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Answer: I was talking to her last weekend on the phone and you know, I was telling her about having the interview, and I said CIA and she said, you said what? (laughs).

Question: So your sister works for?

Answer: For Civil Aeronautics Corporation.

Question: Oh.

Answer: Civil Aeronautics, I wrote it down here so I wouldn't forget the thing, so Administration or something, Association.

Question: Ok. So was that a governmental body then?

Answer: Yes, yes. It was where she learned all the Morse Code and how to bring planes in, you know, and she just learned a lot of stuff there and she was there all during the war. She learned all about the weather and telegraph, and to guide planes in and radar, not radar, radio, you know.

Question: So she, she stayed on the home front then.

Answer: Well I worked in aircraft right there in Santa Monica at that time too.

Question: So now when did you start working in ah...

Answer: I started in '42...

Question: Working on aircraft.

Answer: With aircraft, ah huh.

Question: And what was your job? What did you do?

Answer: Well to start out with I was a riveter and then I worked my way up to where I was an assembler, and ah, I just did all kinds of odd jobs, whatever they wanted to do. And I also had a sister who worked there too but then she decided she'd go in the Navy.

Question: Oh.

Answer: And so she went and joined the Navy but I thought well gee I can do just as much good, you know, for the war, working there and making airplanes as I could in the Navy because they just put you in the hospitals, you know. And I wasn't very good at hospital work because blood just turned me off (laughs).

Question: That's not a good place to be then.

Answer: So. And I just stayed in aircraft.

Question: So as the war got going, you, as many women at that time, kept the country running.

Answer: Yeah, right, uh huh.

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Question: So how was that, that must have been a big change because before that it was a pretty male oriented...

Answer: Right. Yeah, well actually I don't think that women were even hardly considered at that time. You had to work, you know, because those jobs had to be filled but you never got to move anyplace, you know, you had to stay right there at that job until the war was over with. And ah, that really wasn't too bad. I only had my mother to go to see in Phoenix, and she was keeping up the home there because my dad was in the service, my two brothers were in the service, and my sister was in there, and my other sister and I, we were working there in Santa Monica

Answer:

Question: Huh. Do you remember what type of planes, what the, or were you working on such a ...

Answer: I think the C, I can remember it was a fighter plane to start out with, that I learned to rivet all the wings and stuff, you know. And then the big C-54 came and I was able to work on it. It was a big cargo planes and that was big for me, you know (laughs). I had really made a big step there. And I like that. But, you know, when the war was over we didn't, nobody had a job anymore, we were just, we were out.

Question: The women or nobody period?

Answer: Just, well hardly any of the men. I guess some of the men stayed there but my husband he, at the time, you know, he didn't have a job either. He was in the, working in that part, you know, where they didn't need him anymore, so we went to Colorado.

Question: Hm. So during the war, while you were um, let me start with this, lets talk about in the plant so now they've brought all these women in and they're starting to work in what used to be a man's world, how did that work out? Did you have men bosses or was it all women running the show?

Answer: Well yes, we did have men bosses because the women hadn't worked themselves up to the point where they could be a boss, you know at that time. And ah, there was a, I guess those men that were in there, our bosses were deferred from the military, you know, because somebody had to be there to make planes, you know so, they just got to stay there.

Question: And so what did you work on, a particular part? I mean, you moved from plane to plane eventually but did they say...

Answer: Well no, they had all these parts. Say they had a big pile of 'em up to the ceiling and maybe there was two or three pieces to it and these three pieces had to be all riveted together, you know. And so to start out with we had to learn to read blue print, you know, and know where these parts went to and all that. And then we had to know what rivets to put in them. And we used machines and it wasn't too often much um, hand riveting at that time. I guess there was some but I remember the machines better than anything because I could just go like that on that thing (laughs). And that would be it, would turn out to be a big wing after I sent my part I had put together down the line, you know, the assembly line and pretty soon it just came out to be a big wing. And ah, they'd put those together, and I guess they had to be, those had to be riveters that were up there putting them together you know. But ah...

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Question: So how old were you roughly, when you...

Answer: I was in my early 20's.

Question: Ok. So what were you doing prior to um, one day you got up and you were working on airplanes, what were you...

Answer: What did I do before that?

Question: Yeah.

Answer: I was a waitress.

Question: Huh.

Answer: Yeah. After I graduated from high school in Phoenix, I went to San Diego because there was no work in Phoenix, and ah, that was just a little town, little town then. And ah, so I went there, my girlfriend and I went there and we both got a job at one of those drive-ins, I don't know if you remember them or not, but ah, I worked on the inside and she was a little car hop, you know. And ah, we had a job, and we were making money, not very much but we were making money though.

Question: Making a living, squeaking one...

Question: So how did you end up then, was there an ad? Or how did you end up in the airplanes?

Answer: Well I went to Convair and I put my application in there and I don't know what happened but when I came in to be interviewed, I had to, they said that it was either the wrong day or something, you know. But ah, then I had to you know, put my application in again and in the meantime well my younger sister had come to stay with me and so anyway we got on a bus and went up to Santa Monica to see my older sister she lived up there. And while we were there we went to work at Douglas. We just went and they said oh yeah, yeah come on in, you know (laughs). You know, so we just went there. I just never did go back to Convair until years later, after I had been to Colorado and all over you know. And I went back and I put my application in at Convair and I got on and that was in '50.

Question: Oh wow, so that was quite a bit later then.

Answer: Yeah, uh huh. And ah, I worked at Convair for eight years. I finally made A rating but I'll tell you it was a hard job. The men would just laugh at you when you'd say A rating. You know, I was doing the same work they were doing you know.

Question: But the discrimination yeah.

Answer: But I was a determined person (laughs).

Question: So when you went to Douglas was it um, did you look and say oh here's a good paying job or was it a time where it was like here's a way we can serve our country or what?

Answer: No, no, no, no, I went there because I wanted to build airplanes.

Question: Oh really?

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Answer: Right. Because ah, my dad and my brothers were in the service, you know and I just wanted to be in it doing my part of it too.

Question: Huh.

Answer: It wasn't because I was making a lot of money. I think I was made \$1.28 an hour, you know. And maybe I didn't even make that much because at that time you know, you just didn't make much money.

Question: But you knew the planes that you were building and that were sending out they were going over to our men and women overseas and...

Answer: Right, right. I used to think that if daddy ever gets on this plane that it never goes down with him, you know. He was in the Sea Bees.

Question: Oh really?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Oh wow! Admiral Barby, who was one of the initial, if I understand right, he was the one of the ones that started the Sea Bees used to live in Olympia

Answer:

Answer: Oh ah.

Question: Passed away a number of years ago but had written a book about the Sea Bees and ah, that's it, my childhood memory. I knew a little bit of them but. So you're ok so, so huh, that's an interesting connection you had of building these planes and not only just for faceless people you had what did you say, you had a brother over there, your dad over there.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Huh.

Answer: And ah, well my sister she stayed in the states, she was in the Navy in the hospitals.

Question: Now you said that's it if a woman went into the service they ended up...

Answer: Right. I don't know what they did with the Army, you know, whether the Army the Marines and them, I don't think they sent the women overseas. I'm not sure, you know, nobody talked about things like that.

Question: Huh. What was it like, because the war was being fought on foreign soil, how aware of the war were you over here? I mean what was your concept of the war?

Answer: Well it was a bad thing because I had friends that were in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed, you know. And not only that, you know, on the west coast there in Santa Monica and San Diego and everything, we had black-outs all the time. We knew what they were like and a lot of times you know, they'd, the sirens and everything would go off, you know, and we had to walk and you walked in pitch black of night, you know, to get to where you were going

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because there were no busses running with lights or anything, you know. There was no lights on at all.

Question: So everything just stopped. I mean you walked but did everything else, when the sirens went off, stopped? Cars driving and...

Answer: Yeah, yeah, right. There was no lights, you know, no street lights, no nothing. It was just pitch black.

Question: Huh.

Question: Shopping and things like that, did everything just function normally or did the whole thing change because of rationing and...

Answer: Oh, well yes it did. You had your ration stamps. I still have my book, or part of a book that I had and ah, you went and if you wanted meat now you had so many points for, that you could spend for meat. But a lot of people ate out at that time, too because they were almost working. You know, just like my husband there were times I didn't even see him for weeks because he worked a different shift all together than I did. And we might pass on a bus going, him going in and me coming home you know, but you, what was the sense of cooking a big meal just for one person? So we just stopped and had a hamburger or something.

Question: Huh. Did you have to um, all right clothing and things like that were those of short supply too?

Answer: Yes, ah huh. And not only that, but you know women never wore slacks for anything before the war. There were very few of them did. And ah, we went into the air, into aircraft you had to wear pants. That was a must. And ah, then I went to hunt for pants to wear, I couldn't find any in the stores or anything so I found this old, he was a tailor, I found him and he made me slacks that I could wear (laughs), I could wear to work. I mean I had to have 'em because they wouldn't let you in the gate if you didn't have 'em on.

Question: Hm. Was that the first pair of slacks you really had then?

Answer: Yeah, right.

Question: Hm that's interesting because now it's so common day.

Answer: Now yeah. Everybody wears slacks.

Question: Did you realize it was a, that all that was happening that it was such a changing time or were you just living life?

Answer: No you just lived life. You just did what you had to do and that's it, you know. There was none of this here, oh I don't like that job, you know or, like you see all these young kids and everything going out, you know, Oh I wouldn't work with that. You just worked and that was it.

Question: And it sounds like you had a real sense of pride.

Answer: That's right. You took a pride in what you did, or most everybody did. I can see, see some of 'em working in those aircraft factories like they did then, you know, and leaving their stuff laying around and everything else. When I went into assembling in aircraft I had to

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assemble the covers that went on the controls of the plane. And you think that I didn't look for everything I could find in there because if there had been a bolt or a screw or something loose underneath that, that cover that was put over that, that plane could've came down, you know. And I don't think that they even think about things like that anymore. A lot of times when these big planes crash now I think you know who the one who was working on that one (laughs).

Question: Do you have any idea how many planes went through the facility while you were there?

Answer: Oh no. I never even, they were coming right through one after the other, all the time, all the time, all the time.

Question: And you just kept...

Answer: Yeah, you just kept working and working and working (laughs).

Question: Do you have any idea where they ended up, any of the planes?

Answer: A lot of 'em probably ended up in the middle of the ocean. You know, there were a lot of planes that were shot down.

Question: Did you ever see your finished product, or were you so far up the line that you were just working on a piece and when the plane was done it was done way down somewhere else?

Answer: Oh yeah. You could, you could go down the line and see 'em you know, when they came out of, come out to go on the field you know, for their last test and everything like that well you could go down and look at 'em. You were proud of 'em.

Question: So when you said that times were very different then...

Answer: Yes.

Question: I mean, really?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Well what do you, why do you think it was so different then than it is now, or what was so different?

Answer: I don't know. Nobody seems to care anymore about anything. They just, as long as they're making money, that's it, and that's all they think of. Money, money, money. Until I get so sick of it it's not even funny, you know. You can have a good job, what I think is a good job to somebody else it's just ooh, I wouldn't have that job, you know. Like I worked for the government for 20 years. I worked in the commissaries, I was a cashier quite a bit of the time, that's the lowest paid job in the government. Was all the money that goes through your hand and everything in a day and they don't pay you nothing for it, \$5.00 an hour. And ah, it might have gone up a little bit since I quit but I finally made it up to where I was a store worker before I retired and I was making nearly \$14.00 an hour, I was making good money, but \$14.00 to somebody else is nothing. Just like a lady I was talking to yesterday, she said, she's trying to sell her house and she wants to clean it up a little bit, and she said you know if you'll just come over and keep me company while I work I'll pay you \$10.00 an hour. I says

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fine I'll be over there tomorrow (laughs). But I don't intend to sit and watch her you know, I'll help her clean.

Question: Now you had, your dad was in the service...

Answer: Right.

Question: You had a brother...

Answer: I had one brother he was over in Europe and the other one was in the Coast Guards.

Question: Oh ok.

Answer: He was in, you know, around the U.S.

Question: And was it you who talked about, lets see, so when they wrote home the military or whoever would mark out information that wasn't...

Answer: Yeah it was all censored.

Question: So what would the letters, what did you get letters that you could...

Answer: Well you know, my mother, she got letters from my dad and he was over around in the Islands, you know, the Pacific Islands and this one time I came home to see her you know, and she said you know, I have a letter here and I can't make it out, she said, would you read it? And ah, it was Guam spelled backward, you know, he was telling her he was going to that island. And ah, I pondered over that a long time you know, and then I said, no mama you know that spells Guam (laughs).

Question: And that was because he wasn't supposed to tell you.

Answer: That's right. That would have been censored out of it anyway if, and I guess they couldn't figure out that there was an island out there by that name anyway so (laughs).

Question: So would the letters come all marked up?

Answer: Ah some of 'em yes, some of 'em not too bad.

Question: Huh. So you could keep ah, I mean did you get letters in a timely manner or stuff you got from your dad and...

Answer: Oh, I guess it came, her mail came ok. Now ah, at that time, you know, I wasn't married to my husband you know. But he was in the Navy when I married him in '54. Well he was still on ships, you know, that went over ah, that carried cargo, and ah, I know different times things that, you know, that he told me, he didn't tell me too awful much because he just didn't like to talk about it. Ah this, he had a couple of ships shot out from under him. You know. In fact one of 'em had a huge hole in it and he got to take a picture of it. And those pictures I don't know what happened to 'em, I was going to bring 'em in but they're someplace.

Question: 'Cause in all the moves things get...

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Answer: Well I lived with my daughter for a while and, after my husband died, and her husband died of cancer and we bought a place together, and I still have a lot of my trunks and stuff out there at her house because I live in a little apartment and I just don't have room for it.

Question: Yeah. Huh.

Answer: So they might be out there in one of those trunks.

Question: What um, when the war was over, what we see historically what we always see is the footage of Times Square and the Ticker Tape Parade, and what was it, what was your, do you remember when you found out the war was over?

Answer: Well there was a, there was a lot of people who went out and they got drunk, and they just hooted and hollered and yelled for a week, you know, after it was over with. And there was a, then there was the ones who just went home and I guess that we just sat down, you know, and said you know we have to do something, neither one of us work anymore. You know and they went about their business and I guess the stores and everything started to stock up on stuff. You know, like we had to make our own ketchup and stuff like that during the war that didn't have it, you know, so I guess they were stocking up on all those things that could be stocked in a store. But ah, now us, ah he was from Colorado and we went back there and we bought an old burned out restaurant and rebuilt it and opened it up and it was just good for three months out of the year and then it closed. It was in a little resort you know. And ah, but I don't know what all the rest of 'em did (laughs). I guess they went about their business the way they, you know whatever they were going to do there was a lot of 'em that was awful happy. Well I was happy too but I just wasn't that happy that I wanted to go out and get, get looped (laughs).

Question: So it's like one day there's a war and one day there...

Answer: And one day there's no war and everybody was very happy about it.

Question: So did, did instantly, ah lets see you were at Douglas then.

Answer: Yeah, um hm.

Question: Did instantly war's over and they said ah thank you.

Answer: Yes. Good bye. We had no jobs.

Question: Huh.

Answer: And when we went to Colorado, well I thought everybody was, they told us that we could draw unemployment. And they had at that time if you worked in aircraft or you were a veteran or something like that, you could draw it for so long a time, 21 months or something like that. And ah, so anyway we went to Colorado and Marvin couldn't find a job or anything back there, and it was starting winter you know, when we got there, so we weren't able to build at that time. And ah, he went down and he got some unemployment. But when I went in to get unemployment they kind of just laughed at me. They asked me what I'd been doing, you know, what job I'd been doing and I said I worked in aircraft, you know, and I wasn't lying to them or anything. And ah, they just kind of pondered the situation you know, and then the man said to me can you make a bed? And I said certainly I can make a bed, he says

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we have a maid job for you. And so in all my life I never draw, drew one penny of unemployment (laughs).

Question: Wow. Because you're a woman.

Answer: Well...

Question: 'Cause they didn't believe that...

Answer: Yeah right.

Question: Hm.

Answer: They actually didn't have too awful much work for the men and that, you know, because they had to kind of get back into, in the groove or something, get back in gear before they could, before these jobs came up. And at that time you know, they had you know, CC Camp.

Question: YCC and YACC and...

Answer: Uh huh, and all those camps and I guess they sent a lot of those people to that.

Question: Huh.

Question: The country then, the war's over but now all of a sudden, we have to get the country going again. Is that kind of...

Answer: Yeah you didn't, you didn't go down to a welfare office and put in your bid and get a big check every week, you did something for what you got. And ah, even the men didn't stay on welfare, I mean on unemployment very long. They just stayed on it until they could, you know, find another job.

Question: So now all of these people are coming back from, ah overseas.

Answer: Right.

Question: And they're storming in too.

Answer: They had preference to all of us.

Question: Oh really?

Answer: That's right. Well they were the ones that were over there risking their necks. You know we felt that we were very fortunate we didn't have to go. And ah, so they just, it took a while for everything to get back into running shape again, but it did.

Question: Huh.

Question: What do you think for future generations, I mean is there a major message to leave with generations to come about World War II or war in general?

Answer: I think, do you know what? I think they really need to get on these publishers that publish these history books for these kids because there's so many kids these days that

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don't even know there was a World War II. And some of the other mistakes that they put into these history books and everything, it's a crime what they're trying to teach these kids. And all these books are going around the United States and everything and they aren't doing nothing about it because these big publishers have enough money to fight it.

Question: What do you think they should know about World War II?

Answer: Where it happened. You know, and everything about it. It was going on in Europe and it was going on everywhere it seemed like. And ah, some, I know that my two little grand daughters they don't know too much about it, they haven't even hardly heard about it.

Question: I know, there's this one gentleman we talked to, he speaks at the high school, and he says when he's talking about World War II he has to make sure that the kids know he's not talking about -- and I would think Vietnam and not even Vietnam -- but that he's not talking about Desert Storm.

Answer: Yeah, right.

Question: And that's the, the concept that's there, keeping 'em to understand it.

Question: How do you think it changed your life? How do you think your life would have been different had World War II not have...

Answer: I don't know. I never ever thought about it.

Question: I mean did think you, did you ever think you would have ended up working on airplanes or anything like that, or do you think your life would've been...

Answer: No I probably wouldn't have. You know I, I probably wouldn't have worked for the government either, in the commissaries. But ah, we were stationed up in Kodiak and there wasn't anything else to do except work in the commissary. So that's where I started that.

Question: Huh.

Answer: Well it was all good experience, everything. And if I hadn't worked, worked 20 years in the government, I'd sure be in bad shape today. I, you know I couldn't pay my rent.

Question: You got the good...

Answer: That's right and I worked hard, you know, in the commissaries. That isn't just, you know, real easy work.

Question: Sounds like you worked hard at everything you did.

Answer: I think I did too.

Question: Yeah. Like you said, for you it wasn't, I mean yeah pay was nice, but you worked to do what ever job it was the best that you could.

Answer: I never ever found a job that I couldn't do. You know it, if it was waiting on tables I could do that, if it was working in a, in ah, an establishment where they sold liquor and that, I could wait on those tables, I could do just about anything, I could do maid work, I

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worked in the laundries. I worked every place. Like, like this friend of mine she says your clothes look so nice Kay when they're hanging there you've got 'em all ironed and everything, she says, I don't iron any of my clothes. I says well that's your business if you don't want to iron them but they don't look like they're ready to wear unless they're ironed as far as I'm concerned (laughs).

Question: I'll bet you still cook from scratch once in a while.

Answer: I do.

Question: Ok.

Answer: Right.

Question: Yeah, see that's something that luckily I grew up with a grandma that taught me how to cook and so I learned how to cook from scratch but a lot of people my generation don't have the faintest idea what scratch means. That means from a box to them you know so.

Question: Did you ever, now today when they build buildings and things like that the iron workers and all that once in a while they'll kind of leave their signature somewhere hidden and did you ever in one of the planes, you know put a little signature somewhere, just a little...

Answer: Well I probably did. Or leave little notes was what, so that if that plane was ever worked on, you know, that somebody could find it and know where it came from and everything. I never ever heard from anybody. But ah, I'm sure if they ever found the notes, you know, they at least they knew that, knew where it came from.

Question: 'Cause I knew there was a lot of different things in the service that ah...

Answer: Yeah.

Question: What about um, ah while you worked, so did you work five days a week, six days, seven days?

Answer: No we worked six days a week.

Question: Six days a week.

Answer: Sometimes seven days a week. You know, if they had to have planes that went out, I mean a batch of 'em that had to go out, you just worked until they were ready and that was it. And then you slept after it was all over with (laughs).

Question: So was there any normal life on top your work or was it, I mean you got up, you went to work and when you came home you were so tired that, social life or anything like that?

Answer: Well I don't know, we used to go out to bars, you know, and go dance and things like that. I mean, you had to something and I bowled at that time. I'd get off work and I'd be so tired, you know, and I'd go bowling. I think about it now but you know.

Question: Was there the comradeship within the people that worked on the airplane the same as there were for the people in the Navy or the Army, they, their platoons they grew

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close together, were you worked side-by-side with people or were you just so focused on your work that...

Answer: Well I really didn't have too many like, friends in aircraft when, at first, you know during World War II. You just worked and worked and that was it. I had a few but very few. The lady where I lived, I knew her because she worked in a department right next to me. But um, real close friends no.

Question: Hm. So um, hm.

Answer: But I can remember going to Phoenix from Santa Monica

Answer: Every once in a while you know, I'd go in and tell a white lie you know, and I'd say my mother is sick and I've just got to go see her, you know, and she wasn't too well. And then they'd figure out how they could give me a week off, you know, to go there. So I'd get on the Red Car, that was a street car, in Santa Monica and I'd ride all the way down to L.

Answer: to the train depot. I'd get on a train and they had to go through Barstow, that was way out of the way the way I figured it, but anyway I was going to get to Phoenix by the end. So they'd go to Barstow and then nine times out of ten they'd side track us for all the troop trains to come through. Sometimes we'd sit there overnight you know, and so when the troop trains would all get through going through, well then they could let the passenger train go through (laughs). And it would take me nearly a week to get there and a couple of days at home and go back (laughs), go back. But I did get to go.

Question: So it very much affected, ah, even though all the fighting was happening somewhere else it affected our transportation, it affected everything with all the moving of both equipment and men and...

Answer: Right, all of that had to be done first and then we came next.

Question: Huh.

Answer: So ah, I think that most everything at that time it moved by, by train too, they didn't have all these trucks on the road like they do now.

Question: Did you, did you, could you keep track of them more? I mean was the news timely enough so you knew what was going on where? Or were you so busy...

Answer: Well if something big happened yes. You know. Like there was a fellow that lived with us, my mother and dad and all of us, and ah, we kind of thought of him as a brother, well he was on one of the big aircraft carriers and I, I happened to be up in Frisco at that time and ah, and when I heard about it, well then I found out it was gonna, whoever was saved on that ship was going to be sent back to San Diego. You could find out, find out from somebody you know. And so I went back down there but I couldn't find him. I went to where they said they would be and ah, they said they had no, no record of him coming in there at all. And then I thought well you know, he got killed and I felt really bad. I'm walking down the street in San Diego one day and I see him, he's kitty corner across the street from me (laughs). And boy both of us we just run, you know, and grabbed each other. I mean it was, you know, really something after you thought, you know, I thought he was dead and everything.

Question: Huh.

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Question: That's pretty, I mean when you think of that, the numbers of people and that's it keeping track of where they were coming and going and ah, you know. And that's another thing I heard, you know, it took all that time during the war to get the troops over there and then the war was done and there was the reverse except instead of doing it gradually it was like, everybody wanted to get home right now.

Answer: Well sure they did.

Question: Huh. Where did, where were you when Pearl Harbor got bombed? Do you remember how you found that news out?

Answer: I was in San Diego at that time, yeah.

Question: And do you remember what your thought was when you heard?

Answer: Well it was terrible. I knew a lot of people that were over there. In fact the fellow I was going with, he was over there. But he didn't get killed, he was one of the lucky ones. He happened to be a shore at that time even though he wasn't on his ship. And this is one thing that I've always wanted to do was to go to Pearl Harbor again. I want to see what, you know, see that, the Arizona and all of those different things and I've never gotten over there. Maybe before I die I'll get there (laughs).

Question: Today's always a good day.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: You know, it's a, and it's getting cheap to get over there now so. You just got to go on a plane where they cram a lot of people in.

Answer: Yeah right.

Question: Well great, thank you for coming in to talk with us.

Answer: You're welcome.