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Austin Roberts' Second World War You know people who tell you they were patriotic, and they joined up because they wanted to save the country--you know, that's mostly BS, to tell you the truth. Most people joined up because they were so damned poor. At that time--1939--I know that, watching them come into the recruiting station, there were more came in with a pair of overalls with the seat worn out of them, and maybe a pair of sneakers on, or an old pair of something on their feet. That's everything they owned, you know. And that's why they joined up. I guess maybe there might have been a bit of feeling into it, too, but most of it was practical. shores. You see, now, we had 2200 men. Our outfit had 10 miles of coastline to cover. Well, 2200 men, you spread them along 10 miles, and you don't get too many in one spot., The morning of the 8th of December. I was going on an engineering course, for putting up barricades against tanks, and all this kind of stuff. They still didn't know what was going to happen. And I remember that I went to breakfast. And I came out of breakfast, and I had two mess tins. I had washed them and I was shaking them, drying them out. I served in the Far East--Hong Kong. We left Vancouver. It took us 23 days to get down there--November 13. (Did you know where you were headed?) No idea. The only thing they told us was--after we left the Philippines, a couple of days from China-- they told us that war could break out any minute, and it might be bad enough that we'd have a job to get off the ship. We weren't at war yet. War (for us) started on the 8th of December, 1941. We knew that the war in Europe was going on strong. But the Japanese hadn't declared war yet, see. We were getting guns set up along the island (of Hong Kong), the first thing, you could hear the roar of the planes coming. And you knew there were a lot of them. I just looked out for a minute and, boy, they were coming hell for leather, all these bombers. And they bombed the damn place flat. They got every plane that was on the airport, and every building that was around here--they bombed her flat. They (the Japanese) had to come in, now, by the mainland, through that part of the mainland (of China) that we owned, or had leased. So that was a British problem, and they were looking after that part of it. The British are great troops, best in the world. I don't care what anybody says.