



Virginia War Memorial Marocchi Memorial Scholarship

Rear Admiral John Marocchi Biography

Rear Admiral John Marocchi was born in Bologna, Italy and came to the United States with his parents as a small child. He felt strong allegiance to his adopted country and received an appointment to the US Naval Academy in June 1938 as a member of the class of 1942. His class graduation was moved up to December 19, 1941 – just twelve days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. After graduation, he went to the Naval Training Center in Norfolk. From there, he was assigned to the pre-commissioning detail for the USS Birmingham.

After the commissioning, the “Mighty B” sailed out of Norfolk escorting a convoy to Africa. From there, it was part of the Task Force supporting the invasion of Sicily. What mixed feelings he must have had as he participated in the shore bombardment of his native land. His ship was then sent to the Pacific where it participated in the battle at Bougainville. The ship took two torpedoes and one aerial bomb but stayed in the fight. After repairs were completed, Lt Marocchi and his ship were on duty when the aircraft carrier USS Princeton was attacked and set on fire. The Birmingham came alongside to help put out the fire when the Princeton exploded. The Birmingham’s crew sustained 649 casualties in the crew of 1,200. After barely escaping death, Lt Marocchi was hospitalized for 16 months.

Following the war, he attended Naval Intelligence School and served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, included three years as Fleet Intelligence Officer to the Commander in Chief (CINC) of the Pacific Fleet. In 1969, he was promoted to Rear Admiral. Following assignment to Germany as the Deputy Director for Intelligence for the US European Command for three years, he was transferred to Fort Meade, Maryland as one of the two Deputy Directors of the National Security Agency (NSA). He retired in 1975 after 37 years of service.

During his Navy career, Admiral Marocchi received many honors including the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart. He is one of very few Navy officers who completed Army Airborne training. For over fifteen years, he was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia War Memorial. He advanced the Memorial’s mission in countless ways, including participating in and sponsoring some of the “Virginians at War” documentary film series and other educational programs. Admiral Marocchi spent his entire life in service to his adopted country.