

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
JOSEPH A. MALIN
Navy, World War II
2011

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Malin, Joseph A. (1922-2015). Oral History Interview, 2011.

Approximate length: 2 hours 16 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Joseph Malin discusses his service with the World War II service with the Navy as a coxswain operating landing craft aboard the U.S.S. President Polk, his time training soldiers in Waianae (Oahu), his life after being discharged in 1945, and his trip with the Freedom Honor Flight. Malin enlisted in the Navy in 1942 and mentions boot camp at Great Lakes (Illinois) and amphibious training in San Diego (California). Malin discusses his year in Oahu training Army soldiers on the experience of riding in landing boats and hitting the beach under wartime conditions. He describes his year and a half aboard the U.S.S. President Polk, working to capture the islands of Kwajalein, Guam, Saipan, and Tarawa by operating landing craft delivering troops to shore. He mentions the use of the Polk as a hospital ship at Iwo Jima. Then he talks about being discharged in 1945, meeting his wife and working as a mechanic and air conditioning engineer. He provides a sketch of naval life through his discussion with the interviewer of photographs and documents he kept from his service. He discusses his trip with the Freedom Honor Flight in 2010 and ends the interview mentioning his impression of being in the service.

Biographical Sketch:

Malin (1922-2015) served with the United States Navy from 1942 to 1945. After being discharged he worked as a mechanic and air conditioning engineer, and opened Pacer Realty with his wife.

Interviewed by Ellen B. Healey, 2011.

Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein, 2011.

Reviewed by Jennifer Kick, 2016.

Abstract written by Jennifer Kick, 2016.

Interview Transcript:

Healey: This is going to be the start of an interview with Joseph A. Malin, who served in the United States Navy during World War II. This interview is being conducted at Mr. Malin's home at the following address: [REDACTED], New Lisbon, Wisconsin on July 29, 2011 and the interviewer is Ellen B. Healey. Okay Mr. Malin I am glad you gave us this opportunity to conduct an oral history for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. I am going to start out asking you about your background. Please give me your birth date?

Malin: 6/14/22.

Healey: And where were you born?

Malin: Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Healey: Grand Rapids, Michigan. Who were your parents?

Malin: My mother's name was Veronica, her maiden name?

Healey: Go ahead, yes.

Malin: Her maiden name was Patadovich. My father's first name was Stanley. And they both came from Poland as young teenagers. They met in Grand Rapids and got married.

Healey: What did your dad do for a living?

Malin: He worked in the furniture factory for god, thirty years I guess, a long time anyways.

Healey: OK. Did you have brothers and sisters? Older or younger? And how many?

Malin: Three sisters and two brothers and one sister was older than I and the other ones were younger. And they're all dead.

Healey: And did you grow up in Grand Rapids, Michigan?

Malin: Yes I did.

Healey: How much of your life did you spend there?

Malin: I stayed there until I was nineteen when I joined the Navy.

Healey: Tell me a little about your schooling before you joined the Navy.

Malin: I went to grade school in Grand Rapids. There was a parochial school taught by nuns. One to nine, and I went to a Catholic Central High School in Grand Rapids and graduated in 1940 from High School.

Healey: And after you graduated from high school what did you do?

Malin: I had a couple of jobs. My first job was delivering duty supplies in town with a truck. I did that for about a year then I worked in a knitting mill where they made women's clothing and socks and stuff like that. It was a regular knitting mill where all the ladies worked; I was the maintenance guy there.

Healey: What was the size of Grand Rapids when you were growing up, what was the population?

Malin: I would say that Grand Rapids would be comparable to Madison. When I was growing up it was probably under 200,000, maybe 180,000 or something like that. I don't know, but it is comparable to Madison as far as population goes.

Healey: In high school in addition to taking academic courses were you involved in sports or were you working or were you a just a full time student or just what?

Malin: I was a fulltime student. I did a lot of sports away from the high school. Sandlot stuff, playing ball as kids, I did a lot of that when I was younger.

Healey: Now you say you graduated in 1940 and then had a couple of jobs, why did you decide to join the service or how did that happen?

Malin: Well in 1942 of course I was involved in a gang, I guess you'd call it. We were doing nothing just a bunch of guys who got together where we played ball together. We did all kinds of things together. So a lot of us talked about the service. This was right after Pearl Harbor, December '41. So I mention to the guys "ya know I don't want to get drafted into the Army. I'd rather go to the Navy" So three or four of the guys said the same thing to me, "I don't want to join the Army either." "Let's join the Navy." So I think it was about five of us went over to the recruiting station and joined all together.

Healey: And when was that?

Malin: September '42. So we went there and of course they sent us to Great Lakes, Illinois for training, boot training they called it. We stayed there for about a month.

Healey: How soon after you went down to the recruiting station did you find yourself at Great Lakes?

Malin: A couple of days.

Healey: A couple of days and your buddies were at Great Lakes with you?

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: Now before I turn on the tape you need a break?

Malin: No. I just want to show you something here. This is a picture of our group when we were in Great Lakes.

Healey: So what you are showing me is one of these long pictures of your recruiting.

Malin: I'm on here someplace.

Healey: You're on here someplace?

Malin: I'm not real sure where.

Healey: And are some of your friends from your hometown there also?

Malin: Oh yeah all the guys I joined the Navy with are in that picture.

Healey: This is an old black and white picture and looks like five rows of seamen recruits or what was your rank at that time?

Malin: They just called us seamen.

Healey: Seamen, OK, describe the kind of uniform that you are wearing there. How do you describe that uniform?

Malin: They called them the dress blues 'cause they're dark. We had leggings we had to wear those things and of course this thing around your neck and a cap.

Healey: And a white cap?

Malin: Yup.

Healey: Like sailors wear?

Malin: Like this, this is the only thing I got left from my service and not only that it don't even belong to me.

Healey: And you are showing me a white cap right now a sailor's white cap.

Malin: A buddy of mine; I don't know how I got the darn thing.

Healey: It says Jones, F on it yeah.

Malin: His name was Jones and it don't even fit me.

Healey: You remember who Jones was?

Malin: Oh sure! He was one of the guys in our crew in the Service.

Healey: Just before we started this oral interview on the tape you mentioned that you changed your name after the service, so when you entered the service what was your name?

Malin: Joseph A. Malinowski, I think they said I didn't use a middle name. Joseph Malinowski.

Healey: And how do you spell it? Go ahead and spell Malinowski.

Malin: M-A-L-I-N-O-W-S-K-I.

Healey: So that is the name that you used through your graduation in high school and while you were in Grand Rapids.

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: And also all the way through service?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: We'll talk later on about how you changed your name; I guess that was after service.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: You are in Great Lakes, how long did you spend in Great Lakes training?

Malin: Four weeks. We were there four weeks then they shipped us to San Diego, California.

Healey: What do you recall about your experiences in Great Lakes?

Malin: Boot training? It was very unusual. It was all new to me of course. The funniest thing was that in our barracks we had to sleep in canvas sea bags. You know you hang them on a pipe. They weren't cots so we had to sleep in those things for four weeks. And many of us fell on to the floor because we couldn't get the hang of it. So that was one thing about boot camp and another thing was that in the four weeks that we were there we had to get a whole bunch of shots. The last one we got was really tough. I'm not sure I think it was typhoid or something. But anyway we got these shots and then we went back to our barracks and I think the majority of the guys passed out from that shot. We were all lying around on the floor. And it only lasted one day after one day we were okay.

Healey: What types of things did you learn during boot training?

Malin: They trained us about handling ropes or lines and knots and stuff like that, then they'd train us about basic rules of the Navy.

Healey: Now before you went to boot camp you said you grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Had you ever left Michigan before that?

Malin: No, no I never did. I lived with my ma and pa till I went into the Service.

Healey: So this was your first time out of the state of Michigan?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: And when you graduated from boot camp in four weeks you said you went to San Diego then, did you get any leave or liberty?

Malin: No.

Healey: No liberty either?

Malin: No leave, I think when we got to San Diego we were given liberty on Sunday. We could go out on Sunday because that was our free day, a day off. And a bunch of us guys would go into town and probably get a good meal. Usually, that's all we did. We weren't eating too great.

Healey: How did you get to San Diego from Great Lakes?

Malin: Train. It took us probably three days to get over there from Illinois to San Diego on a train.

Healey: Was it all troops?

Malin: No, it was a mixture.

Healey: What did you think about going across the country?

Malin: It was fun. That was my first time we went through all these states. It was exciting for me.

Healey: Anything particular stick out in your mind as you were going across the United States?

Malin: I think Texas, when we went through Texas you know. I didn't realize what a big state it was. It was just big you know. Mainly, I didn't see much else.

Healey: When you got to San Diego do you remember where your base was in San Diego? What the address was?

Malin: It was the San Diego Naval Training Base they called it. We were sent through the part where they trained us for amphibious work. So all the time we were there, we were there about three months, we learned how to drive these landing boats with the ramp that goes up. So we did that for three months practicing how to land mostly, hit the beach and all that stuff. Then after that this was September and December they shipped us out to Hawaii. And we got to Hawaii this was December of '42 we were sent to a small little town on the other side of the island. And it was going to be an amphibious training base for soldiers. So we lived on the beach in tents.

Healey: Was this in Oahu or?

Malin: Oahu yeah. What the procedure was the Army would send soldiers over to our place like maybe five thousand at a time and this was training for those guys. We had to teach them how to get used to riding in a landing boat. These landing boats carried thirty soldiers, it was pretty full and then we had to take them out to sea. And then run into the beach with them and practice like an evasion. We dropped the ramp on out and all that stuff. So we did that and these guys would sail with us for a whole week. They would come in on a Sunday. We start training them Monday and they would stay there 'til Saturday. And Saturday was their graduation, so we had to take them out at night. You know we'd go out about midnight. It was dark; we weren't allowed to use any lights. And we'd take them out

about eight miles and they'd have to hit the beach at night. They even had fighter planes shooting across the beach like they do in real fighting. So you have an idea of what it was like. And after Saturday these guys would pack up in trucks and go back to their base and then we'd get another batch on Sunday. We did that for a whole year. We did a lot of soldiering then.

Healey: Were you still with men from Grand Rapids?

Malin: Yeah. It ended up that two other guys who were my buddies, we joined together, were with us at this little training base. A little town called Waianae and they were with us. And then after about a year, we got a group of us got shipped to Pearl Harbor and we had to get on the troop ship. And that's when I got on the USS President Polk. The other two guys that were with me went on another ship. So after that--

Healey: Before you go on let me ask you a little bit more about you said you were on the northern part of Oahu during the training and you lived in tents all that time?

Malin: Yeah, on the beach.

Healey: Was that the dry part or the wet part of the island?

Malin: It was dry but they get a lot of showers but no big deal, never, never a big storm.

Healey: Did you have a PX [post exchange] or were you close to town or what?

Malin: We had no PX but on Sunday was our day off and of course everybody wanted to go to Honolulu for liberty. So we did that a couple of times with me a bunch of guys went over there.

Healey: How'd you get there?

Malin: Hitchhiking.

Healey: Oh, okay. [Both laugh]

Malin: Mainly we wanted to see if we could find a good restaurant to get a good meal. [Laughs]

Healey: What were you eating while you were living in tents? What was the chow like?

Malin: Not too great. They had powdered eggs for breakfast, powdered milk and SPAM, a lot of SPAM, nothing good.

Healey: What were your impressions of Honolulu?

Malin: Nice town. Big, it was full of servicemen of course. Navy and Marines and Army are all there, you know. I imagine there were more servicemen than natives over there. But it was a bit city but after that you know we didn't want to go back to Honolulu. You look at Waikiki beach, why it's just another beach and we've seen enough of those.

Healey: Did you get to see Pearl Harbor during that first year?

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: What were your observations of Pearl Harbor?

Malin: The first time I saw it I was with a bunch of guys on liberty and there was a big aircraft carrier and the name of it was Yorktown. Yorktown was in Pearl Harbor and it was all shot up. It had a lot of holes in it from submarine work and it was getting fixed up, it was getting repaired. That's one thing I can remember about Pearl Harbor was that big airplane carrier. I take that back when we were in Waianae training soldiers our officer who was in charge of us was a high school teacher and a coach. And he decided he wanted to have a softball team. I enjoyed playing ball you know. So I joined up, so we made a softball team and then we'd go around the island playing a bunch of guys. We used to go to Pearl Harbor to play the Marines. It was kind of fun to go around.

Healey: And that you did the year you were up north?

Malin: Yes.

Healey: You mentioned Waianae how do you spell that do you recall?

Malin: W-A-I-N- I don't know, on the end of it was A-E. I might have it written down someplace.

Healey: So you were able to go play softball, was that on the weekends? On Sundays?

Malin: Just on Sunday, just on our day off.

Healey: How'd you get there? They have a bus for ya?

Malin: We had trucks. We went in a truck. Our day off on Sunday another thing we did, there was an Army camp about ten miles from us. We would hitch-hike over there and they had a PX where we could drink beer. We'd go there to have a couple of beers on Sunday afternoon. Cause we didn't have any on our base. We had no PX. We had no nothing so we had to go out to different places to get a beer and stuff.

Healey: Now I kind of cut you off when you were telling me after about a year of training soldiers up at Waianae then you were sent to the USS Polk?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: What kind of ship was the USS Polk?

Malin: USS Polk in peace time was a cruiser for, what do you call those big ships that have portholes all over the place. They made a troop ship out of it anyway, and during the War there were several ships that were made like the USS Polk for carrying troops.

Healey: Do you recall what unit you were with when you were on the USS Polk or not?

Malin: When we got on the ship there was about between thirty-five to forty guys that were together and we comprised the boat crew. And on that ship we had eight LCVs; these are small landing boats; and four LCMs [Landing Craft Mechanized] and they are a little bit bigger and they would carry trucks and tanks into the beach. They were big enough to do that. The LCVs—Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel—and all we had were the soldiers. The maximum was thirty in a boat. We were a separate boat crew on the ship, we had a separate division.

Healey: So your boat crew was about thirty-five to forty people but when you went out on the USS Polk how many troops were on the Polk?

Malin: Army?

Healey: Yes.

Malin: There were none there then but they had a crew of about five hundred guys besides us.

Healey: When did you go aboard the Polk? When were you stationed on that ship?

Malin: Well we were there, I don't know exactly when but like I said we were there for a year then they sent us to Pearl to go on that ship. It could have been the winter months, I'm not sure anymore when it was.

Healey: '43 or '42?

Malin: I went in '42, all of '43 we stayed in Waianae. I think, so the beginning of '44 is when we got on a ship. I'm not sure when but anyway that's when we got on the ship. It was 1944 when we got on the ship and that's when they started getting these islands, taking back the islands that the Japanese had. We started doing that and the first one I think it was called Kwajalein was the first island that we hit and then we hit Guam and then Saipan was another one. Tarawa was another, these are all little islands in the Pacific, I think it was the Marshall Islands or Gilbert's but anyway a whole bunch of them. Maybe for about a year and a half we did that and our job was to take the soldiers into the beach. It would usually be a big convoy maybe about a hundred ships, pretty big. And every troop ship had a whole bunch of soldiers on it so they would end up I don't know how many thousand guys would hit the beach at one time. But before they hit the beach they would strafe it with airplanes and the battleships and cruisers would throw mortars at the beach for about a day in case there was any enemy that would be near the beach, make sure they weren't around there. Then we would take the soldiers into the beach and they would go ahead and do the shooting.

Healey: Now your first island was Kwajalein?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: And you talk about the battleships doing the strafing and sending the mortars in, where was the USS Polk at that time? Were you way out or were you close enough so that you could observe?

Malin: We were kind of in the middle. We were pretty close to the island when they were doing that.

Healey: What could you personally observe or hear going on?

Malin: Just all that noise, the shooting—bang bang bang—that went on for hours.

Healey: And could you see it also or not?

Malin: Oh ya, sure I could see them.

Healey: What did the islands look like before the strafing or bombing started?

Malin: They all looked about the same and the beaches were kind of beat up because of the strafing and the mortars hitting them. They were pretty well beat up. There wasn't much on the beach.

Healey: Now you happened to be in a training unit for about a year. How did your training serve you or how did it seem to mesh with what you actually did when you started the landing craft movements?

Malin: Well we did the same thing when we were in Hawaii training soldiers. So we did the same thing on a ship but only this was for real. This wasn't practice so we did the same thing, so we were used to it. We were used to driving those boats and hitting the beach because we did it so many times.

Healey: How many sailors were on each landing craft?

Malin: About three.

Healey: And what were the jobs of the—

Malin: Well one was a coxswain—I was the coxswain, you drive the boat. Another one was the motor mac; he was a machinist guy that took care of the engine and the other guy was just a deck hand. He would help anywhere he was needed. Mostly after you get off the beach we'd have to swab down the deck because these soldiers would vomit all over the place. So we'd have to clean them up after we dumped them and then get another load.

Healey: How did you take to the sea? Did you have any problems with nausea?

Malin: Only one time, one time I got sea sick and that was on a landing boat but after that it didn't bother me and I was on a ship for a couple of years. We went through some bad weather, a lot of storms, but it didn't seem to affect us too much, we were used to it.

Healey: Now starting out with Kwajalein did you do day time landings or did you do any night time?

Malin: It was all day time. We'd usually go early in the morning, just at dawn; first dawn we'd go hit the beach.

Healey: And Kwajalein for example, how many transports did you do? I don't know if you call them sorties or trips or just what?

Malin: Jeez I don't know so many. Like we'd say in our convoy we'd have probably a hundred ships including destroyers and cruisers and mostly some ships were what they called—they didn't have any soldiers on them but they were supply ships. They carried all kind of stuff they'd carry to other ships, ammunition and food and whatever but like I said there were usually about a hundred ships all together that would go on.

Healey: Any particular memories or events that stick out, or—

[Break in recording][00:31:35]

Healey: I had just asked you about if there was anything in your mind that stuck out about the island landings and you said that there was one that particularly funny.

Malin: I think it was Guam. After all the soldiers were taken to the beach, me and my crew had to go into the beach with the soldiers and this was just before dark. So we got to the beach and dumped these guys off and then we started to go back to our ship. And then we realized we weren't catching our ship. I said "what the hell's going on here?" The ship was going out to sea. So we went back to the beach and talked to the beach officer and he said "yeah your ship was being"—they were shooting mortars across the bow of our ship. The captain decided the hell with it he's gonna go out to sea. So he went ten miles out to sea so they couldn't hit him. And we didn't know that. So we went back to the beach and the officer said "well you guys better stay here tonight and sleep." Hell you couldn't sleep it was so noisy ya know. So the morning came and we went back and the ship came back to the bay and back to the ship again.

Healey: Were you the only landing craft stranded or were there other landing crafts?

Malin: No we were the only one from our ship but I don't know there might have been others.

Healey: But they eventually came back and picked you up?

Malin: Oh yeah. We went back and they got us aboard our ship again.

Healey: Did your landing craft during your landings ever get beached or stranded or mechanical difficulties?

Malin: Like broached? Oh yeah that happens a lot. When you run into some heavy seas and the waves are coming into the beach so fast, a lot of wind. And if you couldn't control the boat it would go sideways like this then the waves would just smash the hell out of it. Actually break them and those boats had real thick steel plates but I'm telling ya those storms we had to go through broke a bunch of boats. A lot of boats are busted up on the beach.

Healey: Did the boat that you were driving ever get busted up?

Malin: No. I was kind of lucky that way.

Healey: Do you remember any particular landing that had particularly bad weather?

Malin: We never had any real bad weather. The only problem we had was when hitting the beach we had to be sure the beach had a lot of coral above the shore. And that was real hard stuff. Sometimes we'd get hung up on the coral and we couldn't get off. We're stranded so they had another boat emergency boat that would stay off shore and he'd pull us off. He'd throw us a rope and pulled us off. We did that a lot of times.

Healey: I was going to ask you if that ever happened. It happened to you a lot of times?

Malin: Oh yeah. It did.

Healey: During the battle I take it?

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: You were on the USS Polk for about a year and a half?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: How'd the Polk get re-supplied? How'd ya get food?

Malin: From supply ships.

Healey: Did the Polk ever go into Port or not?

Malin: Oh yeah. Let's see--We went back to Pearl Harbor one time. Boy, I gotta tell you this story. It's been over a year that we were on the ship in these islands. Then we got orders to go to Pearl Harbor and pick up a bunch of U.S. Army Air Force guys, pilots and mechanics and stuff. So we went back to Pearl Harbor and picked up all these guys on our ship. And what happened is these Air Force guys had their own beer. So they had several hundred cases of beer on the pier and it was our job to get this beer on our ship. Take it back to where they were going to their base. It was an air base that these guys were going to. When we got there these landing boats had one little spot that we could put a case of beer in, we'd hide it. When we got back to our ship we'd take that case of beer and stash it. We ended up with I don't know maybe twenty, thirty cases of beer. These Air Force guys got wind of it and they weren't too happy about us stealing their beer. So they put guards on our boats so we wouldn't steal their beer. So we had beer for a couple of weeks on our ship. Then we had no way to

cool it so we used to take a bunch of it and put it in a big canvas bag and tie a rope to it and drop it in the water and let it sit there for a while to get cool. It got pretty cool so we were able to drink it. That was kind of fun.

Healey: Now you mentioned of course the landing crafts that you were driving would take soldiers to the islands. Did you ever do the reverse that is pick up the soldiers?

Malin: Yeah we did that too. In fact, about the last time we were there, our ship was sent to Iwo Jima. And that island was pretty well protected by the Japanese. They had lots and lots of guys there. We took the Marines over and landed them over there. And about three days after we were sent back there because there were so many wounded marines that we had to pick them up on our boats and take them back to our ship and they made our ship like a hospital ship. They got three or four surgeons came aboard our ship and they made an operating room out of the mess hall. So they could fix these guys up good enough to send them back to the hospital ship. So we did that about two days.

Healey: At Iwo Jima?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Do you have any particular recollections of the Tarawal landing?

Malin: Like I say they were all so much all alike. They all seemed to be the same to me.

Healey: Of course there was a photograph at Iwo Jima of the flag being raised, is that something you just heard about later on or were you able to observe any of that?

Malin: No I didn't see that. In fact, I knew about it and saw pictures of it and then two years ago I went to Washington D.C. with these Freedom Honor Flights. I went there with a bunch of guys, World War II sailors mostly and they had this big thing this Marine bunch that put up that flag. There is a big statue, really big; they had it over there at the museum at the Washington D.C. Museum. It's pretty neat.

Healey: When you got off the USS Polk, you said you were there for about a year and a half, where did the Polk go after you left the island campaign?

Malin: I'm not real sure but I think we were in the Philippines, made some landings in the Philippines and then they were getting ready to go to Okinawa, an island near Japan. And that's when our ship was sent back to

Pearl. And we got dumped off in a little island called Maui. Ever hear of Maui?

Healey: Yes.

Malin: They dumped us off at Maui and we lived in tents on the beach and we didn't do anything really just goofing off. This was kind of towards the end of the war. We were there for six months and it was like a vacation ya know. You can go swimming and fishing and stuff like that.

Healey: Do you know why you and your unit were sent there?

Malin: Yeah our whole unit, the whole boat crew was sent there.

Healey: And the Polk was there too?

Malin: No he took off. I don't know where they went. But we stayed there for about six months and all we had to do was get up for muster in the morning and check in and go to shop.

Healey: So you weren't involved with any training at all?

Malin: No, nothing. Then after about six months they sent us back to the States. We got aboard—

Healey: When was that do you recall?

Malin: I think it was October of '45. They put us on a battleship; I think it was the Maryland, real big battleship. You know they are big and they must have had about ten thousand troops on it that were getting off going back to the States.

Healey: So that was after the war had ended?

Malin: Yeah and the ship pulled into San Diego and we got dumped off. And the only thing I can remember about that was you ever hear of this lady Dinah Shore?

Healey: Yes sir.

Malin: When we got to the beach to the pier she was there singing and they had a big band over there playing music for us I guess. We didn't expect that, it was something different. After we got to San Diego we were sent to San Pedro. There was this little town and they had a Navy base there and that's where they put the guys before they sent them home to get discharged.

And I was there probably a couple of months and then I finally got my papers and I could go home. So that's how it worked.

Healey: What you do at San Pedro? Did you have any duties?

Malin: No, no, goofing off duties.

Healey: Is that close to San Diego, San Pedro?

Malin: Yeah it was. It was, I don't know maybe ten, fifteen miles away. So we had a lot of liberty. We could go into town almost anytime you wanted too.

Healey: Any particular reason you were kept for so long after the war ended. The war ended in August of '45 and you were discharged when?

Malin: December. In the service, like government, it takes forever for those guys to do all their paperwork and stuff like that. When we were on Maui we got kind of teed off because "what the hell we doing here all this time? I'd rather be home." And here we sat waiting for them to get us going.

Healey: Now I haven't asked you now all the while you are in the service from 42-45, did you ever get back home?

Malin: Once. Our ship was sent back to San Francisco for repairs. I'm not sure exactly when but they had to fix up some stuff and the ship was suppose to be there for a month. So we got two weeks leave. Half of the ship went off on two weeks then the other half would get off on the other two weeks. So I got home to Grand Rapids at that time; that was the only time I got home from the war.

Healey: And that is from San Francisco to Grand Rapids? Did you train?

Malin: Yeah. In those days they didn't do too much airplane flying I guess like they do now.

Healey: And what did you do on your liberty back in Grand Rapids?

Malin: You know my family was there; my sisters, brothers and my mom and dad nothing special mostly eating. My ma was a good cook. I'd go to the tavern and have a few beers.

Healey: You mentioned you had a couple of other brothers, did they end up going into the Service or not?

Malin: No. I had a brother he was much younger than me and he went to college in Michigan to Ann Arbor I guess. And he ended up being a professor of English and then he got cancer and died when he was about forty-four. In fact, I stayed with him for about two weeks; he was in pretty rough shape. I had another brother, younger than the other one; he died with a ruptured appendix. My mother sent me a telegram says “come on home Henry died.” And I couldn’t get home I was in the South Pacific then. She just sent me the telegram and he was only sixteen years old. Nice kid ya know, so; that’s what happened to my two brothers. My sisters—one of my sisters joined the Marines during World War II. She was in the service for I don’t know about a year and a half or so but never left the States.

Healey: I was going to ask you also more about your correspondence while you were in the Navy. How often did you hear from home and did you hear from your sister in the Marines?

Malin: Yeah we would correspond quite a bit just writing letters back and forth. They called it D Mail special little envelopes they made for servicemen so we didn’t have to pay no stamps or nothing. We corresponded quite a bit yeah.

Healey: And how was the time lapse with your correspondence while you were out on the Polk?

Malin: As far as getting mail? It would vary sometimes two weeks and sometimes it would be a month. When mailman or the sort keeper guy got the mail he had to go wherever we were. When we were aboard ship we couldn’t mail anything out and you couldn’t get any but when we got to some island or someplace where he could go get the mail he could end up with a big fat canvas bag full of letters. Then they had mail call and you’d get a whole bunch of mail at one time.

Healey: Who was your primary corresponder? Who did you hear from most?

Malin: I think my sisters.

Healey: I know you mentioned your mother was from Poland, did she write in English or no?

Malin: Yeah she wrote in English. I corresponded with her quite a bit, sure I wrote her quite a bit.

Healey: And where was your sister stationed that was in the Marine Corp?

Malin: I think Camp Lejeune it was called, I think it was in the southern states.

Healey: North Carolina—Camp Lejeune?

Malin: Yeah. I think that is where she was mostly.

Healey: Do you know what she did in the Service?

Malin: No I don't, nope.

Healey: Okay you indicated you got out of the Service you were in the San Diego area in late 1945, what did you do after you got discharged?

Malin: When I went home I got a job I think it was with General Motors in an automobile factory in Grand Rapids. And I did that for about I don't know six months or so. And then me and a couple of other guys got together and said "why the hell are we doing this?" We had all this free education coming you know G.I. Bills and stuff. I had enough to go on to college even. But anyway we decided that we were going to go to Chicago to a trade school in Chicago. One of the guys I was with knew about it so we went over there and enlisted in this trade school where they taught us heating and air conditioning. That's what we went for. We stayed there for a whole year; a one year course. We finished and went back home and jobs were pretty tough. We couldn't get much so—I can't remember—Oh while I was in school I met my wife in a doctor's office. She was a RN. She was working there and I was over there for something. I think my cousins and I went on a horseback ride and I think I fell off the horse or something. And that's where I met my wife.

Healey: In Chicago?

Malin: Yeah this was Chicago.

Healey: Was she originally from Chicago?

Malin: She was from a little town next to Chicago called Alter.

Healey: And what's your wife's name?

Malin: Regne, R-E-G-N-E.

Healey: That's her first name or her last name?

Malin: Her first name.

Healey: Her first name and her last name was?

Malin: Lembcke L-E-M-B-C-K-E that was her last name. Well anyway after I got home we corresponded quite a bit. Finally, I decided to come back to Chicago. It was Dolton in the little town my wife's parents lived. I went over there and got a job in a steel mill I think. I got a job over there and of course we were dating. Eventually we got married about a year later. My wife being a nurse she got a job in a research laboratory near where we lived. It was called Sinclair at that time. Then she got me in over there, I started working over there as a mechanic. I worked in that research lab for twenty-one years. And after that the company was merging with another company and they wanted to get rid of a lot of guys, so they gave us some severance pay and then my wife says to me "let's go to Wisconsin." She didn't like Illinois and I wasn't too particularly fond of it either. So we said okay and we put our house up for sale and sold our house. We came to Wisconsin. Where the hell did we end up?—oh, Mazomanie. Ever hear of Mazomanie?

Healey: Yes.

Malin: A little town there—anyway we ended up over there. We bought an old farm house with ten acres and I got a job in Madison working at the City County building with my training and we stayed there for about seventeen years. At that time we had three kids.

Healey: I was going to ask you, you had family? And where are your children?

Malin: Robin lives in Baraboo. I got two boys, one in Cross Plains and one in Black Earth. When we were in Mazomanie we had little kids she was just a stay at home mom you know raising the kids. I worked in the Madison City County Building as an air conditioning engineer and took care of the air conditioning. I did that for about sixteen years till I retired. Then I retired I was at least sixty-two some place in the 1980's and I retired. And after I retired we talked about selling our farm. We had ten acres so we had no trouble selling it 'cause it was a good deal. Ten acres people want to be farmers a little bit and then we moved to Sauk City. We stayed there for a couple of years. I wasn't working at the time. I was retired. We moved to Sauk City and lived there for a couple of years and then we moved to Reedsburg, little town of Reedsburg on the edge of town by the lake. We lived there for a couple of years. My wife was one of these gals who liked old houses and she liked to restore. She was pretty good. She was very knowledgeable about a lot of stuff. So she would buy an old house and she'd fix it up and maybe stay there a year or two. I would end of doing most of the work like sanding the floors and painting and stuff like that. So after that we ended up in New Lisbon. There was this little house in New Lisbon that my wife found right in town. It was kind of an old beat up house so we bought that and spent about two years there fixing it up doing a lot of work. So finally after we finally got it fixed up a couple

come along and wanted to buy it. So we said “let’s sell it.” And I said “well, what are we gonna do?” So she said “I’ll find something.” So she drove around and she found this house. She said “I found a place for us.” So we sold the house in town and moved here so that’s what happened.

Healey: You move around a lot, you wander around a lot.

Malin: Yeah we did move around a lot.

Healey: So why did you change your name after the service?

Malin: When I went to Chicago to go to school my uncle and aunt lived in Chicago, my dad’s brother. He changed his name to Malin and after we got married I talked to my wife about it. I said “why don’t we change our name too?” She said “okay.” So we did. We had to go through the procedure and go sit in front of a judge or something to get our name changed. And that’s why I changed my name and it turned out pretty good. Because when I was in the service those guys especially those guys from the South they couldn’t pronounce Polish names. We are all SKI that’s all they called us. So they had a hell of a time trying to pronounce our names. So I thought it was a good idea and that’s why we did it.

Healey: I see, okay. You’ve got some paperwork out here. You have your discharge papers or what do you got?

Malin: This is my discharge paper from when I got discharged. I gotta show you this first. This picture here was taken we were in the South Pacific aboard ship. And this guy was from Texas and we had a lull in our—we didn’t do nothing for quite a while like about a month or so. So he said “well let’s make some home brew.” He knew the recipe. This is the wooden jug off a life boat, a water jug. He took that water jug and then this guy worked in the kitchen. He said “well, we need apples, raisins, sugar and a whole bunch of yeast.” I don’t know what else but he did it. He put all this stuff in this jug and then he said “now we have to wait two weeks to let it ferment.” So it sat in this boat for two weeks and he said “okay it’s ready.” So we got together and we figured we better have a couple of drinks. And I’m telling ya, that was pretty powerful stuff.

Healey: Pretty powerful stuff. So what we are talking about here is Mr. Malin has a black and white, it looks like an eight by ten photograph with five—are these all Navy people? All sailors, young sailors. And you’re at the bottom of a boat?

[Break in recording][01:03:17]

Healey: And we were talking about a photograph of five sailors and a gentleman from Texas having a recipe for what'd you call it "hooch" or--

Malin: Home brew, he called it apple jack.

Healey: Apple jack, okay and which one of the men in this picture is you?

Malin: Here.

Healey: You are up on the top?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: You got, you were saying you've got soup cups and coffee mugs that you are using to drinking out of.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: One gentleman's got a cigarette and you're in a landing craft. Who took this photo of you do you remember?

Malin: I don't really know.

Healey: It's a nice picture, okay. What else have you got?

Malin: These are pictures I took in Washington D.C. when we were with that Freedom Honor Flight.

Healey: When were you able to do the Freedom Honor Flight?

Malin: A year ago September, last year yeah when I did this.

Healey: Had you ever been to Washington D.C. before?

Malin: No, that was my first time.

Healey: You have a couple of nice pictures here of the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. What's this photograph of?

Malin: That was taken inside the airport in La Crosse when we were getting ready to go on an airplane.

Healey: So you flew in and out of La Crosse?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: And that's a one day trip?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Tell me about what you recall about your experiences in Washington D.C. and the flight.

Malin: Well it was interesting.

Healey: Did you know any of the people that you went with?

Malin: No.

Healey: Okay.

Malin: There were about a hundred of us. Most of the guys had guardians with them because a lot of them were in wheel chairs so they couldn't walk but I was okay. I didn't have any problems you know. We got over there and got on a plane and landed in Dulles Airport I think. And we got there in the airport a big fire truck was squirting water on us, kind of like a hello.

Healey: On you or on the plane?

Malin: On the plane, we were on the plane.

Healey: Oh okay.

Malin: We got off of there in Dulles than they took us by bus to this memorial place here and we stayed there all day walking around. It's a big place damn man you can spend hours and hours walking around over there looking at stuff.

Healey: You stayed in Washington D.C. most of the day?

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: Were you bused around?

Malin: Yeah. We got on a bus and got over there and stayed there for several hours looking around and walking around and stuff. You could see all the stuff that they were showing us. About the only thing I can remember that was different when it was getting to be the time we were supposed to go back on the bus and head back to the airport, it was maybe supper time. There was a place a little stand they were selling stuff. And I saw somebody had a can of beer and I say I'm going to get a can of beer, it was pretty hot. So I got a can of beer, sat down in a chair and started

drinking. Then a lady, I didn't know who she was, but she come up to me she was probably in her fifties she says "you can't drink that beer." I said "why not?" "You're not allowed to drink beer." I said "poop on you" I was thirsty so I drank it anyway. Yeah, she started raising hell with me 'cause I was drinking a beer.

Healey: And that was with somebody who was with the tour?

Malin: Yeah. I don't know who she was. But we saw a lot of stuff. It was very interesting to see all that stuff. I had never been there before then they put us on the bus and they took us all over the D.C. area. They showed us all these buildings F.B.I. Building, I.R.S. Building, all these buildings, all these big buildings that they have which I never saw before.

Healey: Going to take a quick look at your discharge paperwork here.

Malin: Sure.

Healey: Were you actually discharged from Great Lakes as opposed to San Diego? Where were you discharged from?

Malin: I was discharged from San Pedro. Oh maybe I did--

Healey: This one is an Honorable Discharge from the United States Navy, "This is to certify that Joseph Malinowski Boatswain's Mate Second Class U.S. Navy Reserve is Honorably Discharged from the United States Separation Center Great Lakes, Illinois and from the Naval Service of the United States this Fourth Day of December 1945." So you recall did you actually go through Great Lakes?

Malin: I think I did, I can't remember that, I think they sent us to Great lakes to get discharged.

Healey: I was actually reading from a little small, I'm not sure why there's a small a copy then a large probably eight by ten, it's the same thing.

Malin: I'm not sure why they did that but that's what they gave me anyway.

Healey: I'm looking at; I guess they were sent to you. The Veteran's Administration sent you in October 5th of 1955 your enclosed discharge papers. And that is when you were living in Dalton, Illinois.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: I also got your separation form here. It's a NAV Purse 553 in the case that you came in as a single person, U.S. citizen from Kemp County Michigan.

That time you were living on Dayton Street Southwest in Grand Rapids, Michigan. That all sound familiar to you?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Did you live in the same house all the while you were growing up or did you parents move around?

Malin: No we moved around because this was kind of the Depression years. My father who worked with his factory for thirty years got laid off because it was tough times in the '30s. My parents lost the house 'cause they couldn't make payments. We got thrown out of the house we had to move around a lot, so they rented a lot.

Healey: He is showing me a plaque with his medals on. There are four medals on there and I also have a transmittal of the awards he is entitled to and I'll read those off. A World War II Victory Medal, an American Campaign Medal, Asian Pacific Campaign Medal, three Bronze Stars and then for his button lapels has a discharged button and an honorable service lapel pin parenthesis "ruptured duck". Foreign awards listed as: Philippine Liberation Medal, one Bronze Star, and Philippine Presidential Unit Citation Navy. So did your parents stay in Grand Rapids, Michigan most or all of their life?

Malin: Yeah. These are a bunch of papers I salvaged from the time I was in the service.

Healey: Okay, you got one paper here from the USS President Polk which is the name of your ship that you were on. It says "Pursuant to Section 3 Circular #39 War Department 1943 Class 4 priority for transportation by air within the continental United States during the period of six September 1944 to twenty September 1944. It is authorized for use subject to the provisions of the existing air priority directives of the War Department Circular pertaining there to you are on leave from duty overseas and upon expiration of such leave will return overseas." Now were you able to ever use an authorization to utilize air flight?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: And when did you do that?

Malin: When I went home on leave.

Healey: So you didn't have to take the train, you flew?

Malin: I took the train going back. And some of those papers are just guys that were on my crew.

Healey: There's a paper here from Kamaole Amphibious Training Base in Maui, TH. Did I say that right it is K-A-M-A-O-L-E Amphibious Training Base Is that where you were when you were spending six months with not too much to do?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: It's got a list of people that I guess served with you, trying to find your name on here not seeing it right away. Maybe you can tell me, is your name listed there?

Malin: Should be [papers rustling]

Healey: Probably is, I just probably overlooked it. [long pause] While you are looking at that I'm looking at another roster of boat crews and what was your service number do you recall?

Malin: My service number was 6236044.

Healey: And you are listed as a coxswain at that time. It's got a list of about twenty-five, thirty people here. I don't know if you remember some of these people here? Leroy Akin, Curtis Atwood, George Austin, Charles Butler, Marvin Campbell.

Malin: Oh yeah, all those guys were in my boat crew.

Healey: And you are listed under on this other piece of paper from your Amphibious Training Base you're in the 116 category. Keller, Lloyd, Jones, Dortch, Kelly and Malinowski those were all guys you served with there?

Malin: Yeah they were my boat crew.

Healey: Go on liberty with them?

Malin: Yup.

Healey: Did you usually go with your boat crew?

Malin: No. There were two guys that were my buddies. This one here was one and another one.

Healey: What was his name, do you recall?

Malin: Jimmy Daldis[sp??]

Healey: Jimmy Daldis from Texas?

Malin: No from California, he was from California. There was another guy from California that we were buddies. Oh, I got to show you a picture.

Healey: This roster of boat crews some of it's on flimsy paper and some of it's on pretty yellowed paper here.

Malin: Now this picture here was taken in Hawaii. Jimmy was one and John was the other one. We were going into the shower in Hawaii.

Healey: So somebody caught you in your birthday suits?

Malin: Yeah huh-uh.

Healey: A little bitty one and a half by two black and white photo, that was in Hawaii when you were in Pearl or up north?

Malin: No this was in that training base in Hawaii that Waianae place that is where we were at.

Healey: Well you managed to keep quite a few boat rosters here.

Malin: Yeah when I got to be boatswain mate my officer mate put me in charge of those guys 'cause I had the highest ranking. I was a coxswain.

Healey: And what's the pay grade there for—what was your highest pay grade? Where you an E-4, E-5 or you don't know? Do you remember what your pay was during your Service?

Malin: Yeah, when we were in the Service we were getting twenty five bucks a month while we were in the States. As soon as we got overseas they raised it to fifty bucks a month. So we got fifty bucks a month and when I got to be boatswain mate I think they gave me a ten dollar raise. I figured I could get more money so that's why I did that. I just read the book and took a bunch of tests so I could get this rating. Then when I got that rating my officer said "as long as you're boatswain mate now you got to take charge of these boat guys. You've got to be in charge of this boat crew".

Healey: How many people were in your boat crew?

Malin: About thirty-five, that's okay so that's what I did.

Healey: Since your pay went up, what did you do with your money?

Malin: Well I couldn't spend it. Many times I would send my mother money a couple of hundred dollars 'cause you know those days in the '40's it was pretty tough. I know my parents were financially pretty well strapped. So I would send them a couple of hundred bucks 'cause I couldn't spend it anyway when you are aboard ship. And even when you are on the island you don't buy much stuff.

Healey: You also have a boat roster here or roster I'll spell this—W-A-I-P-I-O Amphibious Operating Base.

Malin: Why-O-Pa-Who

Healey: Waipio Amphibious Operating Base and the Fleet Post Office is San Francisco, California. This is a transfer memorandum dated the fourteenth of April 1945 and it got a list of probably about thirty to forty-five people on it, including yourself. It says "Transfer for the below named men as of April 16, 1945 to Kamaole Amphibious Training Base for Duty."

Malin: I think that is when they sent us to Maui to get discharged.

Healey: At that time you are listed as being a BM-2C.

Malin: Boatswain Mate Second Class.

Healey: And then you got a copy of boat allocation table for cargo and troops or ANC Troops, Red Beach One control vessel. Left end of Red Beach One is marked with two and a half by ten red sign, beach master sign, boat allocation. It shows for the Polk eight LCVPs, Landing Craft Vehicles Personnel and as you mentioned four LCMs. You also have a piece of paper here that indicates—top it says U.S.S. President Polk and this is another copy of the authorization for air transport, another boat assignment here, then you kept a copy of common Hawaiian words that was put out there.

Malin: I didn't learn much Hawaiian words.

Healey: Some interesting original paperwork here and I suspect from time to time you look at that and check the names out.

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: Did you keep in contact with many of the people you served with?

Malin: No. I got a lot of their addresses and my wife says “Why don’t you try to see if they are still living?” I say “Gosh, chances are they’re not.”

Healey: And what’s your age right now?

Malin: Eighty-nine.

Healey: Okay. I take it you were the average age of the people you served with?

Malin: Yeah we were all about the same age bracket.

Healey: And you’re just showing me now—why don’t you go ahead and tell me what this is.

Malin: When you cross the International Date Line you know they make a big deal of it.

Healey: The main of the Neptunus.

Malin: Yeah they give you a piece of paper.

Healey: It says you crossed the International Date Line in October 31st, 1944. You remember that day?

Malin: No. I don’t really remember.

Healey: Don’t remember them celebrating or doing shenanigans or anything at that time?

Malin: Nothing big.

Healey: At that time it says the USS President Polk was bound for New Guinea, Milne Bay, M-I-L-N-E bay, New Guinea. Did you actually go to New Guinea?

Malin: Yeah we were there.

Healey: Did you land in New Guinea or not?

Malin: We were and in fact it’s one of the islands I was able to get off the boat and go on the island. Some of these islands we couldn’t even get off the boat.

Healey: What do you recall about New Guinea?

Malin: It was kind of a wild island. It was inhabited but gosh it was pretty rugged. Think I have a picture of New Guinea here somewhere.

Healey: Was there Army or Navy people there, service members?

Malin: Oh yeah.

Healey: Looking through your scrapbook here.

Malin: You want to look at this?

Healey: Well you can tell me about some of the pictures and things that you got there.

Malin: This one here says “Number four hold en route to Guam Marianas, June 1944.”

Healey: It says aboard the Polk?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Number four hold en route to Guam Marianas June 1944. These are pictures of what?

Malin: These are my crew when we were goofing off down in the bottom of the ship.

Healey: What do you have on your heads there?

Malin: Helmets, yeah we were just goofing off. Now this is Guadalcanal May 1944.

Healey: A picture of yourself and a friend by the name of Jim.

Malin: These are these little landing boats getting ready to go to the beach.

Healey: When you went in to Guadalcanal were you taking any fire at that time?

Malin: No. They had already had it pretty well covered up. These are all the guys that I—

Healey: Let me go back here, you have one labeled “Granny the Seamstress” and you got a sailor—

Malin: Yeah he was a good friend of mine. He lived near Chicago. This guy was really good at sewing so anytime we had problems with badges or

something we could give it to him and he'd sew it for us. That's why we called him Seamstress.

Healey: You got Bob Tucker and Willy Hulsey.

Malin: These guys were from the South. These are in Waianae. These are pogo dancers in Waianae. They gave us a little dance treat.

Healey: And that's when you were in Oahu?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: And Waianae spelled out W-A-I-A-N-A-E.

Malin: Yeah. These are pictures of the LCMs putting a truck in there.

Healey: Two and a half ton truck being lowered into an LCM. There's a picture of the pier at Waianae.

Malin: Here's a LCM hitting the beach.

Healey: You were also at Pokai Bay.

Malin: Pokai Bay.

Healey: P-O-K-A-I in Hawaii.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: What's this up here?

Malin: That's another LCM getting ready to go in the water, we were about to drop it in water. Here we were in Bougainville. See I found this sign. Can you see that?

Healey: Yes.

Malin: That say Bougainville?

Healey: Bougainville and it is some club there and I can't quiet see the name of the club. You indicate Bougainville, The Solomon's November of 1944.

Malin: Yeah we were able to go on shore.

Healey: All of your pictures here your without helmets and standing in tropical area. What was Bougainville like?

Malin: Kind of like New Guinea, pretty, pretty wild.

Healey: Had the Solomon Islands already been captured there?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: How long did you spend there?

Malin: I don't know. We never stayed more than a couple of days you know.

Healey: Hot and humid or not?

Malin: Yeah but we got used to it. We got to the point where we hardly ever wore anything on top. The weather was hot but the humidity wasn't too bad. We were used to it pretty good. These are family pictures mostly.

Healey: You got Emily at Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Malin: That's my sister.

Healey: That's your sister who was in the Marine Corp?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Than you also have PFC Mary Crane.

Malin: Yeah that was a friend of hers and she was also in the Marines.

Healey: Did you ever meet these people or no?

Malin: Oh yeah, I met this gal here. I don't know who she was.

Healey: When were you able to meet them?

Malin: When I was on liberty at home. This is a fellow here—Leyte. Leyte is an island in the Philippines.

Healey: Leyte Air Strip. You got a picture with a plane. I don't know if that plane is taking off. It looks like taking off but it could be landing.

Malin: I don't know.

Healey: And again it's a black and white picture about a two by three photograph.

Malin: And these are all guys in my crew.

Healey: Somebody you refer to as “Cowboy.”

Malin: Yup they all had nicknames.

Healey: Somebody as “Frankie Sinatra Jones.”

Malin: It’s this guy’s cap.

Healey: Oh you got his cap. Sinatra left his cap behind?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: You got photos of men in their service—Are you in these photos?

Malin: No. I’m not in these and I’m not in these either.

Healey: You’ve got pictures that are labeled here and there’s a picture of you.

Malin: That’s my sister, my little nephew—

Healey: This back in Grand Rapids?

Malin: Yeah—this is my other sister. That was when I was home on leave that they took those pictures. This is my brother Hank who died. Here he is again. That’s my sister there. On the island of Maui, now I don’t think I took these pictures I must have gotten them from somebody.

Healey: Again you’ve got black and white pictures with mountains in the back and one of them has got some cars probably of the era in front of what looks like maybe a hotel.

Malin: These are just pictures of guys that were—

Healey: Do you remember when these pictures were taken?

Malin: Yeah that was after we were in Maui, like ’45.

Healey: These pictures are from April of ’45 showing sailors looking like they’re on liberty in your whites. What do you call those uniforms?

Malin: Whites, yeah. May 1945.

Healey: You got pictures of some of the sailors that were stationed aboard the Polk.

Malin: These were the kind of tents we lived in.

Healey: When you were doing your training?

Malin: No, when we were in Maui.

Healey: Oh in Maui you lived in tents too. You didn't live in permanent—

Malin: Yeah, see all these tents.

Healey: You have a picture of somebody named Morgan Rich or Ritchie—Nolan Rhodes

Malin: [Laughter] That's me.

Healey: That's you in a hula skirt. [Malin laughs]

[Break in recording] [01:34:58]

Healey: July 29, 2011 with Mr. Joe Malin and we are on tape two side b. And we are continuing looking at a scrap book that Mr. Malin has of his wartime experiences in Hawaii primarily but also in other places in the South Pacific.

Malin: These I don't know when we took these pictures.

Healey: You got one labeled "deep sea divers." Did you actually go deep-sea diving?

Malin: No but some of these guys did 'cause I couldn't do it.

Healey: Where you a swimmer or not?

Malin: No I didn't know how to swim.

Healey: Joined the Navy and never learned how to swim okay.

Malin: During War World II, they didn't care.

Healey: When you went on the landing craft did you have life vests on, life preservers?

Malin: No.

Healey: Flak-jackets?

Malin: We had them in the boat but we didn't wear them.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Malin: They were too bulky.

Healey: Apparently a lot of pictures when you spent your last six months on Maui.

Malin: Yes, let's see.

Healey: You have the residents of tent 116 on the beach.

Malin: That was our tent.

Healey: You got something labeled the Purple Heart, what is that all about?

Malin: I was playing basketball with a bunch of guys. It was the enlisted men against the officers. This is in Hawaii outside. And one of the guys, I was down below, and one of the officers was up with the ball and he hit his elbow knocked me right there. I had to have three stitches put in.

Healey: Oka, so that's your war time injury.

Malin: Yeah, that's my war time injury. This one, you want to see that other one or--

Healey: Sure. You've got a scrapbook with hula girls on the front.

Malin: See now this here is the ship that we went to Hawaii on. [Inaudible]

Healey: And it's labeled as the Matson Liner Lurline L-U-R-L-I-N-E and this picture says "at Saipan 1945." What ship is that?

Malin: That's ours.

Healey: Polk?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: It looks a photo you or someone else took; it's a black and white photo. Good size ship, looks like it is tied up in port?

Malin: Yes, it was. We had these guys come on, Artie Shaw, ever hear of him?

Healey: Yes. He was performing there? He's got what, a clarinet? Yes a clarinet; looks like a clarinet.

Malin: When I first went to Hawaii he and his band were on that ship.

Healey: Oh, okay. You got a photo of him. "Aircraft over Bougainville"
You take these photographs?

Malin: No.

Healey: Black and white photographs of two aircraft and another one looking over
the wing of an aircraft and then one an aerial photograph. It looks like
maybe coming into a landing strip; I'm not sure what's there. And then you
got-- What's Halley, Alaska or Halle, Alaska--where's that taken?

Malin: Haleakala

Healey: Oh I see Haleakala.

Malin: Next to Hawaii.

Healey: All right.

Malin: This was a church in Waianae, we used to go to church on Sunday. We go
on road trips.

Healey: The Waianae Catholic Church.

Malin: Yeah

Healey: Was that run by the military or was that a civilian?

Malin: No, it was their local church. A funny thing the first time we went to mass
we saw this little boy, altar boy, dressed up in the, you know how they
dress up, anyways he was barefoot but I guess that's the way they did it
over there, 'cause they hardly ever wore shoes.

Healey: You got a picture of the interior of the Catholic church at Waianae
and also a Protestant church at Waianae that is a little bit bigger brick
structure instead of a wooden structure, a general store in Waianae. This
says Vella Airstrip V-E-L-L-A where's that? Where's Vella?

Malin: Vella. I think it was at [inaudible] Vella LaVella [inaudible]

Healey: Photo in route to Guam, can you explain what's happening there? What's
that a picture of?

Malin: Usually, the ships would drop the boats into water.

Healey: This is a hoist of some sort?

Malin: Yeah uh-huh.

Healey: Water in the background and a couple of sailors behind the hoist; a couple more pictures of airplanes. One looks like it's flying over an island with water around it. And you got another Catholic church here at a--

Malin: Waipahu

Healey: Waipahu- that's a different one that's a brick one. Who is this over here?

Malin: This is a friend of mine from Grand Rapids. She was in the Marines.

Healey: Okay and this says a picture of Peg; was this taken in Grand Rapids or where was that taken?

Malin: Yeah that was taken in Grand Rapids, when I was on liberty.

Healey: Do you remember what her last name was?

Malin: Stuart, S-T-U-A-R-T-, I think Stuart.

Healey: She is in Marine dress uniform. There she is again.

Malin: This is my sister. This is—I don't know where I got that from.

Healey: And then you got a number of other pictures from Waipahu. You learned a lot of Hawaiian. The hospital there and your theater there and what's the name of this park?

Malin: I don't know but this is where we used to go get our beers. That was the army base.

Healey: You got a picture of the U.S. aircraft carrier Enterprise and this is a Hawaiian hotel in Honolulu. Do you remember who this is?

Malin: I don't remember this one but he was in my crew.

Healey: This says Smitty, Smithy, Smitty?

Malin: Yes. This little girl here is her sister Margaret. They lived right in town in Waianae. She was a seamstress. She was a fine lady. So we used to—when we had any problems with clothes we'd go take them to her and she'd sew them up for us.

Healey: These look to be Hawaiian ladies that were there.

Malin: Yeah they lived there in Waianae.

Healey: Okay.

Malin: Now this is my brother and this is me and Kate.

Healey: Okay, you sitting with a seamstress because that looks like she's—is that her sewing machine?

Malin: Yeah. This is more of our boats.

Healey: Salvage boat? Want to keep that with this so it stays in that page?

Malin: Yeah stick it in here. I don't know where I got that one from. Here are some more pictures of boats.

Healey: I see the name Cy, was he one of your buddies or boat mates?

Malin: Yeah he was my buddy. We went through basic training and all the way through to Hawaii.

Healey: Do you recall where he was from?

Malin: He was my neighbor.

Healey: He was your neighbor in Grand Rapids. What was Cy's last name?

Malin: Cy Levendowski [sp??].

Healey: Levendowski and he was one of the guys you decided--one of your gang members you decided to join up with.

Malin: That's right. He was one of them. These are more photos.

Healey: A picture of Hotel Street in Honolulu.

Malin: These are all pictures of--

Healey: You were a driver is that what your station looked like on a boat?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: This says Morris at the helm but that is what you would look like also.

Malin: And these are all pictures from Camp Andrews.

Healey: Where was Camp Andrews located?

Malin: Near Waianae about ten miles from where we were.

Healey: Was it an Army base?

Malin: Army yes.

Healey: You got some photos with some people that you met there. Here you've got some photos of people fishing, looks like kids fishing.

Malin: Yeah [inaudible]

Healey: Flash and Duke and "something caught at the gate here" is that SP—Shore Patrol?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Okay, what was that all about?

Malin: I don't know they were just goofing off I think. Some would stand watch--

Healey: Oh you did stand watch, so you were shore patrol from time to time?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Okay. Any particular incidents you remember about standing shore patrol?

Malin: No.

Healey: You stand shore patrol in the town or on the base?

Malin: No, on the base. Here is a picture of us playing baseball. That was in Hawaii

Healey: Where did you get the mitts? Did you have mitts yet?

Malin: I don't know I think the officers must have had them for us.

Healey: This one says "Old Man Turner" and it is somebody who is in—does he got a beard?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: What's he doing with a beard?

Malin: I don't know.

Healey: Where you allowed to have beards at that time?

Malin: At that time yes.

Healey: I noticed not many people had beards.

Malin: No. If you did it when we were overseas they didn't care.

Healey: Okay. So Old Man Turner, he doesn't look very old, why was he Old Man Turner?

Malin: Because he was older than us.

Healey: By about what two years?

Malin: Yeah we were probably twenty and he was probably twenty-two.

Healey: Are these official photos?

Malin: Yeah, I didn't take those.

Healey: Okay of [inaudible] Kwajalein and Bougainville, New Britain Islands. You've got some candid shots of-- these are people you served with?

Malin: Yeah, oh yeah.

Healey: This one says "our home" where is that?

Malin: That is the tent we were in. There were six of us in this tent.

Healey: You had beds, bunk beds at that time? Cots?

Malin: Yeah, Army cots.

Healey: Army cots, there weren't any beds. You have some views of Maui, some of the vegetation I guess in Maui.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Who somebody labeled "Captain of The Head", who is Captain of the Head?

Malin: Just some buddy of mine. We had to take turns cleaning the toilet, it was his turn I guess.

Healey: A lot of pictures of people here in swimming suits on the beach.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Looks like more liberty time here, there is another person with a beard and mustache named Avant, you got Hedrick, Morrison, Mitchell, Cy; who is from your home town and somebody named Boots.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Where the people that you came into the service with were they primarily Polish in your neighborhood?

Malin: In the group I was in yeah.

Healey: Is Cy still living or is he passed away?

Malin: He's still alive.

Healey: I see you have quite a few pictures of Cy.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Now you got what looks like-- are these pictures you took or no?

Malin: No.

Healey: Pictures of mainly a farm near Georgia.

Malin: I didn't take them.

Healey: In hula skirts, grass skirts. Who is this person?

Malin: This is the famous Cy [inaudible]

Healey: It's marked "Duma".

Malin: This is my brother-in-law right after the war.

Healey: Another picture of liberty on Honolulu. Some place called the watchmaker, matchmaker, watchmaker I guess.

Malin: I don't remember.

Healey: And Nelson and Stuart of the Gyrenes-- two women who are in Marine Corp. uniforms, did you know these ladies?

Malin: I knew just this one here.

Healey: Ok and that is Peg Stuart?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Where is the picture taken do you know?

Malin: No, I have no idea.

Healey: This is fresh from boot camp, whose boot camp picture is that?

Malin: Where is it?

Healey: Great Lakes. Are you in that photograph?

Malin: I think so.

Healey: You are the second from the left in front. Are these people all from your hometown or what?

Malin: Yes, they are all from my hometown. I know this one is my cousin, this is Duke, this is—here's Cy. I know this one is from—yeah they're all from my hometown, the whole bunch.

Healey: Looks like you are in your blues with your white cap on right after you graduated from boot camp. Then you say "big little boat" what's this? What kind of a boat is this?

Malin: It's a landing boat.

Healey: I got a photograph that says "Jimmy at the 30 caliber gun" Did your landing craft have guns mounted on them?

Malin: No.

Healey: And then you are on the fantail of the Polk. You, Sandy and Jim.

Malin: Used go up there after supper and just sit there 'till dark and go to bed. Here are more of my guys.

Healey: A couple of photographs here on a convoy, LCVP on the rail and convoy in the background. These are the old fashion photos but they work pretty well.

Malin: So far.

Healey: Hula skirt Sarah with sailors in hula skirts with tin can, do you know what the tin can is?

Malin: A destroyer.

Healey: Another photograph of Sandy at the fantail. He is one of your fellow sailors. LCM number eight at dock; is that-- did you ever man that ship?

Malin: No, that's a LCM, I just did the VPs.

Healey: They never switched you up and had you do the LCMs?

Malin: No. Those are all pictures of our crew.

Healey: The whole gang when you were in Hawaii in front of some of your tents there.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Well somebody took a lot of photographs. Was that you or somebody gave you those?

Malin: I didn't take too many. I had a little camera but I didn't take many pictures. I really don't know where I got all these pictures from.

Healey: But you know a lot of people in the pictures?

Malin: Oh yeah I know all those guys.

Healey: Camerson at boatswains mate locker. We have a picture of Lieutenant Steele. What's going on here?

Malin: Yeah that's-- I don't know. Lieutenant Steele he was our officer in our group.

Healey: Do you remember where Lieutenant Steele was from?

Malin: Yeah he was from Detroit.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Malin: He was a teacher.

Healey: He was the one who got the group into softball?

Malin: Yeah and he was also a high school coach.

Healey: Ever have any contact with him after the service?

Malin: Uh uh.

Healey: Here's someone doing laundry out there.

Malin: Yeah washing his dungarees.

Healey: Looks like he is washing his dungarees in a swimming hole or something.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: You got somebody sleeping here and a lot more pictures of you out on the beaches in Hawaii.

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: You and your buddies. Swimming trunks, did you take swimming trunks with you or did you end up buying them?

Malin: No, they give us a pair.

Healey: Oh all right. Okay, got a picture of the harbor at Bougainville. The Torokina Strip; that is a landing strip it appears at Bougainville?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Amazed at the number of photographs you have here in black and white.

Malin: I know. I don't know where I got them all.

Healey: "Duke & Me reading Grand Rapids" Where did you get the Grand Rapids picture? Is that while you were in the service or afterwards?

Malin: Duke's parents sent him a newspaper every day but we didn't really [inaudible] but we'd all read it anyway.

Healey: A pretty good deal, and what's Cy doing up here?

Malin: Goofing off.

Healey: "The Barber, the Baker and the CB", somebody has a guitar, is that a guitar?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Who's your guitar player?

Malin: I don't know which one it was.

Healey: Did you ever get to Tijuana?

Malin: No.

Healey: Oh here's a picture that says "Butch in Tijuana".

Malin: Butch was one of my buddies too.

Healey: So he got down to Tijuana?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: Did you go fishing?

Malin: No, a guy on our boat was a great fisherman; every time they went out he would throw a line out. That's a tuna, he would get these tuna; real nice fish and a good eat too.

Healey: So you ate them?

Malin: Yeah, he'd give them to the cook in the kitchen.

Healey: Looks like a three foot tuna that he is holding there.

Malin: Yeah these are all pictures of my guys; sure have a lot of them.

Healey: You do, there is quite a few there. Did everybody who went with you from Grand Rapids were they fortunate to come back or not?

Malin: I think so. As far as I know, none of them got killed. I think they all came back.

Healey: And these are later family pictures?

Malin: Yeah family pictures, my nephew and a grand baby, my sister's.

Healey: After you came back from the Service, I know you said you didn't keep up with a lot of the guys you served with but did you keep in contact with those from Grand Rapids that you served with?

Malin: Yeah I did. I lived in Illinois at the time but yeah I kept track. My wife and I would take a ride to Grand Rapids and stay with my folks. I could call these guys up or visit with them.

Healey: Did you join the VFW or American Legion?

Malin: Yeah. I'm a member here too of the Legion.

Healey: When you went back to Grand Rapids and you were there for half a year or a year or so were you part of the VFW there or the American Legion?

Malin: No.

Healey: No.

Malin: I didn't bother.

Healey: You said you are a member of the American Legion or the VFW?

Malin: American Legion.

Healey: American Legion here, okay. How'd you end up signing up for or finding out about the Freedom Honor Flight?

Malin: I go to the V.A. clinic in Tomah for my pills and I every six months I get a checkup over there. One of the nurses over there mentioned it to me. And she was checking it out for her husband or something like that. So she told me about it. She said "I'll give you an address and you can write to them and they will send you an application." So I did that and they sent me an application and I filled it out and send it back. Later on they send me a letter telling me when the trip is going to be. The dates and stuff like that, where I can stay, you know there was a different hotel across that we could stay at. They had a place where we had to meet one day, like a week before the trip; we had a get together and had a meeting. They would tell us what was going on; give us all the information on what we are going to do. So that is how I found out about it.

Healey: And when did you go on that?

Malin: Last September.

Healey: So in 2010. You were in the Pacific during World War II; you recall hearing about the D-Day invasions?

Malin: Oh sure.

Healey: How did you get word about that?

Malin: Well the officers or somebody aboard ship gets some news and we'd hear about it. Usually, we wouldn't get a whole lot of news in one report. Nobody got a newspaper or nothing. But the officers would probably find out and we'd hear it from them.

Healey: And when did you hear about the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Where you in Oahu at that time?

Malin: Yeah I was in Maui—

Healey: Maui, excuse me.

Malin: I was in Maui at the time. We were getting news over there pretty good. While we were in Maui I think FDR died. That's when they had the bombings and that's when the Japanese I guess gave up.

Healey: While you were in Maui before the bombings I know you said you weren't doing much for a while, did you think or have any inkling that your unit was going back into the Pacific?

Malin: No, no we knew we were done.

Healey: Oh, okay and why did you think you were done and that you weren't going to be used anymore?

Malin: Well because they got all the islands that they wanted and they really didn't need us anymore. I think if they didn't have those bombings there'd probably been an invasion of Japan and we might have gotten in on that had they had that invasion.

Healey: You really didn't think that was going to happen to your unit?

Malin: Not after that bombing thing, no.

Healey: Now were you in Maui when that bombing occurred?

Malin: Yeah that's when we heard about it. We knew that's the end.

Healey: Overall what's your impression about being in the service?

Malin: Well it was a good experience, I really—

[Break in recording][02:06:41]

Healey: With Joseph Malin, continuing, do you remember where we were when we dropped off? I had asked you what your overall impression was of being in the service was?

Malin: In joining the navy I got to see a lot of country, a lot of our United States. I got to see a lot of islands. I got to go all over the place. So it was a nice way to see places.

Healey: What would you want people to know about this time in history, World War II?

Malin: Well, I think it was an important time in our life because if a country attacks us we don't want to be taken over by another country. We all felt the same way. We wanted to fight the Japanese and get them the hell out of our country, our land. Sure we all felt the same way, all the guys that were in the service felt that they were doing a good deal. We are doing our duty. We are protecting our country. Like now, these guys are in Afghanistan and Iraq, I feel for all those guys because you know it's a little different. I don't know what the hell they are doing over there. I mean I am sure they are doing good but it was all together different with World War II.

Healey: I am about ready to wrap up this interview but before I do is there any important question that you think I forgot to ask you or something that you'd like to add?

Malin: I can't think of anything.

Healey: I will ask you when you went back to Grand Rapids what changed about your home or about your town when you got home from the war?

Malin: This was '45, it was still rough going over there you know in Grand Rapids. When I got back home we were living in a rented house again because my parents were in pretty rough shape financially, could never buy a house again. So it was pretty tough for them. You know I didn't realize it I grew up as a grade school kid in the '30s. We as kids didn't realize how tough it was for our parents. You know they really struggled. My father lost his job. We were on welfare. I had to go with my mother with the cart, little bitty wagon, through the food pantry to get food. You know to get bulk food like for nothing. Rice and prunes or whatever she could get a hold of and that's the way we lived for a long time. It was tough but we didn't realize it. We were just kids, we had a good time. We

had our fun, but thinking back on it now I think boy my Ma and Pa had it pretty rough at that time.

Healey: Did they have other relatives in Grand Rapids or did they come with family when they came from Poland?

Malin: Yeah my mother came back with her mother, my grandma. She and her grandpa got a house in Grand Rapids not too far from us. She would see her mother quite often and visit. Her grandmother had a whole bunch of daughters and of course we knew all of them.

Healey: And they lived in Grand Rapids also?

Malin: Yeah they lived in Grand Rapids. Yeah so we got to grow up together I guess.

Healey: Okay, now you mentioned you are a member of the American Legion here and how long have you been a member of the American Legion?

Malin: Oh maybe five years. I'm not very active. They sent me a letter once a year for dues and I get a new card but I'm not active in that kind of stuff.

Healey: And most of your family is here in Wisconsin; your immediate family?

Malin: Yup, yeah.

Healey: Now you mentioned your wife is still living and she is in nursing care right now?

Malin: Yeah, she's in a hospice house in Baraboo and I've talked to the nurses over there and they keep telling me that she's going down hill pretty fast. She is not going to live very long.

Healey: How long have you been married?

Malin: Sixty-two years.

Healey: Sixty-two years? Okay and you have three children is that correct?

Malin: Yeah.

Healey: How many grandchildren do you have?

Malin: Two, my daughter has got two boys.

Healey: I'll ask you before we close this up, I do appreciate you talking with me. I am glad you got in contact with the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and told us about your experiences and shared some of your pictures with you, good experience.

Malin: I don't know here is one of my dog tags.

Healey: Oh okay.

Malin: Can you read it?

Healey: I was going to say—

Malin: Here is a better one.

Healey: Okay, I can read it now. Joseph and it says "None" so I suspect that is your middle name. Did you have a middle name?

Malin: Sure.

Healey: What's your middle name?

Malin: Anthony.

Healey: Anthony, you just didn't use it in the—

Malin: I didn't and I don't know how come.

Healey: It has you again as Malinowski and your serial number 6236044. U.S.N.R.-A. is that for Active?

Malin: I guess, I don't know.

Healey: Than it says T942C. What does the T942C stand for?

Malin: Well that is when I joined September 9th of '42 is when I joined the Navy.

Healey; Okay and I'm not sure what the C is for. Are these dog tags that you had while you were in the service? They are not oblong as much as they are almost round; not quite round but more round than most dog tags that you see in pictures and you got two of them. What else do you got there that you going to show me?

Malin: I don't where I got that I think one of my sister's sent me that thing with my name on it.

Healey: It's got your name and looks like your serial number on it and also a bracelet type thing. Did the rest of your family change their name or no?

Malin: No, uh-uh, no they kept the Malinowski name.

Healey: All right.

Malin: Of course my sisters are all married so they had different names but my brother kept his Malinowski name yeah.

Healey: Okay well is there anything else you want to add or talk about your war experience?

Malin: Well, I don't know. Do you want any of this stuff?

Healey: I'll talk to you about that in a little bit. Okay, well again thank you and appreciate it. Appreciate you sharing your experience with us.

Malin: I enjoyed it, it was good. It was quite an experience for me too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]