

JACK ROGO

PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT
VALLEY NATIONAL BANK BLDG. SUITE 203
10221 RIVERSIDE DRIVE
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.
TELEPHONE 761-0173

MEMBER
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA ACCOUNTANTS

ENROLLED TO PRACTICE BEFORE THE
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 2, 1964

DR. GORDON W. PRANGE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

DEAR DR. PRANGE:

THIS IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF YOUR LETTER DATED JULY 30, 1964. HOW UNFORTUNATE THAT OUR PATHS CROSSED AT THE WRONG TIME: WHEN YOU TRIED TO REACH ME AT MY OFFICE I WAS VISITING FRIENDS IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND.

YOU HAVE ASKED A DIFFICULT TASK OF ME IN TRYING TO REMEMBER DETAILS OF AN EPISODE THAT TOOK PLACE OVER TWENTY YEARS AGO. THE DIFFICULT PART IS TO BE OBJECTIVE AND ACCURATE.

TO BEGIN WITH, I WAS AN ENLISTED MAN SERVING A SIX YEAR ENLISTMENT (FEB. 14, 1940 TO FEB. 16, 1946). I ENLISTED IN LOS ANGELES AND TOOK MY BASIC TRAINING AT THE SAN DIEGO NAVAL TRAINING STATION. LITTLE DID I KNOW, AS I SAILED UNDER THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE ON MY NINETEENTH BIRTHDAY (MAY 22, 1940), THAT I WOULDN'T TOUCH THE UNITED STATES UNTIL FORTY THREE MONTHS LATER. I WAS STATIONED IMMEDIATELY AT THE SUPPLY DEPT., NAVAL AIR STATION OR COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS FORD ISLAND. ON DEC. 7TH I WAS ALREADY THERE FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS AND WAS RATED AS STOREKEEPER THIRD CLASS. MY DUTIES, AT THAT TIME, WAS CLERICAL IN NATURE. I FINISHED MY ENLISTMENT AS AVIATION CHIEF STOREKEEPER.

SUNDAY, DEC. 7TH STARTED OUT AS AN ORDINARY DAY. WHEN I AWOKE, I REMEMBER THE WEATHER WAS MILD AND SUNNY. I GOT DRESSED IN MY UNDRRESSED WHITE, WHICH WAS THE UNIFORM OF THE DAY FOR SUNDAYS, WASHED UP AND WENT TO THE MESS HALL FOR BREAKFAST. WHILE I WAS HAVING BREAKFAST THE ATTACK BEGAN. I FELT SOME ANXIETY WHEN I HEARD THE BOMBS EXPLODE AND FELT THE CONCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, THE SCUTTLEBUTT STARTED THAT THE ARMY WAS HOLDING MANOEUVRES. EVEN THOUGH THE BOMBINGS PERSISTED I ONLY GAVE IT A PASSING THOUGHT. THIS WAS THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING IN THE MESS HALL.

WHEN I FINISHED BREAKFAST I WENT OUT INTO THE LANAI OF THE MAIN BUILDING AND LOOKED NORTHEAST ALONG BATTLESHIP ROW. I COULD SEE THE USS CALIFORNIA LISTING, THE USS ARIZONA BURNING AND THE ACRID SMELL OF SMOKE WAS IN THE AIR. AT THIS TIME A PLANE FLEW LOW OVERHEAD, I WAVED AT THE REAR GUNNER AND HE RETURNED MY WAVE. I KNOW THIS SOUNDS NAIVE, BUT WHEN I SAW THE RISING SUN INSIGNIA ON THE PLANE I KNEW IT WAS NOT ONE OF OURS, BUT NOW KNOWING AIRPLANE RECOGNITION OR MARKINGS I STILL DID NOT KNOW OR REALIZE WHO WERE DOING THE BOMBINGS. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I WATCHED THE ATTACK, BUT I DO KNOW I WAS ABSOLUTELY FASCINATED BY THE AIRCRAFT MAKING THEIR TORPEDO RUNS AND THE DIVE BOMBERS COMING IN FROM HIGHER ALTITUDES. ABOUT THIS TIME IT SUNK INTO MY THICK SKULL THAT THIS WAS FOR REAL, BATTLESHIP ROW WAS REALLY ABLAZE.

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I WENT BACK TO MY LOCKER AND CHANGED INTO MY DUNGAREES FOR I

DIDN'T WANT TO DIRTY MY 'WHITES'. SOMEONE CAME INTO THE LANAI AND ORDERED ME BACK INTO THE MESS HALL. THE MESS HALL WAS ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE MAIN BUILDING. THIS BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED OF CONCRETE AND STEEL AND OFFERED THE BEST PROTECTION AND SAFETY IN THE VICINITY. IN THE MESS HALL I MET E.R. BISHOP, A VERY GOOD FRIEND OF MINE, AND WE PROTECTED OURSELVES BY GETTING UNDER THE MESS TABLES. THERE WERE MANY SAILORS IN THE MESS HALL DOING THE SAME THING AS THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE TO DO SINCE THE NAVAL AIR STATION HAD NO^N ANTI-AIRCRAFT INSTALLATIONS. WHILE UNDER THE TABLE EATING RAISINS, (WHICH WAS TO BE OUR LUNCH), I COULD LOOK NORTHEAST^{WEST} OUT THE WINDOW INTO THE SKY. I SAW SMOKE SPIRALING UPWARDS AND PLANES CROSSING THE VIEW. ALL AT ONCE A JAPANESE PLANE FLEW BY WITH ITS WING BURNING FURIOUSLY. THIS WAS THE PLANE THAT HIT THE FANTAIL OF THE USS CURTIS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY I WAS QUITE NERVOUS AND SCARED. I KEPT WONDERING HOW CLOSE TO US THE BOMBS WERE BURSTING AND I WAS PETRIFIED THAT ONE MIGHT HIT OUR BUILDING. I KNEW, HOWEVER, THAT I WOULD RATHER BE OUT IN THE OPEN WHERE I COULD SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON THAN HIDING UNDER A MESS TABLE. WHEN THEY CALLED FOR VOLUNTEERS I WAS READY AND WILLING.

I WENT TO OUR SMALL BOAT LANDING WHERE THE SCENE WAS UTTER CONFUSION. THE ATTACK WAS IN ITS FINAL PHASE AND THE LANDING WAS ON FIRE AND BURNING FURIOUSLY. BECAUSE OF THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF BATTLESHIP ROW TO THE AIR STATION, MEN WERE SWIMMING TO SHORE THROUGH BURNING OIL. OUR SMALL BOATS WERE IN THE WATER PICKING UP SURVIVORS AND CASUALTIES. I PULLED ONE MAN OUT OF A BOAT OR THE WATER (I'M HAZY ABOUT THE DETAILS). HIS CLOTHING WAS BLACK AND OILY FROM THE WATER AND HE WAS BURNT ABOUT THE HANDS AND FACE. I GOT HIM OFF THE BURNING LANDING AND HALF CARRIED AND HALF DRAGGED HIM TO THE DYSPENSARY.

THE DYSPENSARY ON THE NAVAL AIR STATION, WAS A SQUARE BUILDING WITH AN OPEN PATIO IN THE CENTER. ALL AVAILABLE SPACE IN THE DYSPENSARY WAS TAKEN UP WITH THE DEAD, WOUNDED, AND DYING. MANY WERE CHOKING FROM SWALLOWING BURNING OIL. WITH SOME SEMBLANCE OF ORDER THE DOCTORS AND HOSPITAL CORPSMEN WERE TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF ALL OF THEM. WHEN I STARTED TO LEAVE I SAW IN THE CORNER OF THE PATIO A BOMB CRATER WHERE A DUD STRUCK. I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "MY GOD, WHAT IF IT BLOWS".

FROM THE DYSPENSARY I WENT TO THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT BUILDING AS THIS WAS MY OFFICIAL BATTLE STATION. UP TO THIS POINT I DON'T RECALL HEARING ANY GENERAL QUARTERS ALARM. KELLY, AN ORDNANCEMAN, WAS ON THE ROOF ASSEMBLING EQUIPMENT. I WENT UP TO THE ROOF AND ARMED MYSELF WITH A .45 AUTOMATIC.

THE PANORAMIC VIEW OF PEARL HARBOR FROM THE ROOF WAS BREATH TAKING. THE ATTACK WAS NOW OVER, (THOUGH WE DID NOT KNOW IT AT THE TIME). TO MY RIGHT, ACROSS THE CHANNEL WAS THE USS SHAW ALL TWISTED IN HER DRY DOCK. TO MY RIGHT ON FORD ISLAND LAY THE WRECKAGE OF OUR SEAPLANE HANGERS WITH ALL OF THEIR WINDOWS BLOWN OUT, AND OUR SEAPLANES IN A MASS OF TWISTED WRECKAGE. AHEAD OF ME THE USS NEVADA, LISTING, WAS STEAMING OUT TO SEA. SHE NEVER MADE IT AND WAS BEACHED AT THE MOUTH OF THE MAIN CHANNEL. TO MY LEFT WAS BATTLESHIP ROW. I CANNOT REMEMBER THE NAMES OR THE POSITIONS OF THE SHIPS NOW, BUT THEY WERE ALL DAMAGED, LISTING, SUNK, AND SOME TURNED BOTTOM UP. BEHIND ME, LOOKING ACROSS FORD ISLAND I COULD SEE THE BOTTOM OF THE USS UTAH RISING FROM THE WATER AND THE DAMAGED FANTAIL OF THE USS CURTIS. MY THOUGHTS AT THIS TIME WAS WITH THE ARMY, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS, WHERE IN THE HELL WERE OUR PLANES.

ON THE AIR STATION WE WERE ALWAYS AWARE WHEN THE CARRIERS WERE DUE IN. THE CARRIER'S AIRCRAFT WOULD ARRIVE AND BE BASED ON OUR AIR STRIP IN ADVANCE OF THE CARRIER STEAMING IN. NORMALLY THERE WOULD BE ONE OF THE CARRIERS TIED UP AT OUR DOCK. I COULD ONLY REFLECT IN MY MIND, AS I WAS TAKING IN THE VIEW, THAT THANK GOODNESS THE CARRIERS WERE STILL AT SEA.

I COULD HEAR SPASMODIC GUNFIRE. PLANES THAT WERE ATTACHED TO THE VARIOUS UTILITY SQUADRONS AND NOT DAMAGED WERE BEGINNING TO WARM UP AT OUR AIR STATION. I COULD HEAR ENGINES BEING REVVED UP AT HICKAM FIELD. EVERY TIME THE SOUND OF DISTANT AIRCRAFT REACHED US SOMEONE WOULD YELL "HERE THEY COME AGAIN". EVERY TIME THIS HAPPENED I GOT A KNOT IN MY STOMACH. HOWEVER THEY NEVER CAME AGAIN.

I WAS TOLD THAT CHIEF BONNETT WANTED SOME HELP AT THE PAINT STORAGE BUILDING. WENT THERE AND FOUND E.R. BISHOP, R.R. BLACK AND R. HEDEEN WITH CHIEF BONNETT ON THE ROOF. WE WERE NOW TRYING TO GET OUR ANTI AIRCRAFT DEFENSES UP AND DEFEND OURSELVES. THE RUMORS WERE COMING IN FAST AND FURIOUS. "THE JAPS WERE LANDING AT HICKAM FIELD", "THEY ARE LANDING ON OAHU", "THEY ARE LANDING NORTH OF US". WE COULDN'T TELL TRUTH FROM FICTION, BUT WE WERE GOING TO BE READY. THE PAINT STORAGE BUILDING WAS TO SAY THE LEAST AN INFLAMMABLE LOCATION, BUT THE ROOF WAS EASY TO REACH. CHIEF BONNETT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP A .30 CALIBER LEWIS MACHINE GUN. HE WAS A QUIET, UNASSUMING MAN, YET HERE WAS A CHIEF STOREKEEPER SETTING UP A MACHINE GUN WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF AN ORDNANCEMAN. IT IS MEN IN THE U.S. NAVY LIKE CHIEF BONNETT ^{WHO} WAS CALM MENS FEARS AND EXUDE CONFIDENCE.

WE HAVE OUR BATTLE STATION COMPLETE; THE LEWIS GUN IS MOUNTED AND I SWAPPED MY PISTOL FOR THE SPRINGFIELD .30 CALIBER RIFLE. THE WAITING GAME STARTS. THE USS ARIZONA IS CLOSE BY AND WE WATCH IT BURN AND BURN AND BURN. FORD ISLAND HAD A SPECIAL DOCK FOR OIL TANKERS TO REFUEL OUR STORAGE TANKS. TO TIE UP TO THIS DOCK REQUIRES A TUG, YET DURING THE ATTACK THE TANKER USS NEOSHO WAS ABLE TO GET UNDER WAY AND NEGOTIATE A DIFFICULT CHANNEL TURN WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE TUGS. ONE OF THE BATTLESHIPS SEVERED OUR WATER LINE WHEN IT SANK, SO WE NOW HAD NO FRESH WATER. LATE IN THE AFTERNOON AN OFFICER CAME BY, THE FIRST ONE I REMEMBER SEEING ALL DAY, AND INFORMS US THAT WE WOULD HAVE COFFEE AND SANDWICHES LATER ON. THEY FINALLY CAME: DRY SANDWICHES AND COFFEE MADE FROM CHLORINATED SWIMMING POOL WATER. WE WERE HUNGRY SO IT WAS DELICIOUS. FOR A FEW DAYS AFTERWARDS WE HAD CHLORINATED COFFEE AND CHLORINATED SOUP.

THAT EVENING PEARL HARBOR WAS AN ARMED CAMP. FIVE PLANES WERE APPROACHING WITH THEIR RUNNING LIGHTS ON. MY THOUGHTS AT THE TIME WERE THAT THEY MUST BE OURS BECAUSE THE ENEMY WOULDN'T HAVE THEIR LIGHTS ON. TO THIS DAY I WILL NOT SWEAR AS TO WHAT HAPPENED FIRST, BUT ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY THE ANTI AIRCRAFT GUNS STARTED FIRING AND THE LIGHTS OF THE PLANES WENT OUT. THE SAME OFFICER CAME BY TO INFORM US NOT TO SHOOT UNTIL WE GOT ORDERS. WE HAD SHOT DOWN OUR OWN AIRCRAFT. I DON'T KNOW HOW WE WERE SUPPOSE TO GET ORDERS. WE STAYED AT OUR BATTLE STATION ALL NIGHT AND FINALLY SECURED THE GUN THE MORNING OF DEC. 8TH.

THE AIR STATION WAS GOOD DUTY, REGULAR WORKING HOURS NOT TOO FREQUENT WATCHES. BATTLE STATION DRILL WAS HELD ON OCCASION. THIS COMPRISED HOLDING MUSTER AT THE SUPPLY DEPT. WITH NO FURTHER ASSIGNMENTS. THIS DRILL WAS USUALLY HELD DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. HOWEVER, A FEW DAYS PRIOR TO DEC. 7TH WE HAD A BATTLE STATION DRILL ABOUT MIDNIGHT WHICH WAS VERY UNUSUAL.

SINCE DEC. 7TH WAS A QUIET SUNDAY MORNING, THE MAJORITY OF THE MARRIED ENLISTED PERSONNEL AND OFFICERS WERE HOME WITH THEIR FAMILIES. SOME HAD LIVING FACILITIES ON THE AIR STATION BUT THE MAJORITY WERE IN NAVAL HOUSING OUTSIDE THE NAVY YARD. THIS WAS STRICTLY AN ENLISTED MAN'S DAY. THERE WAS NO PANIC, AND IT WAS MEN LIKE CHIEF BONNETT WHO WERE ABLE TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY WHICH PREVENTED A WORSE CHAOS. IT WAS THE SMALL CRAFT IN THE HARBOR WHICH WERE ABLE TO RISE TO THE OCCASSION AND PUT UP AN EFFECTIVE ANTI AIRCRAFT FIRE.

I FULLY REALIZE I WAS A VERY INSIGNIFICANT COG IN THE WHEEL OF HISTORY AND I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING HEROIC. IN MY NARRATION I HAVE TRIED TO CONVEY MY FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS AND EVENTS AT THE TIME AND I SINGERELY HOPE IT WILL BE OF ASSISTANCE TO YOU.

SINCERELY,

Jack Rogo