put it in the book. ... You did with, and you did without, at different times. We were fortunate that Mr. (Benanado?) said, "When times are good, you pay me." Even in those days, I loved aircraft, because I always built model airplanes, with balsa and whatnot. ... Mr. (Bernanado's?) store was below his house and he would allow me to go up on the porch, ... [with] the plane that I had ... made and cracked up and everything and repaired, and what I would do on the last one [was], these were rubber ones, not the gas ones, and I'd stuff it with tissue paper and put a little gasoline on it and light it and let it go off the porch. ... He was just a wonderful guy. He kept the whole area in food. ... My favorite food is red beans and rice, kid, that can keep you alive for a long time, and we still have it every so often. We got a ham that gets down to a certain point, that you use the bone, and what's left to make the red beans and rice.

SI: Was your father's employment affected at all by the Great Depression?

HB: No. He was part of Bultman's. So, it was the mortuary. [laughter] ... You've got to die, but you might not get paid for a while. That's all.

SI: Did he have trouble collecting?

HB: I don't remember those things. ... See, I had twenty-six first cousins. Tony Bultman started the business and only my father and my uncle, Fritz's father, ran the business. ... I can remember going down there all the time and whatnot. As a matter-of-fact, when we were growing up, my uncle used to tell my dad to, "Send your boy down here on the weekend, will you, so [that] he can knock some sense into my kid?" So, I'd go down there and stay with him, but it wasn't going to change him. Nothing's going to change [him].

SI: Did you spend much time at the mortuary? My research turned up a lot on the mortuary, descriptions of it, how Tennessee Williams wrote one of his plays [*Suddenly, Last Summer*] there.

HB: I couldn't tell you. I know I'd go down there. There's a story told that they had a black guy that ... started working there when he was real young and he went up into ... where they embalmed the bodies and whatnot. ... He was up there sweeping the floor or something and one of them either passed gas or had a muscle retraction or something, scared the living (willy?) out of him and, from that day, until he died, he was a drunk, but they never discharged him. They kept him all the time, because I'd go down there. When I was starting college, my brother had a godmother that gave him all kinds of presents and whatnot, and I said, "Leon, we need a car.

You've got the money. ... I'll keep [fix] the car if you buy one." So, we bought a Model A Ford and I'd go down there and they had the facilities down there, so [that] I could change the leaf springs when they would break. I remember, finally, when I was old enough and had kids, when I was in New Orleans for *Mardi Gras* and my dad was supposedly no longer an embalmer or whatnot and ... my dad got a telephone call and he says, "I've got to go down." I said, "What's wrong with the rest of them?" He says, "They're all drunk. It's *Mardi Gras*." So, he said, "You want to go with me?" and I said, "Well, you've never asked me before. Am I old enough?" [laughter] He says, "Yes." So, we took some tamales, which we bought on the corner, a six-pack of beer, and I said, "Do you think, after I've seen all this, I'm going to be able to eat the tamales and whatnot?" He said, "Sure you will." So, we go down there and he says, "Now, this is what your brother does." He says, "This is where they did an autopsy," he says, "and the doctors are a pain in the neck," but he says, ... "As I put this, all your body back together, I'm going to show you each one, and the colors inside your body are the most vivid, beautiful colors you've ever seen." It didn't bother me at all. I couldn't believe it, but he would tell me [that] the only time it got me is when he had to put the skull on top and he had to drill the skull. Then, it got [me] a little nervous and he said, "Now, I'm going to show you a stitch your mother don't even know," and he showed me how you stitch the skin across it, and you couldn't even see a stitch. So, I mean, my dad ... got awards ... as a make-up person for a body, afterwards, and everything else. He did his job good. That's all. He was a good dad, so, what the heck?

SI: How did you get interested in going to college and studying engineering?

HB: When I was in high school, I knew from that day on I was going to be an engineer of some sort. This idea, you're in the university [Rutgers] here, [of] going to the university and saying, "In the first year, I'm going to find out what I want to be," to me, I think it's bullshit. You have, in the back of your mind, something that you want to do. I knew, number one, I was a lousy language student. I knew I could do math pretty well and I liked history. ... I figured, "I'm going to be an engineer." That's what I stuck with. My brother was a linguist. He became a medical doctor. ... You [today's students] can pick your subjects, when you want to take them. When I went to school, we went from eight to five, fixed course, no bonuses. Only in your senior year, you got to pick between Spanish and German. ... I took German and we had a German doctor, professor, there and he used to say, "*Gotten himmel*, you've got a goddamn German name, but you don't know German from nothing," and then, he got my brother and my brother was just the opposite. He says, "How is it [that] two brothers can be so different than [as] you two?"

SI: Did you live at Tulane or at home?

HB: No, I lived at home. No, in those days, they didn't have that many [on campus students]. If they lived [at school], they lived in ... rooming houses around the school.

SI: Was there much student life?

HB: Oh, yes, plenty of student life. We had a lot of the Greek fraternities there. We had, oh, like the Green Backers, like everything.

SI: You mentioned that on your survey. What were the Green Backers?

HB: It's an organization for athletics, like, Tulane gave up boxing in my sophomore year. In my freshman year, I went out for boxing and Monk Simons was the boxing coach and he put in the paper that he had some freshmen there that, when they hit the big bag, it turned around and swung back and knocked them down. ... I went to him and I said, "Monk, I'm not going to come back for your boxing team if you make statements like that." [laughter]

SI: What other kind of activities were you involved with at Tulane?

HB: Well, I was in a fraternity. I was both in a Greek fraternity, and then, I was also in an academic fraternity, and then, they had the American Society of Chemical Engineers and all those. That was big at that time and whatnot.

SI: How did you get involved in chemical engineering? What led you to that particular branch?

HB: Electrical, ... I knew I ... wasn't interested in. Mechanical, I couldn't see a way clear. Chemical looked like what I wanted to do, because, ... of course, with the oil industries down there, the salt industries down there, they have a lot of things down there in that respect. No, it interested me more than mechanical or civil or any of the other engineering, and I knew damn well I wasn't never going to be an electrical engineer, because, even when I had to take a course in electrical, in the lab, being a "B," I took all the circuit breakers the first time when they asked me to hook up a circuit. My professor came to me and he said, "How come you took all the circuit breakers? What about the rest of these guys?" I said, "You told me in your lecture that you knew that it [the current] comes in here, and then, it comes out there, but you don't know what happened in the middle." I says, "I'm putting circuit breakers there. That's all I can tell you." [laughter]

SI: What kind of a career did you envision for yourself before you went in the Navy?

HB: I envisioned I was going to be working in a plant, and then, I would hopefully work my way up [to] plant manager and whatnot. As it was, I worked for Corn Products Refining Company, and then, I got an offer to come East here, because my wife was from the East and she had to come back here, and there was an instrument company. ... I never thought I could get into sales, but I got into sales, and then, finally, five men pooled their money to start this company and, after they got it [started], Bob Novotny was a mechanical engineer and I was a chemical engineer, so, he was the inside man and I was the outside man. ... Oh, I would call on the labs in the companies around and talk to the people in the labs and say, "What kind of tests are you looking for?" and they would tell me what they were looking for and we would present them, on eight-by-eleven sheets, our concept of how we would perform this test. Now, they could comment on it and ask for changes and whatnot, but, until they decided to order one, there was no cost. So, in this way, we were doing research, so-to-speak. If they decided to buy a piece of equipment, we would guarantee to make it operate as we had specified, but, ... if it worked right and the American Society for Testing Materials adopted it, we wanted the rights to be able to manufacture it. So, when I started, we started with five instruments and, when I left the company, we had a catalog of two hundred and we had a good entrée with most places.

Now, well, twenty years since I was with them, the company is no longer in existence. Everybody I know that's in the company is deceased. I guess I'm about the "Last of the Mohicans" that way. ... I got to talking to a fellow at Princeton, who was head of the graduate school of polymer science, and he had an idea of making a series of miniature instruments for testing polymers. We had a little extruder, we had a molder, we had an impact tester, a torsion tester, and all on a little, bitty sample, that big, and this is the thing that the Japanese saw [and] it was like it lighted up their eyes. ... That's when they wanted to put it in Tokyo University. So, we had a good entrée that way, and then, we also built flammability testers, abrasion testers, you name it. ...

SI: What year did you come East?

HB: 1950.

SI: Your wife was a Jersey native.

HB: Maplewood.

SI: Did you meet her while you were stationed at Lakehurst or later?

HB: Lakehurst. Her father owned the Idle Hour in Point Pleasant and, ... when I blew my knee, I had a cast on from my hip to my ankle. I drove a car, too, shift. [laughter] I put this foot with the cast on there and I worked everything else with the other foot, and I happened to go in the Idle Hour and I met my wife there and the thing was, she said, "My dad will not let us go out until the season's over." I said, "Fine, I can wait." So, now, come next year in April, we'll be married sixty years.

SI: Congratulations.

MJ: Did your wife take on any responsibilities during the war?

SI: My wife wasn't old enough. ... At that time, she was going to Skidmore, in a business course. The only thing they did there, and she'll tell you all about it, if you ask her, up there; ... Skidmore was a very small college. ... In the town of Saratoga, they had nothing but houses. ... They had to do all their laundry, they had to serve in the mess and everything else like that. Skidmore now is grown. It's outside of town and they ... have been given wonderful grants and whatnot. As a matter-of-fact, ... my wife went to Skidmore, my daughter went to Skidmore, my granddaughter went to Skidmore and my daughter's husband went to Skidmore, [laughter] and I'm only a damn Rebel that's up here to Christianize you Yankees. [laughter]

SI: Since we were talking about Lakehurst, could you tell us a little bit about your duties at Lakehurst?

HB: When I appeared at Lakehurst, Admiral [Charles E.] Rosendahl was in charge and, on the second day there, the Admiral called me in and said, "Mr. Bultman, who gave you orders to Lakehurst?" This is what I'm talking about, territorial, and I said, "Well, Admiral, there was a

commander in the Navy that I got into trouble with and, when I got out in the Marshall Islands, I had a friend that told me they were going to build another assembly and repair [station] and he was going to be the boss. My friend must have told him that he saw me. Now, he's still looking for me. So, a friend of mine at BUPERS [Bureau of Navy Personnel], ... I got a hold of him and I said, 'Please, find me a hole that he can't find me [in].' ... He sent me to you." I said, "I know heavier-than-air. Now, you're going to tell me all about lighter-than-air," and he said, "Well, we'll try to instruct you," [laughter] but he was a very smart man. He knew what he was doing.

SI: Did you have much interaction with the Admiral?

HB: He was a very nice guy. The only question he could never answer me [was], I said, "You know, Admiral, we know by engineering [that] we've lost a lot of rigid ships because the force is [one] way up on one end [and] in the opposite direction on the other end. It's going to be a structural failure. We haven't been able to correct that." He says, "You're right there." A lighter-than-air is a semi-rigid unit and it did a wonderful job of lining up all the ships in convoys, as far as keeping them in line and everything, close to shore, and it was a good sub looker, but they had to baby-sit that ship all the time it was inflated, because, if the pressure in that big balloon fell below a certain thing, it had to be completely overhauled, because it would wreck all the parts inside, but they did their job.

SI: You were again in charge of ...

HB: Instruments and whatnot, in the repair of it.

SI: How much of a change was it from heavier-than-air to lighter-than-air, in terms of workload and the way you did things?

HB: Oh, it was a lot less in lighter-than-air. You've got to realize that the pilots that flunked out of heavier-than-air could pass lighter-than-air. They didn't have as many. ... If you go up today in a blimp and the wind speed got above a certain thing, you stayed up there until the goddamn speed came down, because they couldn't land you.

SI: Were they still doing antisub patrols when you were there?

HB: I told you the story.

SI: Yes. I was not sure if that was before you got there. Can you talk at all about this problem you had with the commander?

HB: Well, I can tell you this. ... See, in Pensacola, I was in charge of ... the accessories and he had a report that he wanted due every month at a certain time. ... To get that report out, I would have done nothing but sit at that report from Day One to Day Thirty, and then, start again.

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

HB: For six months, he never caught it and, finally, he caught it at the same time I was having trouble with the WAVES, the first WAVES that were sent there, and he called me in and he said, "How come you're not doing the report as I say?" I said, "Admiral, if it meant anything, you'd have caught me earlier. Why did you take six months to catch it?" I said, "All you had to do was open the front pages of two of them and you'd see, from then on, it was all the same." He says, "I don't want you in my department anymore." I said, "Great. I'll go over to squadron and be an engineering officer." He said, "Go." So, that's where I was when they decided that they needed me out in the Marshalls. So, that's when I transferred to the squadron. I was there for a couple of weeks, really, and then, I got word and they shipped me out to Pioneer Engineering for fluxgate compass school, and then, straight out. I got to San Francisco. I had to take the train across country. I got diarrhea in Washington and I got on there and there was a master sergeant on the train doing the same thing, ... going to go over there. He said, "Wait until the next stop and I'll get you something." "Please." So, he got me, ... I don't know, some kind of brandy and he says, "Drink this and don't stop drinking. It'll bide you." Damn it, it did. We got to San Francisco and that was the best thing I think I ever did in the Navy. I got a ride on a Clipper ship, the old Pan American Clipper. The first time we got on it, we got over the Golden Gate and had complete electrical failure. So, they turned around and landed again. At this time, everybody that was on that plane went to the first bar and started drinking. [laughter] ... When they got us back out, at one o'clock that night, we took off and we got four hundred miles out. The skipper said, "I've got a drunken crew. That's all I know." He said, "We're four hundred miles out and it's the point of no return. We're going." We got there. But, you could sleep on those things, it was beautiful, it was the most palatial thing you've ever been on.

SI: How long were you at Lakehurst?

HB: Six to eight months, something like that. ... The war was over then.

SI: You were discharged from there. Did you ever consider making the Navy a career?

HB: Oh, yes. I considered it, but I went into Reserve and I took my two weeks every year, for about five years, but that was the time [that] everything was being cut back. They were chopping this thing and that thing. ... They were going to go down to about the same thing that they had ... when I first joined up. They were at their minimum [then] and that's what they were [heading towards], so, I figured I didn't want to stay in the Navy. So, I got a job with Corn Products and that's where I was.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your political career? First, what led you to get involved in politics?

HB: I moved into Springfield. There were two parties, of course, Republican and Democrat. We formed the Independents and we ran second in every election, never first. So, we finally agreed, all of us together, that we'd join the respective parties. So, being a Southerner, you'd think I'd be a Democrat. Well, I wasn't. [At] that time, I had a cousin that was starting the Republican Party down in the South and I joined the Republicans and I became a district head, and then, I became chairman, and then, they finally said, "You've got to run." I said, "I don't got to do nothing." He says, "Oh, come on, run." So, I ran and won and that was it, but, then,

from that, I became a probation officer, all temporary, all, you know, just collateral duties and, after the probation [duty], ... what the hell else was it that I got into? Something else; I don't know.

SI: You were on the board of health.

HB: That's all during politics, but, no, what I was getting at, trying to remember exactly, ... oh, besides, I was a friend of the court. In other words, I'd go into the courtroom in Springfield and, if the judge decided that a juvenile, or even an adult, needed a little talking to and explaining what the situation was before they ruined their life, then, I would take them in the side room and talk to them. For instance, at the time that the pooper scooper law came out, we had [a case where] one guy's dog pooped on the other one and they had a fistfight. So, one was suing the other one. They wouldn't talk to each other. They wouldn't do anything. So, I went in the judge's chambers with the two of them and I talked to them for half-an-hour and I wasn't getting anywhere. I said, "Look, fellows, let me just explain something to you. If one of you doesn't say 'I'm sorry' and shakes hands, you both are going to be fingerprinted, you both are going to be labeled. Now, do you want that?" So, when the two-hour period is coming [to an end], I said, "I quit. I'm going in right now." ... They said, "Wait a minute," one of them said, and he looked at the other guy. He didn't say anything, but they kind of nodded to each other. I said, "Well, let's hear it." So, one stuck their hand out and the other shook it and they said they were sorry. ... So, I walked in the court and I said, "Judge, we've got two guys that just changed their mind. He says, "Great. Get them out of here." Then, I'd have kids that ... got in an automobile accident and they were in court for the different things. I'd try to help them out and whatnot.

SI: Why did you decide to run for mayor?

HB: Somebody decided for me. I was city chairman. They decided they needed me to run. That's all.

SI: How long were you the mayor?

HB: I was on the council for three years and what we did was, we rotated the mayorship and the last was in 1970, [in] which I was the mayor. ... A number of times, they had problems in town where they said they would like for me to come back in and take over again. I said, "Forget it. I've had enough of it," and I had one woman stand on the corner and said, "You're a thief." I said, "Yes? I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll take you home with me, I'll give you all my books, all my bank accounts, and I want you to show me where I've stolen anything." But, you can take it just so long. I had no interest in going any further or doing anything else. ... We were there and, ... out of twenty-four communities in Union County, our tax rate was twenty-third. That's all we wanted to do, keep a good town going.

SI: You were on the committee around the time of the riots in Newark. Was there any spillover into your community?

HB: No, because, [at] Christmastime, Margie's mother and father usually had the party at their house and that's when they really burned Newark, about that [time of] year, and I remember, I

can't think of the gal's name that used to help Mrs. Dolan, she was a black girl, and I drove her home through Newark in that thing. I don't know. It was horrible to see and we avoided everywhere we could, but I got her home and she was safe and everything, but it didn't spillover near us, no.

SI: What did you see, burning buildings?

HB: Oh, they were fighting, and everything else. You didn't go down there and wave a flag. [laughter]

SI: In general, have you adjusted to living in New Jersey, having grown up in the South?

HB: Fine. I have no complaints at all. I'm alive, I'm kicking. I had a good company. Finally, Bob and I started to buy the company off the five old men and, one day, he came in and he says, "I'm sixty-five. How old are you?" I said, "I'm sixty-four." He says, "Who's going to buy us?" ... Being the outside guy, I knew a guy in Chicago, and he was a prince of a prince, and I said, "Are your people still interested in our company?" He said, "Yes," he was and I said, "Great. Why don't we get the lawyers together and see what they come up [with] on a price and we'll talk." So, December that, what was it, '85, something like that, [I] went to Chicago and [met] this gentleman and his wife. ... I was sitting next to his wife and I said, "I've got a question for you." She says, "What's that?" I said, "How come you allow your husband to buy something you've never seen?" She says, "Henry Bultman, you know I know what your company looks like." I says, "How do you know?" She says, "You know I've been seeing it." I said, "Okay, we'll go along with it," but they were wonderful. I just called and talked to them the other day, because I found a slip, not a slip, a form, that said I was in a retirement thing. I said, "I never got anything." So, I called his son, both he and his wife are dead now, and I called his son and I got him on the phone. I said, "Come on, tell me, what am I being screwed out of?" He said, "Well, I have to check." [laughter] No, I have no problems. ... I kid everybody about being a Rebel and up here to Christianize you Yanks, but I have never had any problems up here.

SI: Yes. I have heard that the lifestyle is very different.

HB: Oh, yes. Look, I only was twenty-one years in New Orleans, I was five years in service, or close to it, five years in Illinois, the rest of it's been in Jersey. So, I've been here in Jersey more than I've been anywhere else.

MJ: Did you find it difficult to go from military life back to civilian life?

HB: No, no problem.

MJ: Coming from the South, how did you react to people from the North in the service? Did you get along with everyone okay? What were the people that you were with like?

HB: I had no problem. Even up here, I can remember, when we had the company, we had a black guy there. If he had any problems, he didn't go to anybody else but me. ... I went home the Christmas I had told you all about and I remember going across the Gulf Coast and I stopped

in to see a Mr. Carter, who had lived around the corner from me. He was living over there and I walked in. ... He was sitting on the porch and I said, "Mr. Carter, you don't remember me, do you?" He says, "Something's familiar, but," he says, "I'm an old man." I said, "I understand." I said, "I'm Henry Bultman." He says, "Shhh, don't say it too loud." He says, "I want you to go in the kitchen." I said, "Okay, I'll go in the kitchen." So, I walked in the kitchen and I swung the door open and these two mummies are in there. They're end plates, five-by-five. "Henry Bultman, what the hell are you doing here?" [laughter] I mean, like it was a homecoming. I mean, they had taken care of us as kids. They were part of the family and everything else. ... [In] my brother's last telephone call, [he] says, "I was coming down the elevator and somebody stopped me." I said, "Who?" "She said, she told me to tell you hello." I said, "Who?" He said, "Charlotte Carter. She lived around the corner from us, you remember?" I said, "Yes." It's a small world, kid.

MJ: How did you feel about the atomic bombs?

HB: Happy. [laughter] Look, if you're going to lose a million men, [it] wasn't just going to be to get on the shore, because these people are, were fanatical. They've changed in the fifty years since the war, dramatically, from what they were then. I mean, they were radical at that time. I couldn't see ... having to go into Japan and beat every one of them down before they did anything.

SI: At the time, were you apprehensive about going to the Pacific?

HB: I was at Lakehurst when they dropped that bomb.

SI: Did you think that you might have to go back out to the Pacific if they had not?

HB: Definitely, and then, when the Korean War was on, I was still in the Reserves and they told me our unit was going to Korea, and that was the time I was moving to Jersey. ... I said, "I'm telling you ... good-bye. If you catch me, you got me." [laughter] I said, "Once is enough."

MJ: Did you join any veterans' organization after the war?

HB: I'm with the American Legion. I'm in [the] Pearl Harbor Survivors.

MJ: Do you still keep in touch with any other survivors?

HB: I lost touch with them about a year ago. ... We're getting fewer and farther apart. [laughter] I still have my license plate as a Pearl Harbor Survivor.

SI: Have you been back to Pearl Harbor since you left the service?

HB: On our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, I took my wife back there and took her over and showed her everything and saw what they had done there, everything. It makes you feel sad when you get there, especially in the [USS *Arizona*] Memorial.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record or anything you would like to say?

HB: You've drained me. [laughter]

SI: Some people like to end by saying something about their family.

HB: Well, I can tell you this. I had three girls, one boy. I have nine grandchildren. I have one grandchild, unfortunately, our daughter's child is mentally deficient, somehow, ... the gray matter got mixed, somehow. The kid is six-[foot]-two, but he has the brain of a five-year-old. They have a daughter that will go to Duke this fall. Now, just a month ago, I should say, my twenty-seven-year-old, oldest granddaughter, got married and she's happy as a lark. ... In the other daughter's family, I have a graduate from Washington College, I have a graduate from Babson College, I have another going to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and one at La Salle. Johns Hopkins, he's in Johns Hopkins, in his senior year. I have a linebacker at La Salle. I have a graduate from, my son's daughter, from Skidmore, I told you, and I have his other daughter [who] graduated from Dartmouth. She has taught English in the Marshal Islands. They have a brother who is now at Monmouth College. So, that's the sum and substance of my family. Everything else stops with us, Margie and I. We're the last of the oldies. I thank you all.

SI: Thank you very much for coming in. We really appreciate this. This concludes our interview with Henry J. Bultman, Jr., on November 17, 2006.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Michael G. Johnson 12/11/06
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 2/8/07
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/13/07
Reviewed by Henry J. Bultman, Jr. 4/17/07