

# Max Martini

*Max Martini's films include **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** and **THE GREAT RAID**. He starred for four years on **THE UNIT** as Mack Gerhardt.*

Troops,

I, not too long ago, went to visit my Grandmother in Texas. She is 94 years old. I showed up to her house early on this particular day assuming that we would sit and talk before she would have to lay down. Much to my surprise, she asked if I would be interested in looking through a box of my grandfather's belongings from WWII. While I was laying out photographs of him together with his naval buddies she explained to me how upset she was that he enlisted so soon after they had gotten married. I, knowingly, asked why he did it. She said that he felt an obligation to his country. That the honor of serving his country was something bigger than he could imagine - that he couldn't allow it to pass him by. I read letters thanking and acknowledging him for his bravery and leadership during his service. I read detailed accounts of combat and how he had gone above and beyond the call of duty. But what I read that had the most impact on me was not a congratulatory note from his higher-ups...it was what was written on my Grandmother's face. The love and respect she had for my Grandfather, who had bravely risked his life for his fellow Americans...for her.

I wake every day to a free country. I wake knowing that I am safe when I walk out of my home. I wake to my children's smiling faces. And with all my heart - I humbly thank you.

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