

**Richard Mason Ellinwood  
Veteran**

**Mike Russert  
Wayne Clarke  
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on  
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Home Interview  
1108 County Road 10 A  
Norwich, New York**

**Q:** Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please?

**RME:** Richard Mason Ellinwood. June 2, 1924 is my birthdate and I was born here in Norwich, New York.

**Q:** What was your educational background prior to entering service?

**RME:** After high school, I went to the University of Michigan to study Pharmacy and after two and a half years or so is when I got called to active duty, but I was in the Naval ROTC at the University of Michigan which led to me being able to get a commission.

**Q:** Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

**RME:** I remember it well. I was at school at Ann Arbor, Michigan but we had gone into Detroit on a Sunday night to go to some entertainment thing...musical entertainment...I can't remember just what it was...that's where I was when I heard about it.

**Q:** What was your reaction when you heard about this?

**RME:** Worst news I'd ever heard.

**Q:** Being in the Navy ROTC Navy program, did you know where Pearl Harbor was?

**RME:** Yeah, I mean, after they told me it was the Hawaiian Islands.

**Q:** Why did you select going into the Navy ROTC program?

**RME:** Right after December 7, I wanted to enlist but my parents talked me into staying in school as long as I could. So, at least I thought I would get some basic

military training by being in a reserve unit and I liked the Navy better than I did the Army when I went to the ROTC.

**Q:** After you went into the Navy, and you had the basics already, where did you go?

**RME:** Yes, we had training cruises on Lake Michigan.

**Q:** What kind of ship were you on on Lake Michigan?

**RME:** It was a World War I destroyer.

**Q:** What did you do aboard the ship? What were your responsibilities?

**RME:** You mean on that...the training ship?

**Q:** Yes.

**RME:** Well, they taught us stuff and so forth, and I think they also got us used to what a seaman does. Like scrubbing decks and washing pots and pans and everything like that, you know, but it was a good learning experience so...

**Q:** Where did you go from there?

**RME:** After I was commissioned in February 1944, I was assigned to a destroyer escort, the USS Brough based out of New York, and we escorted convoys to [unclear] and I did that twice I was only on that ship for about three months.

**Q:** Did you make contact with any German subs or anything?

**RME:** No, fortunately we did not.

**Q:** Describe convoy duty. What did your ship do on convoy duty?

**RME:** Well you can have a convoy of maybe 50 to 80 ships, cargo ships, big ships you know and there'd be six or seven escort vessels out in front of them, probably half a mile to a mile, and they would all be zig-zagg'n you know and with all their sonar equipment run'n to see if they could pick up any contact with submarines...and that's what it was.

**Q:** Where did you take the convoys to? What was your destination?

**RME:** Their destination was England but when we got into the Ireland range some British ships came out and relieved us and we went into Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

**Q:** Did you have a [unclear] time there at all? What was that like?

**RME:** Very nice. I liked it a lot.

**Q:** How were you treated by the Irish people?

**RME:** Oh very well, yes.

**Q:** Okay so you had three months of convoy duty, what was your next assignment?

**RME:** After that, I was assigned to Anti-Submarine Warfare School in Miami and I was there for about two months and then I went to a similar school in San Diego, California.

**Q:** And how long was that school?

**RME:** It was just a little over a month.

**Q:** What was your ship assignment after that?

**RME:** After that I came home for a leave and then they sent me back to San Francisco and assigned to this ship, the PC 462. It took us quite a while to find it. I was aboard two transports, you know, going through the South Pacific and uh I don't know it took...it took about six weeks to find the ship. They'd been on invasion duty. They'd been all over out there in the South Pacific and...but anyway I finally caught it.

**Q:** Patrol Craft didn't have a name just a number?

**RME:** That's right. PC 462.

**Q:** How large was the crew?

**RME:** About sixty-five to seventy.

**Q:** What rank were you and what were your duties?

**RME:** I was gunnery officer and supply officer.

**Q:** Were you a lieutenant at that point or still an ensign?

**RME:** No, I was still an ensign.

**Q:** What was the highest rank on the ship?

**RME:** I think the skipper was a lieutenant commander.

**Q:** What kind of armament did the ship have?

**RME:** The biggest they had was one three-inch gun, and they had a dual forty-millimeter and two or three twenty-millimeters.

**Q:** Could you drop down charges and so on for a [unclear] submarine?

**RME:** Yes.

**Q:** What duties did the ship have while you were on it?

**RME:** Well when I joined the ship they were preparing for the Okinawa invasion, so we were down in Guadalcanal, in that area, staging. And then we went north and then we escorted convoys up to the invasion—two ships—up to the invasion site which was April 1, 1945. We were there for almost two months

at Okinawa and our duties while we were there—being a small ship, we were easily maneuverable--so we would deliver mail we would go to where the mail was received and deliver it to ships in the area. That type of thing.

**Q:** Did you see any kamikaze attacks while you were there?

**RME:** Yep. Fortunately, as I said, we were a small ship. They wouldn't pick on us but yes we did.

**Q:** Did your ship ever engage or fire its guns?

**RME:** Yep.

**Q:** Were you there for that typhoon that struck Okinawa, or did you leave before that?

**RME:** We left before that. I don't remember the date, but I know what you are referring to though. From there we went back to Pearl Harbor, but in one of the ports we were in-- on the way across the Pacific like the Ulithi Islands or Guam, and it was after the typhoon--and I remember seeing an aircraft carrier come into the harbor with its flight deck bent right over bent right down that had been through that typhoon. What a sight.

**Q:** How long were you one PC 462?

**RME:** From February 6, to September 29, and while we were in Pearl Harbor the war ended and we had tentative orders to go to Japan to help with the settlement of things over there. Then at the last minute they changed our orders and this ship was a fairly old ship and they decided to decommission it. So they sent us to San Francisco.

**Q:** Now you went on another ship then?

**RME:** Yes. After the ship was decommissioned, I had a little leave and uh, they assigned me to a PCE, which is a little bit bigger, a Patrol Craft Escort. They thought it was in the Pacific, so they sent me back to San Francisco. I got out there, and they found out the ship was going through the Panama Canal to the east coast of the United States. So they sent me right back to the east coast, and this ship was in Charleston, South Carolina. So I spent from March until June of '46 on that ship.

**Q:** What did you do? What did this ship do during that period of time?

**RME:** They didn't do anything really. No. They were tied up at Charleston. We might have gone out once or twice, just exercise the ship maybe, but we really didn't do anything.

**Q:** Do you remember where you were when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?

**RME:** No, I can't remember where I was.

**Q:** Did you have a reaction to that at all?

**RME:** Yeah, I mean, I think he was admired by many, many people. Even those that weren't a Democrat and it was a sad occasion, really.

**Q:** Where were you when you heard about the dropping of the atomic bombs?

**RME:** Hmm, I'm not sure...I think we were, that's when we were coming back to San Francisco and I was at Pearl Harbor. I think that's where I was when that happened.

**Q:** What was your reaction to the atomic bombs, do you recall that?

**RME:** Oh, my first reaction was, "I'm glad this is going to get the Japanese to surrender!" Then when you started hearing about the casualties, it made you think twice a little bit, but at least it ended the war.

**Q:** Where were you when you heard about the end of the war?

**RME:** Right there in Pearl Harbor.

**Q:** What was the reaction there?

**RME:** Oh, that was great, big time yeah.

**Q:** When were you discharged?

**RME:** On June 4, 1946.

**Q:** How did you get back home? Where were you discharged and how did you get home?

**RME:** From in the Third Naval district yet, which is in New York City. I think I took the train home, yeah.

**Q:** Did you keep in contact with your parents while you were gone?

**RME:** Oh yes.

**Q:** On almost a regular basis?

**RME:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Q:** After the war was over, did you make use of the GI bill at all?

**RME:** I did.

**Q:** How did you use it?

**RME:** I went back to the University of Michigan to finish up.

**Q:** Did you ever use the 52-20 Club?

**RME:** No.

**Q:** Did you ever get to see any USO shows at all?

**RME:** Yep, a couple. That was when I was looking for this ship on the South Pacific and I'd be on an island for a while before they shipped me to another place, you know. I did see some USO shows.

**Q:** Did you see any big-named stars?

**RME:** I don't remember any big-name stars, but they were very entertaining. They were good.

**Q:** Did you join any veteran's organizations?

**RME:** I have been a member of the VFW, which I'm not, now, but I still am a member of the American Legion.

**Q:** Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that was in service with you?

**RME:** Yes, I'm still in touch with a fella that I was with on one of these PC's. He lives down in Pennsylvania.

**Q:** Do you ever get to see him?

**RME:** No, haven't seen him. Well, I went to his wedding, which was many years ago. Haven't seen him since, but we correspond.

**Q:** Did you have any events while you were in the Navy that you thought left an impression on you that want to talk about?

**RME:** I guess the first thing that comes to mind is the strength of our military and of the Navy. The Navy always appealed to me because I liked the water, I liked being on ships and so forth. So, that was the impression that I liked about it.

**Q:** How do you think your time in the service changed you or had an effect on your life?

**RME:** Well, I think it makes me proud that I was able to serve and uh...that's the most I would say about it I guess.

**Q:** You think you ever would have been able to travel as you did?

**RME:** No Way. No, I didn't think of that. Yeah, I mean, I got to travel all over the world!

**Q:** You got to see both the Atlantic and the Pacific.

**RME:** Yes. Right.

**Q:** Would you hold that (speaking about a photograph)? That's the first Patrol Craft you were on, the 462?

**RME:** The PC 462, yeah.

**Q:** Do you know when and where that was taken?

**RME:** No, I don't. I know the ship was built in Texas.

**Q:** Do you know when it was built? Was it built pre-war?

**RME:** Yeah, it was pre-war. I don't really remember when. If I was to just take a guess, it was probably built in the early to mid-thirties.

**Q:** OK, well thank you very much.