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Juan Perez
January 29, 1992

Unknown Interviewer – Majority of interviews conducted by Rose Manibusan or Daniel Martinez.

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Interviewee: Juan Perez

Military Rank: Guamanian Citizen

Interviewer: Unknown

Guam

Date: January 29, 1992

--00:00:00

Q2: World War II oral history, Mr. Juan Perez 92—16, take 36.

Q: Today is January 29, 1992; will you please state your name and age?

Perez: My name is Juan Namaulea Perez; I am 71 years old now.

Q: Could you please let us know where you were early December 1941?

Perez: December 1941, it was December the 8th, it was Sunday, I was on Pan American Airways, I was the chief boatman at the time, we just released the Canadian twin engine bomber, I believe heading for Australia that morning, that was early, and then we secured the barge, and then we got to the dock. Lately, manager Charles Perri was the manager of the Pan American Airways at the time, I let him off the dock, he immediately went to the office. Prior to that we heard rumors that Pearl Harbor was bombed, but of course it was just speculation rather than the actual truth, so then immediately Mr. Greg, the upper manager, called us in all the maintenance crew after which he told us everything and he revealed the messages that Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese. And he gave us a very brief instruction of actually how to have an airplane drop a bomb, very simple just in case, he said before an airplane will release a bomb make sure that either lay down flat because shrapnel will actually fly on top of you or indirectly, so actually that is what we did. Immediately when he announced that we heard the airplane noise humming, we were very sensitive of airplane because the noise we were very used to it, finally some of us got out of the administration building and we peered our ears up to the sky and then all of a sudden we saw one airplane swipe down, and I know that he released the next to the flagpole

in front of the administration building. I was wounded; I was struck by shrapnel in my left side actually penetrated in my left side, and Mr. Wesley got hit in his stomach and his intestines started coming out, and Anderson got hit in his leg, it was amputated later, another person was struck by shrapnel, I think it was Bill Chapley was the guy, the other one was struck as he was running, his Bill Hajek was struck by I think a machine guy, I tried to help him, but Bill Hajek was dead, I tried to pick up Bill Chapriss, he was struck in the back, I didn't want to lift him up, I tried to save him, I tried to get him out of the area. So finally I started proceeding back to my home and pick up my family and my children and we went to the cave behind the church in Sumay and half of the residents in that area in Sumay where hiding behind the church—

Q2: Oral history War in the Pacific, this is Mr. Perez 92—17, take 37

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Q: You were talking about coming together and then hiding in Sumay.

Perez: Yes, during the bombardment after I got away from the Pan American area, I proceed to my house pick up my three children, my wife [Gwen?] to the cave behind the church. Many of the families in that area were heading to that direction; I don't know how many of them, but a lot of them were in there. And then after that, after the airplane left in the afternoon, many of the crew went back to make a survey of the area to know what actually happened and then the boat that I was operating wasn't hit, the hotel, it was a nice hotel, one story hotel that was totally damaged and the river, all those areas. The Japanese did very little damage bombing of the area, they bombed a few houses, like Tony Baletto's house was bombed and my mother-in-law's house was bombed, but the area actually, the loss--I'm talking about the structural area, the houses was actually minor compared to what happened when the Americans invaded the island, and he wanted to proceed to what actually took place during that day's...

--00:07:37

That morning after the Japanese bombers moved out of the area, the contractor trailer many of the families, they loaded them in a trailer headed toward Fena Valley, transported there--leave them there to hide and then they don't have food actually--the food actually was plentiful down there in the area of Fena because that place was rich in everything shrimp and deer, a lot of things up there that the people can survive. Those are the things I remember. After we got back to surveying the Pan American, we checked out things whether--the mess hall was destroyed like I said. And a lot of the families were desolate, some of the children were getting [unclear] during the day because we never experienced anything like that before, we never experienced any war, the war we had probably was on a family basis but not total war like that.

--00:09:14

That night we heard the Japanese are ready to invade the island, and we saw some ships outside, but we could not identify whether it was an American ship or Japanese because we were not used to that, but we were used to seeing the American flag, but it was a far distance, we feel--it was told an American ship, but no it isn't an American ship, it's a Japanese ship and there were a whole lot of them. Finally when they invaded the island the people actually didn't know what to do, then that day, two days later or a day after that the Japanese army and their truck came up to Fena, Fena Valley and I were shooting dice to try to kill the time. Finally the chief in charge of the PD boat came in and was going to surrender "I want to be alive" what he said, while they surrender we tried to asked him to stay away he said, no he'd rather be a living coward than a dead hero, that's his business.

Finally they picked me up--before that time that evening we went to Sumay and start scratching our food because we borrowed food at the time when we traveled to Fena later on. After that when the Japanese invaded the island I was picked up I didn't know for what reason until I got down to Sumay and they instructed me to train some of the crew, I think an officer, I could not even tell if it was an officer at least not at that time, for me to teach them, instruct them show them how to operate the crash boat that I was operating twin engine. I look at them and I could not understand what they were saying, very little English actually some of them from what I could

understand.

--00:11:55

So finally I went inside the warehouse I got some [unclear] put it in my right pocket. I went out to it then, I tried to start the engine, the clutch would not engage, I was under guard, he was looking the other way, so I started opening the transmission, I slipped out the [unclear] and [unclear] in the transmission because I wanted [unclear], then I put everything back, I adjusted the clutch, I knew that would not immediately ruin the transmission, but I did something to try to cripple them. So finally a week or two later they came up and asked why the transmission was not running, I said I'm not a mechanic, I'm just a skipper of the boat, that's it, so they sent me home. The first time they held me for three days, confined me in Sumay, so I could instruct those people, I was not treated badly, I was under the navy, they gave me food--a mixture of army and navy down there.

--00:13:25

Q: Were there other people with you?

Perez: No I was alone; I don't remember having an interpreter. I forgot the name of that Japanese, he spoke pretty good English, later he explained everything, why I'm there, I started working on it. But I tried to break everything up as much as possible, not to make it conspicuous, so I can be held back, from there they said you go home, make sure you stay home, I don't even have a home, so I went up to my father's ranch and I stayed there. I never saw any compensation, I didn't know what their money looked like anyway at that time, so I had no use for money, they gave me a pass--I didn't know what it said, it was written in their language, and for me to pin it on me so when I go by—and you have to bow to the Japanese, sure I do that, I got slapped one time for not doing it, so I want to make sure I comply with what they said. I don't say I hate them I forgive them for what they did to many of the people, but I want them to know I won't forget it.

Then during that time the families were moved to Fena, many of them in their own

private ranch built a ranch house. Later in 1943--no let me go back to my history of stealing dynamite.

--00:15:32

We have a person named Peter Duwanal, I think he's an ex-navy man, that guy would not bow for anybody--will not bow for an enemy, he said he's an American. So we went up and stole some dynamites at Cabras island and I gave stick of dynamites to some of my friends and families, who didn't hardly use it, I showed them how to work on it, how to use it for fishing. I wanted to make sure they used it the way they should be done, to catch fish and to feed their families. The last trip we made there was a beautiful moon, there was no cloud, we went to pick up dynamite again, we got caught and the two sentries I don't know what they said maybe, hands up, I didn't put up my hands—

--00:16:42

Q2: Oral history, World War of the Pacific, Mr. Perez 92—18, take 39

Perez: About the dynamite, we went to Cabras island three of us, Vicente Sablan, Nicolas and I went to Cabras island, it was a beautiful moon the last time we went up there, we entered the dynamite magazine, I had two cases, one case in each hand. We started walking out the room, maybe sentry, I don't know what they said, maybe hands up or something like that, but I wasn't scared, I tried to be as cool as much possible, so I tossed the dynamite towards them, they dropped their guns, and I escaped and jumped over the cliff, and my two companions went down and swam across the channel. My jump I hurt my feet, I cut my right foot on the coral, so I took all my clothes off and bandaged my wound and then I swam across. The two sentries were shooting at my two companions, and the shell would usually drop in front of my face because they were right on top of me, but I wasn't scared, I tried to ease myself and concentrate on the things I was doing. So I swam across and then later on I went across the channel and met the two guys as I swam. Finally the Pan American--the same boat I was operating, they mounted machine guns because they started shooting

alongside the seashore, but they were far away from us, we were outside the channel.

--00:19:10

Finally we entered--we got to the seashore and we went to a very good friend of mine the [Reyes?] family in [unclear], they have the ranch next to the [?] area now. We went in there and I asked for some dry clothes. Finally the Japanese squad came in—later on they came in and were asking the old man if they had a canoe and he said he has no canoe. I was very honest with you I got a hold of the Mariano [unclear], a message, if you screw anything up, I'll kill anyone of you, I meant it at that time, there was no way I would not surrender anything, I want to look after my people too, but they were very brave to tell the Japanese that we weren't there. After that the Japanese and old man took off to investigate the canoe we were using, they found some dynamite in the canoe. We dressed up we walked out. The following day two local authorities came to my ranch and arrested me and then arrested the other two friends of mine and then from there they took us to---

--00:20:49

Q: Local authorities, interpreters?

Perez: Not interpreters, only local people that picked me up at my ranch. They took me to the [suchu? -unclear], I don't know what [suchu? --unclear] is, then they took me down to Sumay that's where the navy--marines barracks was located. When we got there they took us in the—what used to be a caterers room, nothing in there, we just slept on the deck. Then they started the investigation that was the hardest part. They took [Acenu?] first, investigated him and they put him away and then they picked me, I didn't tell them the truth until later on, they almost broke my jaw, they tied me like a hog, they drowned me, they whipped me.

--00:22:04

One Sipanese interpreter, I think Manuel Sablan, he hit me twice after the Japanese

hit my jaw and drowned me, the last time he came and sat on top of me again to whip me and slapped me on the face, not slapped but hitting me with his fist like that, so he looked up and he cried, and he said "Please tell the truth because your friend already tell the truth" so I thought they were just trying to draw me out, so I said "No, no", so again they do it again, slap me again, drown me, and then finally he said "I won't hit you anymore" he looked up and started crying that is when I said "Yes" after all the torture. Then the other person was sent to Sablan they even crack his head, he wouldn't tell him yes or no, he just said, 'no I didn't go to Cabras island, we didn't see any dynamites'. Then after that evening after everything was revealed, they gave us rice and everything we wanted to eat--not that we wanted, but available they gave it to us, they gave everything, there had a movie, they called us to watch the movie, so my friends asked "Why are they doing this?" I said "Maybe they got a lot of food and they want to see the picture too" I know what the intention is, but I'm not afraid. The following day they took us to Agana, the Adelup cemetery that is when Matanona and Acosta, I see them Matanona was on the right-hand side and Acosta on the left-hand side, I was next to Matanona, I was watching the Japanese firing squad.

--00:24:08

Before they commit to firing on those two guys Vicente Gomez, he is the big chief here, he said "Tell the truth" "I won't tell the truth" so they shoot the guy, the fire squads took the action and Matanona fell in the grave, but Acosta didn't, he didn't fall in the grave, so they took us back again to the [unclear]. That was prior to the severe punishment, but I didn't tell them anything, they told us "If you don't tell the truth we'll execute you" I said "I don't care look at those two guys they didn't say 'ouch' it doesn't hurt". Then they summoned my wife and my two children, my two children were crying, I said "Don't cry, I'll survive". One man [Comoran?], that man is brave, really brave, he wanted to give his life because he was not married, he says he wants to tell the Japanese that he is the one that stole the dynamite just prior to what I was saying, I said "No" my friend said "Yes, please" I said "Hell no, we did this crime, another crime, we went out and stole the dynamite ourselves, so it is one for all, one dies everybody dies" that's the way I feel.

--00:25:55

After that they took us to Agana and they beat me up again. Then later the sentencing came up, three of us, they cut our hair off—baldheaded--the three of us, the judge looked at us, I was the youngest among them. They gave me five years preliminary sentencing, the other guy was given ten years, that was the preliminary sentencing, and then Vicente Sablan [Comoran?] they call him [Comoran?] gave me my death sentencing. We looked at each other, there's no remorse about whatever it is, death is something--everybody will die. Finally, the jury, they went in there, took them maybe ten minutes, they went up and said Perez to remain five years, the other guy remains ten years, the other person Vicente [Comoron?] will give ten to life in prison. Police department is not adequate at that time--the Japanese--because after two or three days after we were in the cell because of the dynamite that we stole—

Q: Where were you in prison?

--00:27:29

Perez: I was in prison yes.

Q: Where?

Perez: In Agana. A bunch came in capturers fishing with dynamites [unclear] family and they locked them up, but they have connections in the Japanese navy, so they released them, then officer I think it was the naval governor said release all the dynamite cases and they released us too, they made a mistake.

--00:28:09

Q2: This is voice over only for Mr. Perez.

Perez: When I was down in prison in Agana, we usually escaped at night and came back actual time, we had to be prompt--

Q: How did you do that?

Perez: The ceiling was damaged by the bombardment and Serrano Flores, myself and a few other people, we just escaped, we had a rope that we'd slide down and after we'd get up they'd throw the rope back, and then we proceeded what we were supposed to be doing outside, then we get back at about three o'clock in the morning, make sure at three o'clock in the morning you're there, and then they climbed up and then stay in bed, they didn't know what the police looked like at the time. I remember when the Americans released a shell, they struck the north side of the jail and it was about five to six feet and that shell struck the bulkhead close to the shower and I was about six feet away from it and it did not explode we were really fortunate because that thing would've killed a lot of the inmates that we had there.

--00:30:02

Q: How many people were there?

Perez: Oh my gosh, you don't have to be caught stealing, you could be accused, and they'd put you in jail that's the rules, I'm not going to deny that because I've seen people in there who were accused who did not do anything, they just put them in jail. The worse part of it when they arrested you they would whip you, they got a horse whip they hit you in the back, they tie your hands and struck you with the whip, that is the way they treated their prisoners at that time. I remember back when one of the interpreters Francisco Pangelinan, we were shooting dice, we were using Japanese money and he went in there like entering a cattle corral and he whipped every person that looked at him--don't know who you are--just turned around and started whipping you, I was not whipped at all because I know how to escape.

--00:31:22

Another thing a retired marine Mr. Brown married to a local [Inasha?] Brown the wife, that old man--during the bombardment you don't see no Japanese around in

Agana-- talking about the civilians--so I already got out from the prison escape--I knew that the old man was there, I went back so I went in and got him some water and the chilaquiles were hard, so I gave him water, I took the one gallon can slide it underneath it, I poured water in there I gave him chilaquiles and I told him what to do he's an old man, I said soak that and salt and then you can eat that, then I took off. Right after I left that place the Americans bombed that place, I don't know whether Mr. Brown was still there or not, but that Agana jail was smashed, but I don't know if Mr. Brown was still there, but before that time when I gave him some food he was still there. The old man was a white man an ex-marine.

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The other thing that I— this family [Sucabulori?], his father was in the police department, when we go out they have a small farm up there he goes out and gets some extra food for us like chicken or something like that. But this other family Mrs. Nelson, she would cook for us and hide the food and give to the prisoners, but in return we go out and steal some sweet potatoes and taro and give it to her because it was close to that area.

Q: Were there rations of food given to prisoners?

--00:33:55

Perez: When you say food you mean something that would energize your muscles, but no you get a scoop of rice and I don't know what they call it like buñelos they call that donut. I don't know what kind of soup we had, but there were no ingredients in there-- only wild animals would eat that--but you had to eat it. Mrs. Nelson I would salute that old lady, she was the one who helped the prisoners a lot. Mr. Lori help us a little and the former chief of police Mr. Roberto, that man hated the Japanese he had to work. They pull him because of the chief of police before him, they needed him, but they didn't make him the chief of police, they made him a guard and the Sapanese would instruct him you need to do this, do that, he had to do it. I seen family of the Duhamel married to my step-mother's sister, he was killed because he wouldn't comply

with the Japanese instruction--but that man didn't know anything about it, our own people invited him, he said everything was settled, you come with us, they wouldn't do anything, he agreed with it and what happened and what happened they killed him, his brother was killed, Peter [Duhamel]'s wife was killed, they wanted to get rid of the Duhamel.

--00:36:14

I seen the Duhamel was chasing Mr. Juan [unclear], he was the [unclear], the mayor at that time during the Japanese occupation, he was chasing him with a .45 and the person who stopped Duhamel was Mrs. Juan Medina and her husband stopped him at the entrance to the door, crying not to shoot Duhamel. When he turns around he met Luis Pangelinan, he's a Sipanese interpreter, Duhamel had a run in with him before prior to that and finally when he met Luis, Luis doesn't know who Duhamel, Duhamel doesn't know who is Luis, but Duhamel suspects he was a Sipanese interpreter because of the uniform he was wearing, so he draws the .45 out, but when he pulled the trigger it didn't fire, Luis turns around pick up his small machete like this [unclear], he picked it up and he stabbed him right in the ear, Duhamel as he laid down he picked it up, he yanked it off and tossed it at Luis but he missed, [unclear] came in and the same .45 that Duhamel fired, he load that and shoot Duhamel, I was there at that time.

--00:38:44

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interviewee: Juan Perez Session # 2
 Citizen of Guam
 Interviewer: Unknown Guam
 Date: January 29th, 1992

Q: This is a new tape, number seven, we are still doing oral history with Juan Perez.

--00:15

Juan Perez: Well, what you are trying to say is, what is the most important for my children to know? First thing that I want my children to remember, one thing, is to forgive and not to forget. Because of the torture, the discomfort that causes my family and for them to stand high of their belief, is the most important thing. And

not to stretch it in any way, tell the truth and the truth will set them free. That is the most important thing that I have lectured my children. I mean, I don't want them to come up and say, they see this. I don't want those things. I want them to – the actual problem that they know is for them to expose them [unintelligible] could do the best. And one of the other thing that is going to reveal– one of the other things that is going to - mostly we are saying, Manenggon like I said, this one Marine at the end of the day, after I shot this person down, he escorted us up to, later on the other Marines came on, I don't know what they are, but they are in the armed forces. They took us – they lead us up to Mt. Tenjo. [Tibios?] truck came in, come up and then we load our stuff and we went from there to Agat – I don't know if it's a concentration camp, it's a camp there, where all the local people were stationed there. And then from there we started to try to ease down and try to wash up and try to clean and see what we have. And then after that, the following day, went to the 59 Battalion, where Jenkin is a commander, Lieutenant Commander Jenkin. I went – I was interviewed and I told him, I says, I know where the Japanese Army are concentrating – where they are now.

--02:47

So I was – I went to the island command, which is in Apra, under a tent. I think General Larsen was there and they interviewed me. They had a moving picture camera, something like what you have here, a big one. And I pointed the area where I know where the Japanese are moving. Up in Yigo, up in – by Dededo, you know, going to the northwest field. So those are the areas where I pointed. When I looked out there, me and some of my friends. Then we show the bombers were heading toward the direction they were shooting down there. That is where most of the Japanese are concentrated. Where they were concentrated the last time. Let me see, what else can I remember about -

Q: What about [unintelligible]?

Juan Perez: You know, Sumay is a ghost town actually when the people out there -

Q: When did you return, do you remember what - ?

--03:58

Juan Perez: No, we don't return. We never did return.

Q: Did you ever go back?

Juan Perez: No. When the Americans invaded the island, we are out – we are in our own farming property in Apra and someplace else, but they need that area. So I say, you move up to Santa Rita, but not before then. They told us that they made an arrangement for the people of Sumay to move to Talofoto alongside the beach, what do they call it? Ipan? That is not Ipan is it? Ipan, yeah. And the people of Sumay rejected that, we don't want that. Then they turn around and they want us to move to join with Agat and a lot of people, also they say, they don't want to move and mix with the Agat people. Because we have a lot of misunderstanding, probably little

fight there.

--05:01

You know, neighbor to neighbor, neighbor fight. So they say, okay, Santa Rita. They start building a thatched roof. I was appointed, at that time I was appointed as assistant commissioner of Agat during General Larson and then later I was appointed the commissioner of Sumay for Santa Rita. As it is now.

Q: Were you able to go back and collect your belongs at Sumay?

Juan Perez: What do you have there? Nothing.

Q: So you never went back?

Juan Perez: No, there is nothing there. Actually the Americans started bombing the place, they have to bomb everything. Even the cemetery actually was – have you ever been down to the cemetery and see those holes there? Shot by Japanese probably and American bombs, whatever it is.

--05:59

Our church was destroyed. Everything was destroyed at Sumay. There is nothing there to salvage. It's one of the most beautiful towns.

Q: What was it like?

Juan Perez: Oh, tranquility is a word for that village. Not a village. Don't say village, we call it a town because it's a very lively place, it was rich in everything. Resources. Natural resources that we have. The sea is plentiful of shells and anything. Fish. Inland is – everything, we got everything in there. We had the cable station, we had the Pan American, we had the Marine barracks. We had the Navy. We – matter of fact, they even build an island there, they called it a map island.

--06:57

The military built a small island there. Just for one mine sweeper. [Map?.] The other one was the Penguin, the USS Penguin, which was scuttled off our of Orote peninsula. But further down, because my uncle was – he was a first class at the time, an engineer. So I know he is the one that reveal that, scuttled there, the USS Penguin. I boarded that Penguin, it's a beautiful small ship, but it's beautiful. There is only one, not six inches, a small gun, I don't know the size, but they have only one kind there that I know of. What else do you want me to tell?

--07:49

Q: How many people were living in the village before the war?

Juan Perez: Less than a thousand people, I think.

Q: But that was a lot for that area?

Juan Perez: It's a lot yeah, it's a lot for that area. It's – it's a family get together there. And family, they have – you know, we have thatched roof before. One house would put up a thatched roof and all the families were there to help. They didn't expect any compensation. They helped each other. They were masters. You want me to help you. That is the beautiful language. You want me to help you. That is the beautiful language of the people of Sumay.

Q: It must have been hard being a little kid from Sumay, when you became the commissioner of Santa Rita. Of course the people wanted to go back there at one time or another.

--08:54

Juan Perez: We always wanted to go back there, we would relinquish everything that we have now and go back.

Q: When were you able to?

Juan Perez: Uh, no. No, we can't. No we can't do that. The military – nothing they did wrong, I think they did the right thing. They are the people actually that stayed in front of us and said, hey, I will shield you, I want you to survive. So give them credit, you know? I will give them everything, because when they were bombing the island, everybody was crying, we were singing "Uncle Sam". When Uncle Sam gets you, everybody says it. Uncle Sam is no good, so it's just the reverse. I don't know, people have different thoughts. But my family were on the armed forces, every one of them with an exception of me. I got into politics. But Sumay is a beautiful town, one of the most beautiful towns. We got everything. Everything.

--09:58

Beautiful people and beautiful people, they help each other, that is important. Now, hell no, they can't help. They won't help you with anything. They say, how much you pay me? Even young children say, hey, got any money? But before, they don't ask for money? Help is a word. We will help you. And now you know we start weaving for maybe coconut they are going to put that out. And the families will go there and help them weave the coconut leaf. And it's definitely 500 pieces, maybe 3,000 pieces, but you have enough people there to finish that. Then they kill the cow, they kill a pig and they invite everybody, they eat over there and what is leftover, give it to somebody else. What else do you want me to tell you?

Q: Would you like to add anything else?

Juan Perez: No.
[END OF SESSION]