

Heroes Among Us

Wendall Squires

Born: 1926

**Fleet Marine Force – Pacific - Corporal
1944-1946**

The year was 1944 and handsome young man, Wendall Squires, was beginning to follow in his father's footsteps. Wendall's dad received the Purple Heart and served in World War I as a lineman in the Army and Marines 28th Division—installing communication posts and towers. "He was in every major battle from France to Italy," Wendall proudly stated. "When I went to Indianapolis to enroll, the doctors rejected me. They told me I had four hernias." After being checked by his family doctor, he was cleared to go back to enroll in the Marines. The same doctors checked Wendall and informed him that he had no hernias. "So they took me in and I went to San Diego for boot camp."

After boot camp, Wendall was sent to cook and bakers school near Pearl Harbor. The remnants of the infamous December 7th 1941 attack were still fresh.* "Before boot camp," Wendall recalled, "I was working for General Electric and was 17 years old. I was only allowed to work in the kitchen. So apparently, that's what caught their eye."



About half-way through his training, he had a sharp pain. "The doctors examined me and found one hernia. So naturally, they did surgery, and that kept me for six months at Pearl Harbor. They couldn't ship me in either direction. Finally my 90 days were up and they called out three names and mine was one of them. They told me I was going back to cook and bakers school."

"I finished school but about three weeks later, I had a severe pain and went to sick bay. They found another hernia. I had to have surgery again." Because of the second surgery, "He never did get to go to Iwo Jima," added Wendall's daughter and caregiver Wende.

"I thank the good Lord that he got me through that time," reflected Wendall. "He watched me through the whole thing....the biggest disaster of the war was Iwo Jima."

Wendall was assigned to the Marine Transit Center mess hall at Pearl. "It's where guys from overseas were coming home and where guys were sent from Pearl further into the Pacific. They went overboard," Wendall joked. "They paid me twenty-one dollars a month, plus five dollars as an assistant cook."

“Something I found out later was when a chief guy came into the mess hall and said, ‘I bet there’s something you don’t know about yourself.’ He said ‘Your name came up five times that I know of for you to be shipped to Iwo Jima.’ And he said that someone told him ‘Look we’re getting good service out of him. Why not send somebody else and keep him?’ It was “answered prayer” Wendall stated in reflecting his fate not to be shipped out to Iwo Jima.

As an assistant cook, Wendall prepared breakfast mostly from “powdered eggs” as well as lunch and dinner for ‘6 strippers’ – officers. The mess hall fed thousands of soldiers.

Last year, Wendall’s family took him back to Pearl Harbor to see where he served. He saw the Aloha Tower with clock that was still there from the 1800s and had withstood the Pearl Harbor attack. The family also toured the Arizonan National Shrine. The Marine Transit Center was gone but Wendall remembered the big gun that use to warn the island of incoming attack planes.

Today, Wendall receives care from Hospice Buffalo’s Home Care team for end-stage liver disease. He has received hospice care for the last five months at



home and celebrated his 88th birthday on May 9.

Hospice Buffalo salutes Wendall Squires and the many veterans who gave their all for our country’s freedoms. Through his personal story, and others like his, we can better understand the unique life experiences of Veterans.

-End-

**A surprise military strike conducted by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on the morning of December 7, 1941 (December 8 in Japan). The attack led to the United States' entry into World War II. 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed, 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded.*