

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center  
Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

John Thomas “Tom” Maloney  
McMinnville, Oregon  
June 26th, 2012  
Dive-bomber pilot, SBD, SB2C  
Air Group 98, 80 Strikles  
*USS Princeton*  
Air Group 6, 15 Strikes  
*USS Hancock, CB-19*

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is June 26, 2012. I am interviewing Mr. John Thomas “Tom” Maloney by telephone. His phone number is 503-472-2247. His address is 2407 West Hills Drive, McMinnville, Oregon 97128. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Tom, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Mr. Maloney:

Thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make sure it’s okay with you.

“Agreement read.”

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Maloney:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The next thing I’d like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road we try to get back in contact with a veteran he’s moved or something. Do you have a daughter or a son or someone we could contact, if we needed to, to locate you?

Mr. Maloney:

I have five children, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any one of them.

Mr. Maloney:

I'm 92 and I'm not going to be here much longer, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I hope that's not true but you never know. What's one of your sons names?

Mr. Maloney:

Tom Maloney and Tim Maloney.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Which one would you prefer giving me? I need a phone number and an address. Do you have that handy, do you?

Mr. Maloney:

The phone number would be for Tom 503-472-4309.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And he lives where? In McMinnville?

Mr. Maloney:

In McMinnville.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I don't need an address. That's all I need. Hopefully we'll never need that. What is your birth date?

Mr. Maloney:

June the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1920.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you born?

Mr. Maloney:

McMinnville.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Maloney:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, you grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Maloney:

Well, we came through it okay. We fared quite well. Why don't I just read this off and then I can.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Read that to me and then we'll ask the questions after that. Go ahead.

Mr. Maloney:

I was elected in to the State of Oregon Air Museum State of Oregon Honor Roll.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Sure, that will be fine.

Mr. Maloney:

“J. Thomas Maloney realized war was imminent upon joining the United States Naval Air Reserve in October of 1941. Attending flight school at Corpus Christi, Texas, Ensign Maloney earned his wings, joined Air Group 98 aboard the newly commissioned aircraft carrier *USS Princeton* and headed for a land-based assignment in Guadalcanal. Providing air support during invasions of Munda, Bougainville, and Green Islands, Maloney made over 80 strikes against the Japanese destroying enemy aircraft, cargo, and transport ships. He garnered three air medals for his efforts, assigned to Air Group Six aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Hancock* in July of 1944. Lieutenant Maloney participated in fifteen strikes against enemy shipping and airfields on Wake Island, and Okinawa, resulting in a fourth air medal. Another air medal was not signed by his Skipper who was killed. As division leader, Maloney led a strike against Okinawa flying off of the aircraft carrier *USS*

*Hancock*. During his strike against Okinawa, he destroyed a bridge used by a Japanese supply line. Exploding debris from the bridge smashed into his SB2C Helldiver forcing Maloney to ditch his aircraft into the sea where he and his rearseat gunner barely escaped before it sank. Later retrieved by a Destroyer, they were back aboard the *USS Hancock* when a kamikaze dove into the ship causing severe damage. Returning to battle, Maloney led the attack against Hokaido Harbor, scoring a direct hit and annihilating an enemy cargo ship earning him the Distinguished Flying Cross. At Kure Harbor Japan, Maloney dropped the 2000 pound bomb which, along with other bombs, hit and sunk a Japanese aircraft carrier on July the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945 and for which he received a Navy Cross. Four days later, Maloney achieved yet another accurate strike, this time sinking a Japanese battleship earning a second Navy Cross. Discharged from the service in December of 1945 and returning to life in McMinnville, Maloney graduated from Linsfield College and today devotes a significant amount of time as a docent and guide at the Evergreen Air Museum volunteer.”

Mr. Misenhimer:

I do have some other questions I'd like to ask you, if you don't mind.

Mr. Maloney:

Well, I'm going to hang up pretty soon.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, (laughing) don't do that to me. Now, you went into the service I believe you said on October '41.

Mr. Maloney:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You volunteered.

Mr. Maloney:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Maloney:

Some of my friends went in the Navy Air Corps, that's why I did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And you were about 21 at that point. You took your training in Corpus Christi.

Mr. Maloney:

That's correct.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was your training there in Corpus?

Mr. Maloney:

It was fine. I think we covered the basics.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I'd like to talk about Guadalcanal. You were at Guadalcanal, right?

Mr. Maloney:

Yes. Henderson Field.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were you flying out of there?

Mr. Maloney:

Dive-bombers.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The SB2C or was it the old SBD?

Mr. Maloney:

The SBD.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that plane?

Mr. Maloney:

Well, it was a very good dive-bomber.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You mentioned a 2000 pound bomb. Was that from an SB2C?

Mr. Maloney:

Yeah, the SB2C, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It could carry a 2000 pound bomb.

Mr. Maloney:

Yeah. When you carry a 2000 pound bomb and you take off of a carrier you have to be catapulted.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now I understand the *Hancock* was hit by a kamikaze, is that right?

Mr. Maloney:

This is correct. I think we've covered the basics. I'm not feeling too good. I appreciate you very much and thank you for calling.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Thank you.

Transcribed by:

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