

## MGYSGT Alfred B. (Barry) Carpenter Jr

Born: May 31, 1935  
Philadelphia

Died:

Period of Service Korea and  
37 year career  
US Marine Corps Reserve  
Sources: Retirement  
ceremony, and interview

Enlisted in US Marines Reserves for eight years on January 10, 1954 at Glenview Naval Air Station, Illinois. As a reciprocating engine mechanic, he was assigned to the Maintenance Department as a Plane Captain on the F4U "Corsair" of WWII fame. In July 1955 he was promoted to PFC and in May, 1957 to corporal (E3). He later qualified as Plane Captain on more advanced aircraft, the F9F-6 Panther and the F9F-8B Cougar. In April 1960, the Marines instituted a new rank structure and he was among the first to be accorded Corporal E4. At this time his group was deployed for training to Cherry Point, NC, and to gunnery and bombing practice in El Toro CA. He was instrumental in keeping the flight line up and running during these ATD deployments. He extended his commitment several times over the years.

In 1961 Cpl Carpenter was made the Flight Line Chief of the squadron, a responsibility usually reserved for marines of a higher rank. In 1962 the squadron transitioned to an attack unit, and received the A4 "Skyhawk" aircraft. He had several positions in the next few years (Training NCO, Maintenance Analyst, Quality Assurance NCO) and was promoted Sergeant in 1964 and to Staff Sergeant in 1967. In recognition of his outstanding performance, he was promoted to Gunnery Sergeant in April, 1967.

In 1974 GySgt Carpenter was transferred to Marine Transport Squadron 234 where he qualified as crew chief on the C119 "Flying Boxcar", flying hundreds of hours in transporting Marines and cargo around the US and overseas. In May he was promoted to Master Sergeant. The unit was redesignated as an aerial refueling and transport squadron in 1975 and received the K-130 "Hercules" aircraft. Carpenter volunteered for extended active duty, and assigned to flight engineer training, which brought him to every point of the globe. On February 5, 1976 he qualified as the first reserve Marine ever to become a KC-130 Flight Engineer. He flew missions in support of Marine Corps activities in Latin America Europe and the Far East, earning him the highest Marine Corps line rank, Master Gunnery Sergeant (E9) May, 1978. Specifics of the in-flight refueling process follows in the attached interview.

During the next nine years, Carpenter logged thousands of flight hours (4600 total) training reserve Marines to participate in the first non-stop transPacific flight refueling on the way. His outstanding performance as a flight engineer earned him the title of Flight Crewman of the Command, and in 1982 and 1983 he was considered for the MCAA Marine Corps Aircrewman (Fixed Wing) of the Year Award in competition with aircrew members throughout the entire corps. In 1983 he was recognized as being the senior Marine Crewmember in the entire Marine Corps. He then stepped down as the Corps senior enlisted flyer and in 1987 was assigned to Engineer Support Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Engineer Support Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Force Service Support Group, Fleet Marine Force. He then served in various training and other capacities until his retirement on July 1, 1991. He served for over 37 years.

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He was able to continue working as a lineman for a Chicago utility company during his service period, retiring after 39 years. He is married to Grace Ann Ellefson, sister of Jake Ellefson. His son, Alfred III was killed in a jet skiing accident in 1992.

See interview following.



# **VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT**

**Preserving Stories of Service for Future Generations**

**Interview with**

**Barry Carpenter**

Conducted by Mr. John Gay

October 6, 2014

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Corrections to transcript are noted by square bracket [ ] for additions and an ellipsis ... for text that has been removed either due to inaccuracy or at the request of the veteran.

**We're sitting at Barry Carpenter's home on Washington Island, Indian Point Road off Ellefson Lane, a beautiful home, and we're going to talk with Barry Carpenter about his experiences in the military which was a career in the Marines. This is John Gay on October 6, 2014.**

**Barry, why don't you tell us what you did before you joined the Marines, and when, and some of your experiences doing that.**

I was ... [living] at home; I was working for Commonwealth Edison. At the time it was gas and electric [utility] but it was public service. Friends of mine came by and said they were going to go up to Glenview Naval Air Station and join the Marines. So, I said, "Good idea." I went with them and we signed up and joined the Air Wing, the Marine Air Wing.

**That was in 1954?**

1954.

**January 10<sup>th</sup>, I see.**

That's when I reported, January 10<sup>th</sup>. At the time, we had the original [f4u] Corsair used in Korea. A bunch of the guys came back from Korea in that squadron so I got to know them and I worked on the airplane. I did multiple jobs including driving the refueling truck for fueling the airplanes. I started to work on the airplane and had a mechanical ability; I was able to fix things. So they tended to keep me on the flight line all the time. And I think our first maneuver was ...

**Let me ask you, before that, did you take boot camp in San Diego?**

At the time, I did, my enlistment was for eight years with two years of active duty. Since I had been working at Edison and I was busy doing that, I asked the Draft Board, when it was I needed to do my two years of active duty. They said you don't have to do them until your draft notice comes up. (Shortly after that they changed the draft duty requirements.) He said you don't have to join until your draft notice comes up and I said, well when will that be. He said, "I don't know, they were changing things." So, I said, "OK, good, I'll just stay in the reserves." He said, "That's fine." So about four years later when I was twenty-three and I was a Corporal in the Marine Corps Reserves and I went into the Draft Board and said, "My draft notice is up." He said, "Well, all the draft requirements have changed. You only have to do six months active duty and since you've been [in] the Marines for four years, you don't have to do any active duty." I said, "Good, I have an eight year obligation, I'll just do my eight years." By the time the eight years was up, I was pretty involved. We had converted to jets and we had had many different airplanes. I have a list of many airplanes I worked on, somewhere. I had worked on all of them that we had.

**Was this at Glenview?**

This was at Glenview. I just kept reporting to my monthly meetings and my two weeks active duty in various locations. I did boot camp at Glenview. The guys in the squadron had been to boot camp. So they had me there and they went through all the drills and everything I had to do right at Glenview on my weekends. In the end, when they said you don't have to go on active duty, I said, "What about boot camp?" They said, "You did your boot camp at Glenview, that's enough." I said, "Fine, I like being in there; I like my job and I like working on the airplanes." But, I thought, well, I'm not going to volunteer to go to boot camp as a Corporal and it wasn't a good idea.

**Were you working on a daily basis at Glenview?**

No, no just on weekends. One weekend a month, two weeks in the year. We went to different locations where ever we took the airplanes and the squadron was transported there. So, I continued to do that.

### **So you were still working at Commonwealth Edison?**

All the time.

### **Doing the work then once a month...**

I would go to Glenview. It was a Reserve Duty. So my enlistment was up and [the] CO called me up to his office and he says, "Are you going to reenlist?" I said, "Yeah, I like coming here; I liked doing it and I liked my job there." I was kind of an intricate part by then. I knew the airplane and I was fixing them and everything was going along, so I reenlisted. And that enlistment was up and I reenlisted again and that enlistment was up and I reenlisted again. So I ended up with thirty-seven years in the Reserves. In about 1975, they said they had to get rid of the jets out of Glenview. So they gave me an option of going to a helicopter squadron or a transport squadron who had the old flying box cars. I didn't like the idea of helicopters because I knew airplanes more. So I went into the transport squadron. They had these flying box cars which the engines I had an idea about because I worked on them when I first joined which was way back in 1954. So, I said, "Okay, what can I do? Where can you put me?" I was a Master Sergeant by this time. They said, "Well, all the shop have senior enlisted in charge of all the shops. I can't really put you there because they are already settled and you haven't worked on this airplane." I said, "Okay, well, I'll just think about this." And I said, "How about air crew?" He said, "Air crew? You're kind of senior to do air crew now." I said, "But, I don't want to go into training because that's not my thing. I'm a mechanic. But, if possible, could I go into air crew?" He said, "But you'll have junior people training you." I said, "I don't care. I'll listen to them; I'll do what they say; I won't give them a hard time; I won't pull rank on them; I'll just work at it." He said, "Well, Okay, we'll let you go into air crew." So, I was trained by the guys that were crew chiefs on the [C] 119. I said, "Great!" And I qualified as a crew chief; I flew that plane for a little over a year as crew chief ... flight crew I flew with the airplane and it was great. Then, in about '74, they said we were going to get the KC-130. I said, "Great!" They asked everybody if anybody could take six months and go out to El Toro, California and go through all the schools for the 130. I said, "Just write the orders and I'll take them to work and they'll give me the time off." So I took a leave of absence from work and I had a friend who also volunteered and the two of us went to California for six months training. We went through all the schools, went through all the systems schools, learned the whole airplane. While we were there, we flew, as a trainee; we flew every flight we could get on to. We flew every day of the week. I mean, it didn't matter; every time there was a plane flying we got on it.

### **To get the flight hours in?**

Yeah, to get the flight hours in and to train. First as a first mechanic that flew with that airplane as a crew member. Then, when we qualified as a first [mechanic] we then started our engineer training, we would go on every flight we could get on, in the engineer's seat with an engineer training us. We did that for four or five months after all the schools and everything. Then we came back to Glenview. We actually came back with the first airplanes that came to Glenview. That was an A model or a B model. I mean it was an old airplane. We had planes that were made in the '50s and this was in the '70s. But the first airplane, first 130 that flew, was in '54. That's the same year I joined the Marine Corps. The first time the 130's flew their test flights and the Marine Corps got them.

### **They're gargantuan planes, aren't they?**

They're four engine transport that refuels in flight. We had hose pods on each wing so we could refuel two airplanes at the same time and the Engineer controlled the panel that controlled the fuel flow and the pumps and how much fuel we could pass and still get back to the home base or wherever we were [working out of].

**How did they get the hose from one plane to the other plane and in the little hole?**

It's all hydraulically controlled reel and on the end of that hose, which is like a 4 inch big hose that had a drogue like a little parachute on the coupling that couples to the receiving air craft. The receiving aircraft has a probe that they fly up to the airplane and they fly formation with it. They come up to the hose and they have to push the hose in about five or six feet and the reel in the pod rewinds the slack to keep tension on it and he locks into that receiver coupling. Then I turn on the fuel and I count how many pounds of fuel that the receiver gets and I report that to the Co-pilot who is keeping track and is talking to the receiver. Then he marks it down how much fuel I gave him.

**Does it ever get snagged or anything like that?**

Yes, it can get snagged. It can get tangled up in there; it can cause all kinds of problems. I can cut the hose but I can't cut the hose with the airplane on there. He's got to disconnect. He's got to back up a little bit or slow down enough to disconnect. Then we rewind the hose and it all rewinds into the pod. Then we're set to go and we keep refueling planes until we get down to our "Bingo Fuel" which is the fuel we need to get back to the airport.

**If you transmitted fuel to a plane, how many pounds or gallons would you give them?**

You know my memory is not too good anymore and I knew all those numbers.

**How about 500 pounds?**

Oh, thousands. I mean hundreds, hundreds of pounds. The plane holds a lot of fuel and we would give him as much as he wanted or needed until we got low on fuel for the airplane. We passed the receiver the same fuel as the airplane used out of the same tank. So we don't want to give him anymore than we can afford to give him. It worked out good.

**And you said you could actually refuel two planes at one time?**

Right. [One on each wing.]

**That's amazing. You're almost wing tip to wing tip aren't you?**

Well, we're close. I mean they have to connect to the airplane through the hose. The co-pilot's talking to the receiving aircraft. He's telling him when he can come in, and he can tell him when he's got his fuel and he'll back off and then he'll peel away and another airplane will come up and he'll plug in and we'll give him fuel.

**Is there a sight line that the co-pilot can see?**

No. At the back of our airplane, we have hatches, doors, on the back of the airplane. On the inside of those doors we have a seat that folds down and we have an observer and he's watching his airplane and the other one is watching his airplane on ... [his] side of the airplane and they're talking to us, in the cockpit. They're telling us when the airplane is there, he'll tell us when the hose is out, when the hose is back in and he'll tell us when the plane has pushed the hose in far enough to receive ... [fuel]. There's a marking on the hose, white paint on

the hose so he can tell him how far in he is. He can tell me, okay you can start passing fuel so then I give him fuel and I turn on the pumps and off he goes; he just gets his fuel.

**What if it snags? Is it because the nozzle ...**

Not too much of a problem at the airplanes, although that has happened. When it's rewinding, if there's too much slack or something, it's on the reel. It's like snagging your fishing line. When you're reeling in your fishing line sometimes it snags up. Well, that can happen in that pod on the reel and then when we come back in we'll have to take it apart and repair it. Sometimes you can't even untangle it; you have to cut it with a hack saw to cut that hose to get it untangled and use the pod again.

**The pods are on the back end of the plane?**

They're on the wing tips. There's one on each wing tip toward the end of the wing. It's a very long wing span. The plane ... [has] lots of room to have ... [a] plane ... [on each side].

**That's an amazing process. Who invented that?**

I don't know. The Air Force has a system where they have a flyable boom that comes out the center of the fuselage and they set in a little pod and they can see the receiver and they can control, they can fly that boom. So the Air Force receiver comes up and the socket for that boom is on the top of the receiver airplane. So the guy that controls that boom, he flies that boom right into that socket and he extends it right into the plane and then they refuel right through that boom. But the Marines and the Navy uses a hose and a probe. So the receiver aircraft would fly up and into the hose and then we'd refuel.

**You'd put it in about five or six feet you say?**

No, no, it goes right into a socket. The boom is sticking out in front of the airplane and the drogue on the hose is flying and he flies his probe right into the socket and then he pushes back into the receiver, into the pod. It doesn't go into the aircraft at all, he flies ... [the probe] into the drogue, the coupling and it locks in and then we refuel. Then he's done, he just backs out.

**How long did it take to refuel a plane with that?**

Well, it could take five or ten minutes. Fuel goes fast because you're going through a four inch hose. The coupling is big; I mean it's a lot of fuel. We have big three phase pump motors that have a lot of pressure. I mean it goes through there with a lot of pressure.

**Was that invented at the time of the Strategic Air Command when they wanted to keep the planes in the air?**

Yeah.

**Twenty four hours a day.**

Right. Because the bombers, the big B-52 or whatever they were, they could not take off loaded with fuel so they always sent a tanker up at the same time or they'd have a tanker on station up in the air at altitude and those bombers would take off, loaded with bombs, heavy, so they couldn't take off with all that weight and a load of fuel. So they would go up and meet the tanker; the tanker would fill them up and then they could fly across the ocean, drop their bombs and fly back. Then if they needed fuel they had a tanker up in the air and

that tanker would refuel him if needed fuel to get back to home base. That's how they flew. And some of those spy planes stayed up there for long hours. There was a record of forty some hours, flight time.

### **Changing off of pilot and co-pilot?**

Some of those planes flew, the U-2 used to refuel like that and that's a one pilot. He would stay up there for long hours. It was amazing.

### **How did they stay awake? Lindberg had a problem getting across the ocean.**

That's right and they had a problem, too. Some of the planes had augmented flights. Like when we would go on long flights, we could install a huge tank inside the cargo compartment and we could fill that with fuel so we had enough fuel for fifteen hours or something. Sometimes we would fly with an augmented crew and we'd set up beds in the cargo compartment and the pilots could go take a nap, go to sleep, in a bed, while we're flying. They would take turns augmenting the crew.

### **Did you take some flights yourself across the ocean?**

Oh yeah, many. There was one time; I shouldn't even say this because it was illegal. We flew back and forth across the Atlantic twice, one after another. Loading cargo in the States and taking it back to Germany or wherever ..., we used to go on NATO missions. And if they needed supplies, we come back to the States and load up on supplies and go back and sometimes we needed to do it more than once. We'd just turn around and go back.

### **You got a lot of travel miles. Where did you go to, England?**

We used to go to Iceland to refuel or stop in the Azores. We'd stop in the Azores. Sometimes we operated out of the Azores.

### **Because it was a better climate than Iceland?**

Because it was partway across the ocean. Some of the fighters didn't have enough fuel to go all the way to where they were going. Instead of stopping, [landing and refueling,] they would schedule this. They would take off from the States, or wherever they were, and we would take off and it would be all coordinated and we would go up and fly a refuel pattern which was an oval where we could meet this airplane coming up in the air to meet us and it was all kind of scheduled with their air speed and the weather and everything. And we'd already be up there and they would come up and they would radio us that they were approaching and then we would turn around and head towards them and then we would time it so that we could make a U turn and fly in their direction and they would catch up to us, plug in, get their fuel and fly off. It gets complicated especially when we did it to Hawaii with Jets. Sometimes we would have a flight of two ... [tankers] that would leave early and then later on, two more ... [tankers] would take off ... They would take off and they would get up and they would get up to their stations, and fly this oval and we would have another plane from Hawaii taking off and he would be like a rescue, alternate refueling stop so these jets would not run out of fuel to try to cross the ocean.

### **Did you rendezvous mainly near Hawaii?**

No, out in the middle of the ocean, half way there.

### **That's two thousand miles from San Francisco.**

And they would take turns; they would plug in and get fuel from us right away and then they would go on and if they felt they needed more fuel to get to Hawaii they would stop at the next refueling spot and refuel again. And if they had a problem getting fuel there we had an emergency plane on a track East of Hawaii so they could plug in there if they needed to.

**So you had two tankers circling between Hawaii and the States?**

No, altogether there would be five airplanes up there.

**Oh, wow.**

So we could refuel those planes coming across. And if there was a flight of five or six airplanes, you'd need that much fuel. It was kind of complicated. It had to be all coordinated.

**Who set the schedules up?**

The officers in charge of our refueling of our airplanes. They would communicate with the squadron that [we] were going to tank for and so it was kind of a complicated system and we're still doing it. We don't have to change it too much for the Navy and the Marines. The Air Force, now, has big airplanes and they've gotten bigger airplanes now. The KC-10 was the first big one that the Air Force got that increased the quantity of fuel that they could carry. Originally it was the KC-35 and that was a lot less quantity that they could carry. With this new one, that airplane could take off with the fighters and he would have enough room in that airplane to haul the personnel and the equipment for that squadron and the fuel to refuel the planes on the way over the ocean. They would just fly as a unit all the way across the ocean. And anytime the fighters needed fuel, they'd just come over and get some fuel. It simplified this whole thing tremendously.

**Like the mother cow?**

That's right and it worked just great. The problem with the Marines, they do close air support and low level stuff and we refueled helicopters. We were the only ones that flew slow enough to refuel helicopters.

**How slow would that be? Are you talking about one hundred miles an hour?**

A hundred twenty, a hundred forty, somewhere in there.

**Refueling a helicopter with that big blade going around?**

Well, you could feel the blade going past the airplane. Every time it went by, the plane would thump, thump, thump, you could feel that. I had two helicopters on there refueling at the same time.

**With that big blade going around, they've got to be above you, is that right?**

No, no. They're far enough behind us; there's plenty of room for the blade but not enough to get away from the sound or the air shock of that blade going by. Yeah, you could feel; it would thump in the airplane. Really exciting. But they would be above the hose because the hose drops; it's like an arc. The drogue holds the hose up; there's a belly in the hose, it's not tight. At that slow speed, we had to reconfigure the hose. We had to put a much bigger drogue on the hose because at a slower speed, the normal speed that we were doing when

**Fighters?**

Whatever, the high speed, as fast as we could go, it didn't use much of a hose because you're going faster. The more you slow down, that drogue doesn't hold the hose up anymore, pretty soon it's hanging straight down and the receiver can't plug in. It's gotta be out so that he can plug in.

**Parallel.**

Yeah. Helicopters, E Model is the one that we used to refuel. Other ones now, I think are modified.

**Do helicopters take more fuel because of that big blade?**

No, no. The engines are smaller than a big plane and they have a limited amount of fuel. But having the ability to refuel in flight let them go on longer trips. Matter of fact, there's been missions where they refueled helicopters a couple of times to get them there without having to land.

**Was that like in Viet Nam when they needed them over there?**

Yeah. Now with the terrorist and stuff they've done missions to recover people who were prisoners. They've used those helicopters and the Marines are the only ones that could do that.

**What is the distance a helicopter can go?**

If they can refuel, they can keep going.

**I mean for one fuel tank.**

I'm not in helicopters; I wasn't in helicopters so I really can't answer that. They can go hundreds of miles.

**So you spent your time circling the ocean waiting for planes to catch up.**

That's right.

**Did it get kind of boring at times?**

Well, yeah, in some respects. There's a constant monitoring that goes on because we didn't have the computers on the engines like they do now. The J Model has actually eliminated the Flight Engineer position. They've got the computers that do the same job the engineers did. They monitor all the engines and keep track of all the systems in the engine and all the systems in the airplane. Now when something goes wrong, the computer knows it; it senses that and it comes up on the screen. And they have screens for the computers in the cockpit for the pilot.

**So the pilot can make a judgment about what he wants to do.**

Oh, it will actually tell him what to do.

**Oh, okay.**

Which is what the engineer used to do.

**So you've been replaced.**

Yeah, I've been replaced by a computer.

**I don't know what I'd be replaced by, maybe a lemonade stand.**

Anyway, an interesting point on my life is that I have a grandson who joined the Marines right out of high school like I did mostly. He joined the regulars and he is now a Crew Chief on a KC-130 J model. So, he's doing the same job I did on the same type airplane except they upgraded the airplane from what I started with.

**When you were fixing the planes, the mechanical part of it, you had to have special tools, special equipment?**

When I started flying the 130's there wasn't as much tool control as they have now. As they got into, after a few years of flying, because I was flying them for thirteen years, so when we first got the 130's there wasn't as much tool control going on. And they found out that that was really important and now they have a tool room and they have tool boxes for the engineers and I would check out a tool box and I would audit that box. I'd have a list of tools in it and I would check to make sure all the tools were there and if there was a tool missing it would be marked on that sheet saying that that tool is missing. When I'd come back and when I'd check in, the tool room would make sure that every tool that I took out was in that box so that there was no tool left on the airplane or in my pocket or anywhere. If there was a tool missing and I couldn't tell them where that tool was, they'd down the airplane and they'd examine that whole airplane looking for that tool. And until that tool was found or deemed that it was not in the airplane... then they would up the airplane again. It became very critical.

**How many tools would be in that box?**

A couple of hundred. A lot of little tools, all kinds of fittings and parts and things that I might need to repair the airplane.

**So, if something happened to the plane, it was brought to you, you actually went in and fixed it.**

Yeah, I had to fix it.

**Some of that stuff is pretty heavy. Did you have to have special (equipment)?**

It depended on where we were. If we were in a remote field in which we could land it, maybe there was no support there. So I had to make it work, one way or another.

**So you improvised?**

Yeah. But if we were at a base where there was facilities, I could use it. I mean they would let me use whatever I needed. And I could order parts from the Supply.

**Were they generally available or did you have to wait a couple of weeks to fly into a particular place?**

Well, there were times when we had to wait for a replacement part or something. Like if the propeller was bad or something went on the housing on the propeller and they had to ship a new one. Or if it was an engine then they had to ship an engine. You know, we'd have to have facilities there.

**To get it on?**

Yeah.

**Was that kind of dangerous at times?**

Well yeah.

**I mean, things could fall on you?**

Yeah. Well, you had to be careful. You were mostly up on scaffolding and then they had lifts, platforms that raised and lowered. And it would be a big platform as big as a dining room table. You could work on that platform ... on the engines. You can't reach them from the ground; you have to have a lift.

**Are they more complicated than an automobile engine?**

Yeah, because everything had to be safety wired so you had to know how to safety wire it. There's a proper method to do all that stuff. There's things that had to be done according to the book. We had a NATOPS book that tells you how to do everything. It's got all the rules and regulations. NATOPS, ... Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization. Everything is controlled by that book.

**Did you ever get injured while you were working on those things?**

No.

**You were pretty careful then.**

I got hungry a few times. We would talk to the pilots about "you gotta feed your crew once in a while." Of course, they wanted to eat, too. There were times we'd interrupt our mission and .... [get something to eat].

**Can you do a lot of that work in flight?**

Some of it yeah, because in the cargo compartment, all the stuff is exposed. There's shelves underneath the cockpit with all the radio gear and all the gears and all the cables that control the flight gear, they're exposed in the airplane. Hydraulic tanks, for the Aux system, are all exposed on the inside of the cockpit, I mean cargo compartment. There's no paneling over all those things. You can see the wires going back and forth in the ceiling; see the pipes going across the ceiling. I mean, everything is available.

**Were they subject to getting severed or banged up because (they were exposed?)**

Things could happen but they're in the ceiling.

**Oh, I see.**

You can't reach them but you can see them and see that they're working, see that they're connected, see if there's any problem. At one time we had a problem with the wing mounts. From the old airplanes, the vibrations and everything was actually loosening the bolts that hold the wing on. And one of the engineers on one of his inspections noticed that there was loose bolts up there and so then they had to ground the airplanes and check all the airplanes make by Lockheed, all the 130's, to check those wing roots to make sure ...

**Did they find a lot of them?**

Yeah, there were quite a few. They were all repaired to keep the planes flying.

**No accidents as a result?**

No.

**That was pretty good. That was a pretty close inspection then to find that.**

Yeah. We had a first mac on the airplane besides the engineer. The engineer would stay in his seat between the Pilot a co-pilot monitoring the systems and everything. The first mac would do a walk around. He would look out the windows and look at the engines, make sure there was nothing leaking nor nothing loose. He would check inside the cargo compartment for all these systems and he would make sure that everything was working right and he'd come back and report to the engineer that everything was okay. On long flights over the ocean, we had an hourly inspection and monitoring. We would write down all the systems that we'd just checked it, that it was okay yet.

**Did you have a form for that?**

Yeah, we had a form to fill out and on a long flight we would fill out when we first started and every hour after that we would just check it to make sure everything was okay.

**So you sat between the pilot and co-pilot and you had to monitor all the instrument dials? And you could tell if something wasn't...? [Within the proper limits.]**

Yeah. You could see if a gauge would be off the standard, the limits, there would be limits for all these gauges like the gage, the hydraulic gage, the fuel pressure and the amount in the fuel tanks. Each fuel tank had a gauge that would tell me how much fuel was in each tank.

**So then you alerted the mechanic to go and take a look?**

Yeah.

**That was quite a routine, wasn't it?**

Yeah, it was.

**You didn't get a lot of sleep then?**

No, it kept you awake.

**How did the term gunnery?**

It's the regular Marine Corps rank structure. You went from Gunnery Sergeant to Master Sergeant and then an E9 was a Master Gunnery Sergeant. That was the same as a Sergeant Major. The only difference was that I was in the field or in the shops. I didn't work in the office, [in the] office staff, they were Sergeant Majors and in the shops you were a Master Gunnery Sergeant. That's the difference, that's how they designated E9 in maintenance.

**Were you still working for Commonwealth Edison all that time?**

All that time.

**So you had plenty of time in the air but you also were gone.**

Yeah, I was at work, my regular job. I did my regular job every day.

**What did you do at Commonwealth Edison?**

I was a lineman. I climbed poles, towers.

**My brother-in-law did that.**

Yeah, I did that, I was with them for thirty-nine years. I was with the Reserves for thirty-seven years.

**Oh boy, a double life.**

I was busy, I wasn't home much. And once I started flying which started in '74, '75 when I started flying more. Then, if they had a mission going on, like we would support NATO in different countries, like Norway or Turkey or Denmark or where ever it was, we would sign up for a week to support that. So I would get orders and I would go into work and tell them that I had orders to go on a NATO mission and they'd give me that time off.

**Did that come out of your vacation pay or was that extra?**

No, that was extra.

**That was pretty good.**

I still got my vacation and then I would go on these as an okay time off.

**So you got some time off.**

Edison was good about military stuff; they let me go.

**So you got in a ... [few] weeks a year off work.**

Yeah. It was good enough and the Marines paid me, too. So they would pay me, so I'd get my pay one way or the other.

**That went on then through the seventies into the eighties?**

Yeah, into the nineties. I flew for thirteen years and I've got over four thousand hours in the airplane, flight time.

**Wow, that's not bad considering you were just doing it on weekends and missions.**

Yeah, but sometimes I'd do it three weekends out of the month and I used to go every week. We had a standard Wednesday night flight scheduled and I would schedule myself for those night flights. So I would leave work and head right to the airport.

**Glenview?**

Yeah, to Glenview which was only a half an hour away. I'd preflight the airplane; I'd sign the airplane off; the pilots would come down and they'd sign off the airplane and we'd go flying for three or four hours.

**Wow, wow. That's a full day.**

I did that for years. I got daily pay for doing that so I added my retirement points every day I did that. There's different ways of doing that. You can either do it as active duty or extra drill. So, I'd do it as an extra drill and I'd get another daily point added to my retirement. So now that I'm retired, I've added a lot of retirement points by flying and by going on extra duty which helps my retirement pay.

**Very good. So you got out of service, when?**

Let's see, I should have the date here somewhere.

**Eighty-seven?**

Ninety-one, I retired in ninety-one, one July, ninety-one.

**You left Commonwealth when?**

Two years later. Ninety-three.

**You actually retired then?**

Yeah, I actually retired.

**After you retired, did you come up here at that time?**

Actually, my wife continued to work because she was not older, she was younger and she needed to acquire over fifteen years of work time, at the job she was having to get her retirement.

**Who was she with?**

She was with the school district.

**Where?**

Buffalo Grove. She didn't retire until two thousand. I had a few years when I was retired and I just worked around doing odd jobs and stuff. And I traveled a lot because I had a big van and I traveled all over the country.

**You didn't hop aboard one of the planes, did you?**

Oh, yes. I could fly space available so I flew space available anywhere I wanted to go.

**Terrific.**

It was great and I had a good time doing it. It was inconvenient at times because you can't always be assured of a flight. You don't get a seat unless there's space available and I was a last priority. So anybody else who was ahead of me in priority would get a seat and then when there were still seats left, then I would get a seat. But I flew a lot; I flew all over the country; I'd fly anywhere I wanted to go and visit people.

**Did you go to Glenview? When they closed Glenview, did you go to O'Hare?**

Yeah, O'Hare had a base and a military wing and then they moved up to Milwaukee. So then I would go to Milwaukee to get flights. And there was a regular flight with a Medivac plane out of St. Louis and he would do a weekly trip. He would fly medical people all over the country out of St. Louis. They would go every where. So, if I wanted to go somewhere and there was no local military flight, I could go down to St. Louis, I can't remember the base but there was a base down there that was home base for these Medivac planes and they were nice planes, they were comfortable. They were great; they were like an airliner but they had places for stretchers. So they would transport medical patients to wherever they were from. They would take them back to their home base or wherever to a medical hospital and then the ambulance would meet them and take them to like Great Lakes Medical Center out of Glenview or O'Hare, wherever they would fly into like Milwaukee. They would take them to the medical places so I would just hitch a ride with them and I could go anywhere I wanted to go.

**How did you get to St. Louis, did you drive?**

Well, sometimes I'd drive; sometimes I'd take a train or a bus or whatever.

**So you went to Florida or California?**

Yeah, I'd go anywhere. These planes, they'd go all over. I would go to the operations office where they'd schedule airplanes or had the schedule of airplanes coming in and going out and I could go in there and ask them what planes are going where. One time I was in California by the Los Angeles Airport and there was military operations at the airport at LAX. I knew where that was and I could go in there and talk to the guys and ask them if there's a plane going and at the time I wanted to get back to Glenview so I went in one time and they said, "Well there's a General in here and he's waiting for a plane to come in and get him and he's going to the Air Force Academy, then he's going to come back here, and then he's going to Glenview. Actually he's going to St. Louis." So I said, "Can I get on?" He said, "Sure." So I flew with this General to the Air Force Academy and they had the red carpet out for this General, it was really neat. So I was stuck there at the airport by the Air Force Academy. And they said, "The next day he's going to fly out again, you can get on." I said, "Okay." Well, the weather in California turned nasty and they didn't go. So I spent the next couple of days there. I kept checking on airplanes, seeing who was going where and when I could get on. I would go to their health club and I would take my shower and I would eat then at the ... [hall] wherever on the base. I'm coming out of there two days later, I hear a KC-135 and they're based at ... [Milwaukee, WI]. I knew; I could hear it. I knew the sound of that airplane. So I grabbed my bag and I ran down to operations and I said, "Call that guy and ask him if I can get on his airplane if he's going to ... [Milwaukee]" He said, "Okay, he's going to ... [Milwaukee] but they're starting their engines. You probably can't get on." I said, "Look, just call him and ask him." This was a reserve plane land he knew I was a reserve and he said, "Sure, send the guy out here." So off I go, I got on, an hour later, I'm in ... [Milwaukee where I had my van parked].

**Oh my God.**

That was good service. It's better than what I had planned. I mean, just because I knew what was going on.

**You could tell by the sound of the engines?**

Yeah, I could tell what airplane it was.

**Now in fixing these things on the plane that had gone wrong, you had to know all different systems?**

Yeah, I had to know all the systems. I went to a school, the mechanics school, when they train the aircraft mechanics that work on that airplane, that's the systems school they go to. So I went to all the systems schools: Hydraulics, Electric, Mechanical, everything that... All the systems in that airplane, I had to go to the school and learn it.

**You must have a facility for learning that kind of stuff. That's pretty wide spread knowledge.**

Yeah, what happens is I've always had an innate ability to fix things. I could always fix most anything. If it could be fixed, I could fix it and I could repair it or whatever took place and I could understand how it worked and I could figure out how to make it work. That was part of a problem when I was at Glenview as a young Marine and they needed the airplanes working and they had an airplane that had a system to be fixed. In the morning when they were assigning where we were going, if they had training going on, they'd say, "Carpenter, you're going to the flight line. We got planes to be fixed." And so that's where I was all the time. And so I missed out on a lot of training. And I admit that it's, it's too bad. Now, I can see where that wasn't good. You know, every Marine is supposed to be a rifleman. Well, I never got to fire the rifle because I was on the airplane; I was working on the airplane every time. But that's what I liked to do and I could do it so I was out there. Pretty soon I was in charge of the flight line and I was there all the time. And I was scheduling the planes and scheduling the planes to the pilots and scheduling who was on the airplane.

**Was there a pressure to get these things fixed and get them out?**

Oh, yeah. Sometimes we'd be in different... When we'd go for out two weeks or we were on a mission somewhere, sometimes we had a hard time getting parts. Sometimes we scavenged the parts from other outfits. You know, I'd go to another squadron that flew the same airplane and tell them I'm having a hard time getting this part, do you have a spare part I can use. And they'd help me out.

**You probably helped them out too in the same circumstances. That's just how the military works.**

Yeah.

**When did you meet Grace Ann, how did that come about?**

Okay. While I was working and I was at Glenview on my duties, on my weekends, I ended up with a hernia, an inguinal hernia. So I went to my family doctor and he says you have to have it fixed. I said, "Okay." So I chose the hospital where Ann had gone to nurses training. I didn't know this at the time. He told me when we do hernias now, at that time; you had to be in the hospital six days. You had to be there the day before, and you had the surgery and you had to be on your back for three or four days so you didn't rupture the repair. So I was in the hospital for five or six days. Well, my doctor, the surgeon, knew all the nurses in the hospital and stuff and I got along good with the doctor. So unbeknownst to me, he went to Grace Ann and said, "I have a patient I'm going to do an operation on." And he says, "I think you should meet him." She said, "Don't do me any favors." But he did. He put me on her floor and she knew it and I didn't know it. And I made remarks because I was a young twenty-five year old bachelor, you know. And I'm checking all the cute nurses out and I'm

collecting phone numbers. So then I noticed a few of them had the same phone number. So I found out a few of them lived together and so I said, "Grace Ann's the one. So I'm going to pursue her." So then I talked her into dating me. This was in July of 1960 and by June of 1961 I was married to her.

**Oh wow. That didn't take long.**

Well, I knew a good thing when I saw it.

**Good for you. Yeah, she's a good girl. That's how you got introduced to the island then?**

Yes, she brought me up here.

**Did you come up in the summer a little bit?**

Yeah, we would come up. Her mother was still alive; her father had died a year before. So we would spend as much time as we could up here with her mother.

**Jake's..?**

Jake's mother, yeah. Yeah, it was great, I enjoyed it. Then we talked about building a house around '89 & 90.

**Where did you live? In the Chicago area?**

Chicago suburbs. We were on a trip and we're talking about it. My daughter said, "Why don't you build a little cabin on that property on the island that you have so we'd have a place to stay?" And I said, "We'll think about it." So we thought about it and we thought about a little cabin or something and then it kept getting bigger and bigger and pretty soon we had a four bedroom house.

**The one here.**

The one here. We built that in '90.

**That's the same year we built ours. Young Brothers.**

We had ...

**Jorgensen?**

No, no.

**Martin Andersen?**

Martin Andersen because Ann was friends with him and his family. Well she knew everybody on the island. And she said, "I think Martin will do the best job." So we talked about what kind of house to build. I went to the library and checked out about six or seven books of house plans. Those house plans are all explained in these books. So we went through books and there were about three or four books that had something similar to what we were interested in; I took the rest back. And then we said, "Okay, we have to decide." So we looked at them separately and together and pretty soon, I had one I liked and I said, "I have the one I think we can work with." She said, "Well, so do I." I said, "Well, let's look at it." I said, "Which book was it?" It was the same

book I had picked. I said, “Well, which one?” So she went through the book and she went to the page with the one I liked. We both agreed. We both had picked the same house.

**That’s terrific. You both had the same line.**

Yeah, we both had the same ideas and we talked to Martin. And I said, “Well, there are changes I’d like to make. We can’t quite do it the way the book says because of where the property is and the land we’re on.” And he said, “I can adjust, anything you want.” So we talked it over and came up with this house the way it is.

**It’s a beautiful house.**

You’re looking at Rock Island over there.

**Is that St. Martin’s over there?**

Yes it is. It’s a great spot.

**Wow, you can really see it clearly from here.**

It’s a good day.

**Yeah, it is a good day.**

Yeah, we were lucky; he was great; he did an awesome job and he made changes that I didn’t even suggest. He added things that are absolutely awesome. And we changed doors and windows, the fireplace. The fireplace was supposed to be on this wall here facing the lake. And we didn’t want that blocked so we put it between the bedroom and the living room and that’s a double fireplace.

**... From both sides.**

So I can work the fireplace from my bedroom, right through the door there.

**Who put the fireplace up?**

My brother and I. I told Martin to build a foundation for a fireplace on that spot and he said, “Okay. What about the fireplace?” I said, “Well, I’m going to have my brother come up because he’s a mason and he builds fireplaces and he’ll come up and he’ll help me with the fireplace.” He actually built it; I just helped him.

**Where’d you get the stones, on the property?**

Off the beach and everywhere. The stones came from all over the island, Rock Island, wherever we found the stone we liked. So we just built the fireplace together, him and his family were all here.

**Kirby Jorgensen has a little boot for a signature on his fireplace. I don’t see a signature there?**

No. My brother didn’t have that at the time. We know it’s his work so...

**It’s a good looking fireplace.**

Yeah, we enjoy it.

**And a blower so you can bring the heat right back into the room.**

Yeah, we searched for a fireplace that burned outside air, that did not burn any inside air.

**So you bring it in from outside?**

I bring it in from outside. I have a pipe going to the outside, and a pipe across the crawl space then up and it comes in on the top of the firebox. And actually the pipe goes through the top and then down into the top and then there's a manifold on the top of the firebox and then the air comes out and it comes out each side in front of the window.

**Oh, I see, you've got a little opening.**

That's ambient air. The firebox is inside a big plenum chamber that surrounds the firebox.

**Yeah, that's what we have. We have the same thing. They're great.**

It's a cozy heat.

**And on top of that, that heat sink will keep the room warm all day.**

Well, the stones, by the time we build a big fire, the stones get hot.

**Oh, yeah.**

The radiant heat plus the air circulating in that bottom vent goes around the hot firebox and then out the top vent and then it goes up, heat rises and it rises all the way up to the second floor and then I have a fan at the other side of the house and that blows the air back down so it circulates the air around the loft.

**That's a great idea. And you've got a beautiful spot and it was nice of Grace Ann to put up with you all this time.**

Yes it is, especially with me being gone all that time. She had to be very self-reliant and now sometimes she's too self-reliant. She doesn't ask for help when she should ask for help. She wants to do it herself.

**I can understand.**

And she always carried her own insurance, her own everything. She wanted her own credit card, which was hard at that time for a woman. [As] a woman, they didn't want to give a woman a credit card back in those days.

**They're better at saving than we are.**

But anyway, she ended up very independent and she said that one of the reasons was that all my vacations and recreations were dangerous. I'd climb poles and towers around hot electrical wires and I flew airplanes all over the world with the Marines, refueling airplanes. There is a certain amount of danger in all of that. She said she wanted to be ready in case something happened to me and I was gone. She had everything in her name that she needed and her own insurance.

**She was a wise woman.**

Yes, she was.

**Well Barry, thanks for talking with me about your experiences. We'll get this recorded and I'll show you the copy so you can edit and we'll make the corrections.**

**Well, thanks again Barry.**

Sure. And you can have that retirement.

**Thank you.**

It really goes through everything I did because the guys in the office had all my records. All the different squadrons I was involved in and the different airplanes. It doesn't really list all the different airplanes. I could actually make a list of all the airplanes.

**I'll tell you what, when I get the transcription from this recording, you can add it to it and we'll put it in the final copy. How would that be?**

See, the squadrons I was in flying the flying box car, which was the C-119, and then KC-130, those are the transports. But planes I worked on, let's see... F9-F6 Panther, the F9-F8B Cougar, the A-4 is the one they're still flying.

**That's got a funny name. They call it the ...**

Now I can't remember.

**But that was the one you thought was the most reliable.**

Yeah. But anyway the one plane the Marines recruited, the F-18, sometimes your mind doesn't always work. The F-18. Anyway, that plane, when they test these airplanes at Pax River in Delaware. They recruited our reserve squadron to tank those airplanes while they were testing it. They're still flying, hundreds of them, awesome airplane, they accepted into the system. And I was part of the team that refueled them at Pax River.

**Really.**

And that was before they

**They Okayed them?**

They Okayed them. They painted it really neat with blue and white and stars on the tail. And I got some pictures of it – just an awesome airplane. So we stayed at Pax River for five or six days and refueled those airplanes. We would refuel chase airplanes. It would fly high speed runs and maneuverability runs and it had a chase plane taking pictures of that airplane when they were doing this so they'd have records. And when either of those planes needed fuel, they'd come over to us instead of landing and refueling. It was a great mission, I really enjoyed doing that. And they had the greatest chow hall in the military.

**Well, I'll let it go here Barry, thank you.**