

DEC. 7th MEMORIES

WHEN I ARRIVED AT HICKAM I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE UNIT THAT DID MAINTANCE WORK SUCH AS CUTTING THE GRASS, POLICING THE AREA, GETTING AIRCRAFT READY FOR MAINTENANCE WORK ETC. I PLAYED BASEBALL QUITE WELL AND THROUGH THIS MASTER SGT. DAVIS KNOWN AS SHOTGUN DAVIS OF THE 19TH TRANSPORT SQUADRON BECAME INTERESTED IN ME. HE ASKED ME IF I WISHED TO PLAY BALL FOR THE 19TH? I THEN ASKED HIM WHAT HE HAD TO OFFER ME. HE TOLD ME HE HAD A COUPLE OF AIRCRAFT AND WOULD SEND ME TO AM SCHOOL, IF I PASSED THE COURSE HE WOULD PUT ME ON FLYING STATUS AND I WOULD BE WORKING ON THE FLIGHT LINE. IT SOUNDED GOOD TO ME SO I SAID OK YOU HAVE A DEAL AND WHEN THAT BASEBALL SEASON WAS OVER I WENT TO AIRCRAFT MECHANIC SCHOOL. I PASSED THE COURSE OK AND SGT. DAVIS ASSIGNED ME TO THE FLIGHT LINE WHERE I WORKED ON ONE OF THE TWO DC 2's WE HAD. MASTER SGT. MILLER WAS THE CREW CHIEF. WE WERE NOW JUST GETTING READY TO START THE NEW BASEBALL SEASON WHICH WOULD BEGIN IN JAN. OF 1942, HOWEVER DEC. 7TH CAME AND CHANGED THE WAY OF LIFE FOR ALL OF US.

THE MORNING OF DEC.7TH I GOT UP JUST IN TIME TO GO TO THE MESS HALL FOR BREAKFAST. AFTER HAVING COMPLETED THE MEAL I SAT THERE DRINKING COFFEE WITH SEVERAL FRIENDS OF MINE WHO HAD ENLISTED WITH ME. WE HAD PLANS TO GO TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND AND MAKE A SUNDAY OF IT ON SEVERAL OF THE BEACHES. ONE OF MY FRIENDS WAS A TRUCK DRIVER IN THE MOTOR POOL SO HE HAD AQUIRED A SIX BY FOR US TO USE. I HAD ARRANGED FOR THE FOOD FROM THE MESS SGT. AND WE PLANNED TO LEAVE ABOUT 8:30 OR 9:00. IT WAS NOW ABOUT 8:00 AM AS WE SAT DRINKING OUR COFFEE. WE THEN HEARD SOME AIRCRAFT ACTIVITY OVER TOWARDS PEARL HARBOR. WHERE WE SAT IN MESS HALL WE COULD LOOK TOWARDS PEARL THROUGH THE SCREENS. WE SAW SMOKE EXPLOSIONS AND THOUGHT BOY THEY ARE MAKING THIS VERY REAL. ABOUT THIS A PLANE COME OVER THE MESS HALL AND ONE OF THE GUYS WHO WAS ON THE FRONT PORCH CAME IN AND SAID THAT PLANE HAD TWO BIG RED DOTS ON THE WINGS. THE REST OF THE GUYS SAID YOUR CRAZY. COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELVES HE SAID, WE ALL THEN WENT OUTSIDE AND ABOUT THIS TIME ANOTHER PLANE CAME OVER AND STARTED TO STRAFE AND SURE ENOUGH IT HAD TWO BIG RED DOTS ON IT. WE ALL THEN KNEW WHAT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT THAT WAS IT WAS JAPANESE.

WE ALL NOW TOOK OFF TOGEATHER RUNNING FOR THE SUPPLY ROOM TO GET GUNS AND AMMO. WHEN WE ARRIVED THERE THE SUPPLY SGT. WOULD NOT GIVE US ANYTHING, SO WE JUST EASED HIM ASIDE WITH A LITTLE FORCE AND BROKE THE DOOR DOWN TO THE WEAPONS ROOM. WE THEN STARTED TO GRAB 45 PISTOLS AND AMMO WHICH WAS ALL THAT WAS THERE. WE ALSO TOOK HARD HATS. I WENT BACK TO THE DAY ROOM AND STARTED PUTTING THE CLIP INTO THE GUN AND HEARD A GUN GO OFF BEHIND ME. ONE OF THE GUYS HAD PUT A CLIP IN AND WAS NOT CAREFUL AND IT WENT OFF. I DECIDED IT WAS SAFER OUTSIDE THEN IN THERE AS I MIGHT GET SHOT BY ONE OF MY OWN GUYS. I MANAGED TO EVADE THE JAP STRAFING ATTACKS BY KEEPING A BARRACKS BETWEEN ME AND THE LINE OF FIRE AS I MOVED ALONG. THE PLANES WERE SO LOW I THOUGHT I COULD HIT THEM WITH A ROCK OR BASEBALL, I DID TRY THE 45 BUT UNLESS YOU WERE LUCKY YOU COULDN'T HIT THEM. IT DID HOWEVER GIVE ME SOME SATISFACTION. WHEN THERE WAS A LULL IN THE ATTACK I RAN TO MY BARRACKS AND FILLED MY CANTEEN WITH WATER AND TOOK MY GAS MASK.

AT THIS TIME OUR LT. CALLED US TOGETHER AND ASSEMBLED US ON THE EDGE OF THE PARADE GROUND AND MADE THE GREAT STATEMENT "MEN WE ARE AT WAR" AS IF WE DIDNOT ALREADY KNOW IT. HE THEN POSTED A COUPLE OF MEN ON EAST AND WEST SIDES OF THE PARADE GROUND AND WHEN THEY SAW AN AIRCRAFT COMING TO YELL. HE NO SOONER SAID THAT THEN THEY WERE UPON US. WE LOST SEVERAL MEN BECAUSE OF THIS. THE REST OF US SCATTERED AND HID UNDER OR BEHIND A BUILDING. EVERYTHING WAS NOW FINE UNTIL THE BOMBING STARTED. WE LOOKED UP AND SAW SEVERAL BOMBERS IN FORMATION COMING TOWARDS US FROM ABOUT THE HAWAIIAN AIR DEPOT AND COMING ACROSS THE OLD BASEBALL FIELD, WATER MAIN, BIG BARRACKS AND LARGE MESS HALL. AT THIS TIME I DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO OR WHERE TO GO AS WE HAD NO FOX HOLES TO JUMP INTO. SO I JUST STAYED WHERE I WAS AND AS THE BOMBS CAME CLOSER AND HIT I DOVE FOR THE GROUND. ONE HIT ACROSS THE ROAD IN FRONT OF ME WHERE A BUNCH OF CARS WERE PARKED AND THEY TOOK MOST OF THE SHRAPNEL THE PIECE THAT GOT ME HIT BEHIND ME AND ABOUT THIRTY FEET AWAY IN THE DIRT AND BEING ON THE GROUND I GUESS SAVED MY LIFE. THE PIECE TRAVELED ALONG THE GROUND AND HIT MY LEFT LEG ABOVE THE KNEE AND BELOW THE HIP AND ROLLED ME OVER.

THE FIRST THING I THOUGHT OF WAS THIS OLD MOVIE ALL'S QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT WHERE THIS ONE SOLDIER WAS CARRYING ANOTHER WHO HAD GOT HIT IN THE LEG AND WAS BEING TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL. AT THE HOSPITAL HE LOST THE LEG. THAT WAS THE ONLY THOUGHT I HAD AT THIS TIME HAD I LOST MY LEG SO I REACHED DOWN AND FOUND THE LEG STILL THERE AND WHAT A GREAT FEELING IT WAS. I THEN STARTED TO CRAWL TOWARDS THE BEER HALL OR SNAKE RANCH. I SAW HANK BARTEL AND CALLED TO HIM AND HE RAN OUT TO HELP ME TO GET UNDER ONE OF THE BUILDINGS AND HE WENT TO FIND MEDICAL HELP. A SHORT TIME LATER THERE WAS A LULL AND AN AMBULANCE CAME BY AND BROUGHT A STRETCHER OVER FOR ME. ABOUT THIS TIME I RECALL SEEING A SGT. HOWE WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF OUR RADIO SECTION, WALK BY WITH HIS LEFT ARM JUST ABOUT BLOWN OFF. WE WERE BOTH THEN TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL WHICH BY THE WAY WAS NOT OFFICALLY OPEN BUT I GUESS WAS OPENED THAT DAY. WE HAD WOUNDED PERSONS LAYING ALL OVER THE LAWN WITH THE MOST SERIOUS BEING TAKEN INSIDE FIRST AND GIVEN A SHOT BEFORE TAKING THEM TO TRIPLER GENERAL HOSPITAL. I GOT TO TRIPLER ABOUT 11:00 AM AND STILL HAD MY 45 WITH ME AND WOULD NOT GIVE IT UP. THERE WAS ANOTHER FELLOW NAMED BERNETTA FROM THE 19TH TOW TARGET SQDN THERE AND HE TALKED ME INTO GIVING HIM MY 45 BEFORE THEY TOOK ME INTO THE OPERATING ROOM. WHEN I GOT IN THERE THERE WERE TWO OTHER PEOPLE BEING WORKED ON. I LOOKED UP AND SAW A JAPANESE DOCTOR GETTING READY TO WORK ON ME, I DON'T RECALL BUT THEY SAID I TRIED TO FIND MY 45 SO I COULD SHOOT HIM AND EVERYONE WAS SAYING NO NO HE IS ONE OF US. THAT IS THE LAST I REMEMBER UNTIL I CAME OUT OF THE OPERATING ROOM. TWO DAYS LATER MY WOUND BECAME INFECTED AND HAD TO BE OPERATED ON AGAIN. I REMAINED IN THE HOSPITAL UNTIL ABOUT THE FIRST PART OF APRIL 1942 WHEN I REJOINED THE 19TH. I LATER BECAME CREW CHIEF ON "CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO" AND REMAINED SO UNTIL ABOUT FEB. 1943 WHEN I WENT TO FLIGHT TRAINING.

ATER FLIGHT TRAINING I WAS ASSIGNED TO FLY P-38'S AND ON MY WAY TO A NEW ASSIGNMENT I STOPPED IN TO SEE ALL THE GUYS AT THE 19TH. IN MAY OF 1944. I FINISHED MY WAR TIME SERVICE IN THE OCCUPATION OF KOREA AFTER THE JAPANESE SURRENDER. I RETIRED FROM THE SERVICE IN 1961. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SHOOT DOWN TWO JAPANESE FIGHTER PLANES.

A POINT OF INTEREST IS THAT THE OFFICER WHO PRESENTED ME WITH MY

CERTIFICATE ON GRADUTATION FROM THE AIRCRAFT MECHANIC SCHOOL WAS COLIN KELLY WHO LATER BECAME FAMOUS FOR BOMBING A JAPANESE WAR SHIP IN EARLY 1942.

IN CLOSING I SHOULD SAY I AM LUCKY TO HAVE LIVED THOUGH DEC. 7TH AND I STILL FEEL VERY SAD FOR MY FRIENDS WHO DIDNOT.

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