

**Mike Marino
Veteran**

**Interviewed at
Senator Patty Richie's Office
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Q: Why'd you chose the Marines?

MM: I just liked them better. I might as well be with the best, that was just my fantasy. Then I was put into a platoon and there was a guy from Buffalo whose name was Hauserman and he was around my same height and he was right next to me when we fell out during boot camp. So, I got to know him. We went to camp near our boot camp and that was 12 weeks and then we waited and assembled in our squad platoons. All the Marines were there, and they were called out where they were going to be assigned. I waited and waited, and I was assigned to a torpedo bomber squadron. Then from there we got our planes and we took off for the East China Sea. There was the sixth fleet, now we are only going 12 knots. We always have an escort carrier, and that carrier is our protection. It was a long trip; the Pacific Ocean is beautiful. I love that flight deck, it had the most beautiful sunsets you will ever experience. We finally got to the Sixth Fleet and there were three other carriers in this huge fleet. There were navy pilots on the other three carriers and ours had Marine Corps but of course we took time the pilots had to learn how to land on a carrier. We were out there, and they were landing and taking off and I had a job. It's interesting early in the morning we are out there, and the planes are all fired up and the propellers are going. Each plane had a head mechanic. Now I know he was the one with the CO₂ bottle and if there was a little fire in the engine they could put it out right away. No one got hit by a propeller, but the danger was always there. We fired the planes on the catapult and our captain would not sign and where everybody got a little promotion and a little extra pay because when my pay went out half my pay would go to my mother. This was because I had 3 brothers and a sister, and I was ending up 25 dollars a month and I bought my own tooth brush and tooth paste all those things and if I went on liberty 25 dollars wouldn't go too far. We got to the sixth fleet and there were four big carriers and cruiser and all other kinds of ships. They had these little small boats that could emit a cloudy substance so the huge fleet could be in the cloud, so you couldn't see it. We could hide in the cloud and we never got attacked in it the Japanese fleet was gone. We were there by the end and we were doing we were providing air coverage for mine sweeping detail. They would go over there and protect the mine sweepers and they were cutting the mines destroying them. Of course, when we were on our way to the sixth fleet now and then we would spot a mine and a Navy sharpshooter would shoot at them. The Navy sharpshooter had hit it just right, so it would blow up because they were a danger. Our fleet was stationed in Okinawa, Buckler's Bay, so what

we did was after our days, work the fleet would come into Buckler's Bay, and be there cozy for the night however the Japanese had some planes and some aerial torpedoes. I stayed on the flight deck 23 out of 24 hours. It was not very nice to sleep down there, it was hot and sticky, I would sleep under an airplane. My pillow was a pair of my shoes, and I cradled in my shoes to sleep under an airplane. We would be in Buckler's Bay for the night, and the *USS Pennsylvania* wasn't too far from our ship. We could look and there it was down there.

Q: The *USS Pennsylvania*, what kind of ship was that?

MM: It was a battleship, now in the beginning of the war the *USS Pennsylvania* was in Pearl Harbor and it took a hit and had to be rebuilt. Here it is at the end of the war, it had been rebuilt it was right there our neighbor in the water. The flight deck was 45 feet high and you could look down there and see it. Well what would happen we would get a signal, to man your battle stations and we had guns that we could fire in the daytime. I mean the quad forties were right next to me and you know they probably did a lot of damage to my ears; the only thing we had were little cotton we put in our ears. Nothing like the protection they have now.

Q: What's a quad-forty?

MM: It shoots ammunition, which we would say is about this around, but I don't know how many barrels are on the quad. We had two five-inch cannons in the fan tail, on the lower deck. Then of course the flight deck was built up and we had a hangar deck where you could put airplanes cause they all couldn't fit on the flight deck; so, when they landed we would lower some down. So, we were at battle stations and you were covered with a [unclear] white thin covering over our head and we had a mask and gloves because my station was right on the flight deck. If a bomb goes off and there's all this flame and terrific heat and this would keep from being burned. This one night, we could look up and we see what we called a piss called Charlie and that one plane we could see the flames from the exhaust. They would drop a bomb someplace and they probably knew what we were doing so they said that one plane and that battleship took a hit right near the engines, three engines were damaged, and 26 men were killed. They knew we were there because we had engine trouble; we were stuck there and after that they stayed out in the ocean.

Q: The *USS Pennsylvania* stayed out in the ocean?

MM: It only had one engine and one propeller, three out of the four propellers were damaged. It didn't see too much fighting because it was hit in Pearl Harbor and now it got hit again so it was tough luck. From the flight deck you know wherever they landed them they might hit something. Every now and then they would hit something but, we were stuck there at night. We did a lot of duty before we had this engine trouble. We were out there sending planes out there before [unclear].