

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Nimitz Education and Research Center**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**Michael W. Deery  
Gladstone, Missouri  
April 19, 2012**

**CASU 44  
Tinian**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is April 19, 2012. I am interviewing Mr. Michael W. Deery by telephone. His phone number is 816-436-7599. His address is 1604 NE 67<sup>th</sup> Place, Gladstone, Missouri 64118. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II

Mr. Misenhimer

Mike, I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview today.

Mr. Deery

You are welcome.

Mr. Misenhimer

And I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Mr. Deery

Thank you very much.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Museum. "Agreement read."

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Deery

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the next thing I would like to do is to get an alternative contact. We have found out that sometimes several years down the road, we try to get back in contact with a veteran and he has moved. Do you have a son or a daughter or someone that we could contact if we needed to get back in touch with you?

Mr. Deery

Yes. I have a daughter. Her name is Patricia Kurtz. Her address is 3400 Norledge Ave, Kansas City, Missouri 64123. Her phone number is 816-241-2287. She is a school teacher. She teaches here close by. She has an answering service so you can leave a message for her.

Mr. Misenhimer

My first question for you is, what is your birth date?

Mr. Deery

My birth date is March 30, 1924.

Mr. Misenhimer

You just had a birthday recently, then.

Mr. Deery

Yes sir.

Mr. Misenhimer

Happy Birthday.

Mr. Deery

Thank you very much.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Deery

Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Deery

I was the oldest and I had four sisters; three of whom are still living.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of them involved in any kind of war work?

Mr. Deery

No, not at that time. I had an uncle that was in World War I. He was in the Cavalry.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Deery

My father and my uncle were both born in Ireland and their father had taught them to be horse shoers (farriers), so my father had a job throughout the Depression. It wasn't much money. I think he was making about \$25 a week and he shod horses for a boat company, Sheffield Farms. My mother was able to buy a house with that money. Houses were pretty cheap then.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did they come to the United States from Ireland?

Mr. Deery

My father, I believe, came in 1911 and my mother came in 1921.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they married in Ireland, or did they marry after they got over here?

Mr. Deery

They were married here. They got married in Brooklyn, New York. In fact, they were married in a church on Coney Island.

Mr. Misenhimer

How old was your father when he came to this country.

Mr. Deery

I think he was in his 30s, maybe around 35.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did he get his American citizenship?

Mr. Deery

Yes, he was an American citizen.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know when he got that?

Mr. Deery

No I don't. I know that he was the only Democrat in the house. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he in World War I?

Mr. Deery

No. He had registered for the draft. They had a draft then too. He had registered but the war ended before he was called. His brother, he enlisted in the Army and was in the Cavalry. I don't know what he was, but I would think he was a horse shoer in the Cavalry.

Mr. Misenhimer

\$25 a week was pretty good money back in those days.

Mr. Deery

Yes. My mother was able to buy the house. She was a stay-at-home mom raising the five of us.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have a garden or anything like that?

Mr. Deery

My mother had roses and hedges around the house.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about vegetables?

Mr. Deery

I don't remember any vegetables.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now on December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Deery

Yes. It was on a Sunday afternoon and my father and I were listening to a football game. I believe it was the Giants and the Dodgers. The Dodgers had a football team at that time. We were lying on the bed when they interrupted it. It was about 1:00 or 2:00 with the news that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. We didn't know where it was then. That was when we heard about it on the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you heard about it, how did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Deery

When I heard about it, I was in my senior year. They had a draft at that time and I had registered for the draft. I figured that I would be going in there sooner or later. The day after I graduated, I started working at the high school as a junior clerk. At night, on the way home, I would stop off in New York City and go to a place called DeLehanty Institute. I took aviation mechanics and I took aviation metal smithing because I wanted to go into the aviation part of it. I graduated from that in November of 1942. Then Roosevelt put a freeze on the enlistments because I understood that he wanted an all draft service; he wanted everybody to be drafted. I wanted to go into the Navy. As I was about to go down there they closed the enlistments and then in January of 1943 he opened them up again. I rushed down and enlisted in the Navy around January 15, 1943 and I was inducted into the Navy on January 23, 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Deery

I didn't want to be sloshing around in mud. (laugh) I thought the Navy would be a nice, good clean job. I wouldn't be like the Army fellows. They had it rough out in the cold. I remember the Battle of the Bulge and those things. I used to see pictures of the guys tramping through the high snow. I didn't want any of that. That's how I selected the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to boot camp?

Mr. Deery

I went to boot camp at Sampson, New York, which is up near the Finger Lakes they called them. It was on Lake Bennington.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you do in boot camp?

Mr. Deery

Learning to march and drill. Standing guard. Nothing like later on when I went to school.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have knot tying?

Mr. Deery

Yes, we had to do things like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Blue Jackets Manual; did you have that?

Mr. Deery

Yes. I still have a Blue Jackets Manual. That shows you how to pack your sea bag and how to get all your clothing into a sea bag. If you rolled it, it didn't take as much room as if you laid it out flat.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have swimming?

Mr. Deery

Yes. We had swimming and we learned how to take our pants off and fill them up with air and pull it down over the water and that way it was filled with air and you tied them with string to hold the air in there and you could use that as a flotation device.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any kind of weapons training in boot camp?

Mr. Deery

Not too much. We would go on guard duty and we had a rifle but there wasn't any taking it apart or anything like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you go out and shoot the gun?

Mr. Deery

I don't recall shooting the gun in boot camp. I did later on in Memphis.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how long was your boot camp?

Mr. Deery

It was eight weeks, of which I spent time in the hospital. One time I had a fever and they put me in the hospital. I had a fever over 100 degrees so they put me in the hospital. The next time I went into the hospital in boot camp we were out bowling and I sort of sprained my thigh. The very next day we went out marching. We had to do a rear march. When I was turning my leg for the rear march, I aggravated it and they put me in the hospital because I couldn't get up out of the sack.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did that put you behind in your boot camp, or did you go ahead and graduate?

Mr. Deery

Luckily, no. That was one thing I was afraid of was that I would lose my company. I was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Company of the Callahan Unit, C Unit 101. That was the very first company, Callahan. They were just building that at that boot camp.

Mr. Misenhimer

How were your drill instructors, were they pretty rough on you?

Mr. Deery

No, they were very good. I had no problems with anybody. One night the guard woke me up for duty at 2:00 in the morning and I fell back to sleep again. Then he came in and told me that I was late for guard duty and that I had to go down to see the Chief Petty Officer and he gave me the works. He said, "I don't know how I am going to get you out of this. Sleeping on duty is punishable by death." He scared the heck out of me. (laugh) That was the only time that I was in any kind of trouble.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did they actually do to you, anything?

Mr. Deery

No. I apologized to the guy that I was supposed to relieve. I told him that I would serve some of his duty and they said, "No, it's alright. You've had enough." They didn't make me serve any extra.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go after boot camp?



Mr. Deery

After boot camp I went down to Memphis, Tennessee to the Naval Technical Training Center. It was at the Naval Air Station at Millington, Tennessee. I went down there and we were working on airplane engines and sometimes we had to fix holes in the aileron, making believe that it had been damaged. Everything went fine there. I graduated from Aviation Machinist Mate's School. Instead of going from Second Class to First Class, I went from Second Class to AMM-3C. I skipped a rate.

Mr. Misenhimer

In that school, did you overhaul the engines? Or what did you do to the engines?

Mr. Deery

We were running them up and checking the fuel flow to see that it was idling right when they were sitting on the tarmac there.

Mr. Misenhimer

And these were actual airplanes, right?

Mr. Deery

Yes. They were old bi-wings. We had Marines there and also lady Marines and WAVES all in the same area. We all got along well. There was marching too from the mess hall to the work area. They would play the marching music.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was that school?

Mr. Deery

I got a 30-day leave from Sampson. Then I went back to Sampson on March 30, I believe. Then they sent me on a train to Memphis.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you got there around April 1.

Mr. Deery

Yes and I graduated from Aviation Machinist Mate School around August 28, 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me back up. How was the food in boot camp?

Mr. Deery

The food in boot camp was very good. I had no complaints. The only time that I didn't like it was on Sundays when they would have cold cuts. All the other time you had hot meals, soup and biscuits and all. But I had no complaints about the food.

Mr. Misenhimer

So how about the food at aviation school? How was the food there?

Mr. Deery

The food was good there too.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished that school, then where did you go?

Mr. Deery

When I finished with Memphis, we graduated on August 28, and it was kind of hot. We were wearing our whites and we went on a steam engine to Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia. Those whites were grays by the time we got there to Norfolk. It took us two days to get to Norfolk.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a place to sleep on that train to Norfolk?

Mr. Deery

Yes, we had like bunks. It was like a troop train.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened there at Norfolk?

Mr. Deery

At Norfolk it was called the Navy ATU. It stood for Advanced Aviation Base Training Unit. We were learning other things there. How to work on the tail wheels and working on the landing gear and the hydraulics. We learned a lot of stuff that we didn't do in Memphis.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of planes were you working on there?

Mr. Deery

F4Us, F4Fs. They were fighter planes.

Mr. Misenhimer

The F4U was the Corsair.

Mr. Deery

That's right. We worked on the Corsair and on the Wildcats. I met a lot of fellows there that came from Norman, Oklahoma. We were all together throughout the war. Most of the guys were from Memphis and Norman. We got pretty close and when we got to Tinian Island later on we were still together. That was a long time to be together. Everybody got along very well.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was that school at Norfolk?

Mr. Deery

At Norfolk, I was there from September 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> until around December 4<sup>th</sup>, the beginning of December. What happened was that we had an incident in Norfolk. On September 17, two weeks after we got there, a fellow was transporting depth charges down by the hangar that we worked in the night before. He was transporting these depth charges and one of them was rubbing on the wheel and it went off. If you have a computer, you can Google Norfolk Naval Air Station Explosion September 17, 1943 and that will bring it up. There were 30 some-odd people killed, one of which was one of our fellows from Memphis. He was working on a plane and he was underneath the tail wheel and was up on a hoist. The force of the explosion knocked his hoist down and the tail wheel hit him in the chest and killed him. There were over 100 people injured. It was really awful.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned that you were in the hospital in Memphis, what happened on that?

Mr. Deery

It was in Norfolk. I was working on an aileron and we had this acetone and that is glue. A lot of these people were glue sniffing in the 1960s and that is what they were sniffing. I was painting this acetone onto this aileron to get it hard. Once the glue dried it made the fabric hard. We didn't have a window open in the room where we were doing this and I got sick. I got overcome from the fumes and they had to take me to the hospital that afternoon. I was in there for seven days. Again, I was fortunate; I did not lose my company.

I remember the explosion. I had KP. I was sweeping the hut getting it ready for inspection. That thing raised the hut just about a foot off the ground. I heard the sirens going off and then later on in the day we were getting the word of what had happened. The officer the night before told us; I don't know if he was trying to make us move faster or what, but he told us that if we didn't finish getting one plane out on the line that night we could be back the next morning. Luckily, we did get a plane on the line and didn't have to work the next day. Things happen and you don't know why they happen that way. It was scary.

I left Norfolk in December and we went out to Seattle, Washington to Sandpoint Naval Air Station. They put us to work out there in the supply department. Somehow, they forgot we were there. Some guy got in trouble for that. I think he got courtmartialed. The word was they said, "Are they still here?" They shipped us out to Point Magu in California. When we went there, it was nothing but desert. We were training, creeping on our stomachs, creeping along the ground. It was like jungle training, I guess. That was the kind of training we had there. It would get very, very cold at night and it would get hot as Hades in the daytime. It was at Point Magu that they took President Reagan's body off and brought it to Washington. So you can see it is a Naval Air Station now, but when we were there it was just desert.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then what happened?

Mr. Deery

We stayed there until April. We were attached to CASU 44 at that time. It had been commissioned around February 23. We left Point Magu and went to Port Hueneme, California and we got on the ship there one morning. We sailed for Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. We got there somewhere around the end of April, 1944. I remember that Frank Knox was the Secretary of the Navy and he passed away around this time. That was Iroquois Point I believe. It was right there by Pearl Harbor. We went out there and they shipped us over to Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station. We working on PBVs and PB4Vs. That was the Catalinas and the Liberators. That was the old B-24.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes with the single tail.

Mr. Deery

We worked on those planes there. We stayed there and they shipped out a couple of units prior to us. We stayed there and while we were there, there was what they called a second Pearl Harbor. They were loading these ships to go to Tinian in the Marianas. One of them caught fire and they had all this gasoline stored on these ships and there were a lot of ships that caught fire from that one. There were a lot of deaths at that time. That is why they called it the Second Pearl Harbor. I have a little book that my daughter got for me that tells about it. I think she got it on eBay. No one knew about that until about 15 years ago.

Mr. Misenhimer

They kept it very secret.

Mr. Deery

Yes they did. They did it because they didn't want the Japanese to know about it. They were all lined up right there at Pearl Harbor in the West Lock.

Then we shipped out from there. We went to Eniwetok. I believe it was in the Caroline's but I'm not sure. We sat down there for one full month aboard ship and never got off. Then we finally sailed from there to Tinian. We had to go into Saipan because they had a port and they could unload us. Then they took us by landing craft about a mile south of there to Tinian. That's how we got to Tinian.

Mr. Misenhimer

Eniwetok is in the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Deery

Yes, the Marshall Islands. And we stayed there for a whole month. When we finally got to Tinian, I got there around September 2, I believe. They invaded Tinian on July 24. They had some of our guys go in there and they slept in pup tents. When we got there, they had set up tents, 16 X 16 tents. We were up at Ushi Point which was a Japanese airfield. That would have been North Field. We were at North Field until they built West Field for us. When they built West Field, we moved down there and then they started working on the strips up there for the B-29s. That was about November 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were you doing there? When you got there in September what did you do?

Mr. Deery

We were working on setting up the engines. The engines would come in and they wouldn't have any accessories on them like magnetos, starters, and carburetors. We would set them up in a shop. When they planes came in and they needed a 60 hour check, or at 120 hours, I believe they changed the engines.

Mr. Misenhimer

And this was for what kind of airplane?

Mr. Deery

These were for the PB1s and the PB4Y1s. In December or it might have been January they brought in the PB4Y2s, which were the Privateers. It was a B-24 with a single tail, no twin tail. I worked mainly on changing engines. Taking the old ones off and rehooking the new ones on. You had to connect a lot of wires and hoses and all that kind of stuff. We had four men to a crew. We had to use these stands to get up on the plane to take the old engine off and put the new one on.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you live in there?

Mr. Deery

After we went to West Field we lived in Quonset huts; 20 men to a hut. They never kept a log on the land based units. I had to send away to the Navy to get a microfilm and I got the history of this. That is what I am going to be sending to you. It was on the old Photostats and I am telling you it was one heck of a job to read those things. In the dark and light. It was not like a Xerox. I finally got it all together and we got a book together.

Mr. Misenhimer

Before you came to West Field, what did you live in then?

Mr. Deery

Before that was at North Field and that was the 16 X 16 tents. You could put two 8 foot cots on each side. So there were six guys to a guy. Two cots on one side and two cots on the north side, and two cots on the east side. We were 20 men to a hut at West Field in November of 1944. We stayed there until November of 1945. Then we were shipped home. The war was over and we were shipped home. We were there when the two atomic bombs were dropped. We never knew a thing about it until the morning that the *Enola Gay* had dropped the first bomb on August 6<sup>th</sup>. We didn't know anything about it until we read on the bulletin board that the United States had dropped the bomb on Japan that was going to end the war and that the plane that had dropped it was on its way home and would be arriving around noon time. That was the best kept secret I ever knew about.

Then the next day we didn't know they had taken off on the 9<sup>th</sup>, *Bock's Car*. I have a book signed by Tibbits. I have a lot of books. I went out one time to Wendover, New Mexico and Utah. That is where they trained. My wife and I took a trip out there. That is where they did all their training. I met the pilot, or the co-pilot of *Bock's Car*, his name was Fred Olivi. He lives over here in Overland Park, Kansas. I met him at an exhibit where he was signing autographs. He had a German pilot there with him who was with the Nazis. They were sitting there together signing autographs.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back on Tinian, what else did you do there?

Mr. Deery

I met a few ball players. I am a big baseball fan and at that time I met Johnny Mize. He was in our outfit. Big John was head of the recreation hall. He would give us our sporting equipment if we wanted to go out and play a little catch or play a game of baseball or softball. There was also Merrill May who was a ballplayer for the Philadelphia Phillies back around wartime. I also met Hugh Casey who was an old Dodger pitcher. I met him at Kaneohe Bay. I was like a kid getting to see these guys. I wanted to see them so bad. We got to see quite a few of them.

On Tinian before they took Iwo Jima, around Thanksgiving Day of 1944, the Japs came down and hit Saipan first with big bombs. When they came across the channel they hit us with bombs that would explode and emit steel pellets.

Mr. Misenhimer

Fragmentation bombs?

Mr. Deery

Yes, that is what they were. *(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

These fragmentation bombs would put holes in the plane, and then what?

Mr. Deery

They did a lot of damage. Then the metal smithers would have a lot of work to do. One time I remember this guy came in from Saipan and the Marines had set up their antiaircraft guns along the strip. He came in. You could see the red ball on the side and they said, "It looks like we hit him." The next morning we went down to the foot of the strip and there he was sitting in the water with his tail gunner, dead as a door nail. I remember seeing that. Then they used to come down from Iwo Jima and drop bombs on Saipan and come over and strafe us. That was about the length of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

How close were you to the flight lines?

Mr. Deery

We were about maybe 1,000 yards.



Mr. Misenhimer

You were close.

Mr. Deery

Yes, we were close. We had a few planes crash in our area. In fact, I was looking at my book a little while ago and they had taken pictures of the fellows fighting the fires. B-29s had crashed. I remember this fellow Sweeney piloted *Bock's Car*. He said he didn't know what we would do if he had ever gone off the end of the strip. The bombs weren't activated.

Mr. Misenhimer

The fuses weren't set.

Mr. Deery

Yes. When they took off, they had a Navy ordnance officer go up there and put the detonator in there.

Mr. Misenhimer

These crashes, were they on takeoff or when they were coming in?

Mr. Deery

Some of them were on takeoff and some were when they were coming in. One thing too, I have gotten a lot of these books. I have one that is on B-24s and PB4Ys, the Privateer, the PB4Y2, and they never gave us credit. I would look to see if there was any mention of a CASU and there was no mention of a CASU. We never lost a flight. The flight wasn't cancelled because we didn't get the plane ready. That is what bugged me. A fellow named Allen Carey; my mother's maiden name was Carey; he never mentioned the CASUs. He would mention the Plane Captain. The Plane Captains would be reading magazines all the time, but they never worked on the planes. That always bugged me.

Mr. Misenhimer

What does CASU stand for?

Mr. Deery

It stands for Carrier Aircraft Service Unit. Then when the patrol bombers came in, with us, they said it was with CASU 44, they called Combat Aircraft Service Unit and then in parenthesis it had an F, which meant Forward (forward area); which was beyond Hawaii. That was a Combat Aircraft Service Unit.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many CASUs were on Tinian?

Mr. Deery

Just one.

Mr. Misenhimer

Only yours?

Mr. Deery

Only ours. We had fellows come in from CASU 16 and CASU 17 because they were familiar with the big engines. They came in. There were about 100 of them. They were all First Class and Second Class ratings.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many men were in your CASU?

Mr. Deery

I heard there were 1200. I told you that they never kept records of the land based units. They had ship's logs. I tried to get a record of who was in the CASU unit and they wrote and told me they didn't have any records of land based units, which I thought was kind of strange.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, that's very unusual. Did you work on the engines of the B-29s?

Mr. Deery

No. That was a separate unit. They had their own mechanics. We got to know some of them. In fact, I went to a ballgame here in Kansas City one day and I started talking to this usher and I had a hat on and he said, "What service were you in?" I told him I was in the Navy. He said, "Where were you?" I

said, "I was on Tinian Island in the Marianas." He said, "My dad was on Tinian Island and he was with the B-29s." (laugh) That was pretty nice. His father had asked me if I wanted to do what I am doing with you and I never got around to it. But I am glad that you called me.

Mr. Misenhimer

Good. How many other planes besides B-29s did they have on Tinian?

Mr. Deery

We had the PB4Y1s, the PB4Y2s, and the PV1s and towards the end, we were getting PV2s. The PV2 is just kind of a deviation; it was a twin-tail plane, a smaller one.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the PV1?

Mr. Deery

The PV1 was called the Ventura. I am trying to remember what V stood for.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were they used for?

Mr. Deery

They would go down around Yap, which was south of us, south of Guam. They would go down there and hit Yap.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they bombers?

Mr. Deery

Yes, they were bombers, but they had two engines. They were much smaller than the Liberator or the Privateer.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some other things that happened there on Tinian?

Mr. Deery

Once we took Iwo Jima, we had no action from them at all because they couldn't get back to Japan. They used to stop off at Iwo Jima, coming down to refuel, and then do the same thing going back to

Japan. When we took Iwo Jima that helped us with our patrol bombers. We would go up. They could go up and go right into Tokyo Harbor. Then they started going out to the Philippines. In fact, we got one of the service areas, Asiatic Pacific medal; we got a Philippine Liberation medal, which was a surprise to me. Actually, we didn't have that much action. We were fortunate. The last time they hit us was around Christmas of 1944. They would always hit us on the holidays or the holiday eve; like Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year's. That is when they would hit us. But once we took Iwo Jima that was the end of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever get up to the area where the 509<sup>th</sup> was? They were the ones that dropped the atomic bombs.

Mr. Deery

I went up there one time to see a show. I went in there in the area and I saw this Lieutenant and another officer sitting in a jeep. I said to myself, "Gee, that looks like Roman Lipinski." Roman Lipinski was a guy that went to the same high school that I went to. I went over to the jeep and I said, "Your name wouldn't happen to be Roman Lipinski, would it?" First, I saluted him and asked, "You wouldn't happen to be Roman Lipinski that went to high school at Bishop Lockland, would you?" He said, "Yes, that's me." I said, "I went there too. I remember you playing basketball." So we shot the breeze for a while and then I went back to my base. Later on, I was going home one night from work and I was on a subway car and a guy was standing up against the wall with a Homburg and real up-to-date clothes. I looked over there and I thought, "That looks like Roman Lipinski." So I walked over and asked him and sure enough it was him on the subway car. I said to him, "I met you on Tinian Island one night. You were sitting there watching a show one night in a jeep." He said, "Yes, I seem to recall that." I said, "Well here we are again." To make the story short, one night I was talking to a neighbor of mine. She was a woman that lived next door. She said, "My insurance man is coming over tonight, Roman Lipinski." I said, "What?" And it was him again. I haven't seen him since and that was 40 years ago. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

Small world sometimes.

Mr. Deery

I just lost a buddy that was a very good friend of mine. The last day we saw each other was December 1, 1945. We came home from Alameda, California. We were coming back from Tinian. I said so-long to him in Philadelphia. He lived in Philadelphia and I said so-long to him. We never bothered to get each other's address or phone number. I started this CASU 44 Reunion in 1944. At that time I had a computer and I bought a CD that had all the phone numbers in America, the U.S. I would put a guy's name in and if I knew where he lived the last time I saw him, I would put that in and I found my friend Chuck one night. It was right before the reunion. I called up his home phone number and his wife answered the phone and she nearly went nuts when I told her my name. She said, "He has been talking about you for a long, long time." He was out in Portland, Oregon. He came to the reunion. He just passed away in November. He was a wonderful friend. We don't have too many left. This past reunion we went to San Diego. We went on the *Midway*. We had 5 veterans and 22 family members. We used to get 30 or 40 members. Now they are all passing away. I don't know how long we will be able to keep up these reunions.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you some questions. How did you travel from California to Hawaii?

Mr. Deery

Aboard a troop ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that trip over there?

Mr. Deery

It was very good. We didn't have any problems at all. It took us about two or three days to get from Port Hueneme. I remember waking up and seeing Diamond Head. I had seen so many pictures of Diamond Head. I was up on deck, snoozing. All of a sudden I looked up and there was Diamond Head looking down on us. Then when we went to Eniwetok, we were anxious because the Japs were

still in the area with their submarines. We were afraid of being hit with a torpedo. We didn't get any action from them at all.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went to Eniwetok, were you in a convoy with other ships?

Mr. Deery

Yes, we had a convoy. At night they would speed it up.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they zig zag?

Mr. Deery

I don't remember. I would think they did.

Mr. Misenhimer

From Eniwetok to Tinian, was that another ship to over there?

Mr. Deery

It was the same ship. We stayed on that ship that we took from Kaneohe Bay. I don't remember the name. I remember the place where the ship was tied up had a big 'Aloha' sign. I went back later. My son and my daughter paid for a trip for me to go back with my oldest son to Kaneohe Bay in 2005. I went to see the *Arizona* Memorial. On one end is the beginning, the *Arizona* Memorial. The other side, sort of west of that, is the *Missouri*. I got to tour the USS *Missouri* near the end. I have been on the USS *Stennis*. The *Stennis* was on a reunion. We toured the *Stennis*. We were amazed at the size of that carrier. Then I went up to Seattle and they have the moth ball fleet there. We went up there. We saw the *Midway* sitting there, but now the *Midway* is a museum down at San Diego. We saw the *Turner Joy*. We went on the *Turner Joy*, which was from the Vietnam era. I think it had something to do with Tonkin Bay.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were in Hawaii, did you get leave to go into Honolulu?

Mr. Deery

Yes. I went in once. I never was much for liberty. I didn't drink and most of the guys would be drinking. I had taken a pledge not to drink in 1937, when I was 13 years old. Then I told my mother I wouldn't drink until I got out of the Navy. The guys would want my beer. We would get a ration of beer and they would give me their cokes. We had a good deal going there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is there anything else that you can recall from your time over there in World War II?

Mr. Deery

They had these camps on Tinian where they had women and children and older people. They treated the people very good. One time a guy came along and told me to watch his work detail for a minute because he had to do something. One of them started dancing and jigging around. He was talking to me and I didn't know what he was saying. I was telling him his boss would be back in a minute. When the guy finally came back, I told him what this guy had been doing and I said, "I don't know what he wanted." The guy said, "He wanted to go to the bathroom." (laugh) That poor guy, I didn't know what he was saying.

Another time, Archbishop Spellman of New York, he hadn't been appointed Cardinal yet, he came out on a visit to Tinian. I have pictures of that. I got a lot of pictures. Like Betty Hutton. She came out there. She sang her favorite batch of songs. Then Eddie Bracken came out. He had Peggy Ryan with him. She used to be with Donald O'Connor when they had those young people making movies right around the war time. Gertrude Lawrence. She was an opera singer of some kind, or classical singer. I never did see Bob Hope or Bing Crosby.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were these USO Shows?

Mr. Deery

Yes they were. Eddie Bracken had a line up one time. Admiral Greer was the Admiral in charge of the Tinian area. There was a girl dancing and Bracken said, "Now look fellows. Watch what she does. It tells a story. Watch her hands while she is dancing." After the girl stopped dancing, he said to

her, "You will have to do that dance again. Admiral Greer wasn't watching your hands." (laugh)  
Greer got really ticked off and threw him off the island.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you left there in November of 1945, right?

Mr. Deery

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

And came back to where?

Mr. Deery

Came back to Alameda, California. I have the telegram that I sent my folks. I looked at it just the other day. November 25, 1945. "Folks. I arrived in Alameda today. We will probably be home in eight days." That was all of it. You had to watch how many words you used.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you get discharged?

Mr. Deery

I got discharged; that's another story. I got discharged on February 1, 1946. I had put in three full years and a week. I was to report back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard on December 31. I went back and they gave me a liberty for that night. I went back a couple of days later. When I got in this one morning a guy said to me, "Deery, I thought you were going to be discharged and go out to Lido Beach." I said, "Yes, I'm going to be discharged. I only need half a point. I'll have that by the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month." There was a point system then. I had a half-point shy of meeting the minimum. What happened was, I went in and they told me my name was on a draft for Coronado Heights, California. I said, "That can't be." So I went downstairs to look at the list and sure enough, my name was on there to go to California. I went over to the Yeoman and I said to him, "You have a mistake on there. I am getting out in two weeks." He said, "I am not going to make a change in my draft now." I said, "Why are you going to send me out there? You could send me over to Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn." It was only about a half-hour from my house. He said, "Nope. I'm not going to change



it.” They put me on a train, the kind that had bunks. We got out to Coronado Heights. I walked up to the Officer of the Day. He looked at my papers and said, “What the hell are you doing here?” I said, “I don’t know sir. The Yeoman back there didn’t want to listen to me.” He said, “Don’t bother to unpack your bags. You are going back next Tuesday.” (laugh) So I hung around for a week and went back. I told them, “Don’t send me to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Send me to Pier 92 in New York.” (laugh) I tell you, I was really angry.

Mr. Misenhimer

I can imagine.

Mr. Deery

While I was on the train, there was a guy being called out on the public address system. “Prisoner at large, James Wheaton.” I knew a James Wheaton. I thought, “That can’t be Jimmy. He’s a good kid.” I went on through that time and never met him in Brooklyn Navy Yard. I was on the train going out there. I was sleeping one morning and this guy came up to me and said, “Hey Mac, you had better get out to the diner. They are starting to close it.” I looked at him and I said, “Jimmy Wheaton?” He said, “Yes.” It was the guy I grew up with. Little things like that stick with you.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got out, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Deery

No. I took 52/20 for ten weeks. One day I was over at a buddy’s house. His mother was an old Irish lady. She said to the two of us, “Why don’t you guys go out and get a job.” We said, “Okay if that’s what you want.” We got the paper and American Can, which is no longer in existence; they had ‘Machinist – First Class Wanted’. So we went down the next day. He brought his brother with him. The three of us applied for jobs. We told them we were first class machinists. They asked what our experience was. “Aircraft engines.” “Oh no, that is not what we are looking for.” We said, “Do you have any jobs?” They said yes and I got a job as a spoilage collector. I spent 36 years there. I never went to college. I went for about a year and a half at night to Brooklyn College and it was just a waste of my time. I wasn’t getting what I expected so I quit. I decided that I was going to be a

supervisor without the college. I learned the American Can way of accounting and all that. And I did. I was supervisor of the purchase and records department when I retired. I have been retired for 30 years. I retired when I was about 58. Then I worked for about 6 ½ years until I became 65 and could pick up my social security. I worked for Sears as a paint and hardware person.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill for anything?

Mr. Deery

I used it for the year and half that I went to college. Then I also used it to try for Railway Postal Inspector. I got the job with American Can so I didn't bother to follow through with that. That is the only part of the GI Bill that I applied for. I haven't gone to the Veteran's Administration for any medical help.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs from World War II?

Mr. Deery

I did bring home some but I think my wife through them out.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were they?

Mr. Deery

I had part of a Japanese flag that had been burned. We would go around and go up in the cave areas. There were Japs up in there but they wouldn't bother the sailors. They wouldn't come out when they saw the Marines. If they intended to surrender, they would go to a 'white hat'. We found fires burning, the ashes still burning. They hadn't had time to put the fire out. They must have gone further into the cave. They didn't want to come out.

One time my buddy and I were shooting our carbines off against a cliff. This big Marine came out and boy, oh boy he bawled the hell out of us. He told us that we could be bringing out the Japanese to fire on us. We got out of there fast.

The island had banana trees and we used to cut off a big stalk and hang it up in the hut and they had goats there. I used to get a kick out of the farm boys. I am from Brooklyn so I wasn't near any farm animals. There were a few goats around there and some of them had udders, or whatever they called the thing that holds the milk. They couldn't walk because they were so full of milk. These guys would go up there and milk them like they were milking a cow. It was really something.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Deery

The Red Cross was there and I never did like them because we used to have to pay for our sodas. We never got anything from them; a deck of cards, maybe. The Red Cross wasn't what I would call a good outfit for us.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Deery

I may have. I remember hearing a woman on there but I don't know if it was Tokyo Rose or not. There were a lot of women, Japanese women, that were trying to imitate her.

Mr. Misenhimer

On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt died. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. Deery

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the reaction when you heard that?

Mr. Deery

As far as I am concerned, as I told you before I am a Republican, one way or the other it didn't bother me.

Mr. Misenhimer

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. Deery

Yes, we heard that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any kind of a celebration?

Mr. Deery

No, no celebration. Happy to know that we would have a lot more guys coming over to the Pacific. I tell you, I never was so thankful as when they dropped those two atomic bombs, or whatever they were. That was a blessing.

Mr. Misenhimer

When Japan surrendered on August 15, did you have a celebration then?

Mr. Deery

Yes. We had a good time. Me with my coke and my buddies with their beer.

Mr. Misenhimer

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Deery

I got the American Theater, the Asiatic-Pacific. I got the Victory medal. I got the Philippine Liberation and I got the Good Conduct medal for three full years in. I still have them. I am hoping to put them in a frame before I go to Great Beyond.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you ever in any typhoons?

Mr. Deery

Yes. Just before we left there was a typhoon that hit Tinian. That is another story that I want to tell you. We had a Lieutenant Commander that came in there rather late from Farragut, Idaho. He was very strict. When he would be mustering us after a day's work, we would be covered with grease and he would tell us we were the sloppiest looking group he had ever seen in his life. Nobody liked him. We had a photography little gizmo built up on the back of the hut; where we could take pictures and print the film. We used to get our paper from some of the squadron people and we would print all of

our pictures. This guy came one day and he wanted a set. We told him, "Sorry Mr. Danner you had to be here when it happened." What happened was this one guy was sending home a box and he put a false bottom in the box and Mr. Danner stuck a tape measure down inside and on the outside of the box and told the guy and it teed him off because he caught the guy. He had a lot of pictures down inside the false bottom. He wouldn't let him send them home.

He was the only officer that we had any problems with.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is there anything else that you recall from your time in World War II?

Mr. Deery

I'm trying to remember if there is anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do on Tinian from the time the war was over in August until you came home in November?

Mr. Deery

They were still flying. The squadrons were still there. The planes were all in revetments. I was going to tell you too: I told you about the one guy that was killed at Norfolk in that explosion. I had another buddy named John Craig. He was in a squadron on Tinian. One day they went out and they never came back. This guy was from Scranton, Pennsylvania. He was a real savior of mine. We used to have boxing when we were in Norfolk. This one guy would always pick me out and take a run at me and knock the hell out of me. I was only about 115 pounds. He would beat me up. One day Johnny Craig, he was a professional boxer before the war. He saw him doing it and he said, "Hey Demino, how about you and I going a round." "Oh anytime. Anytime." The guy was from Brooklyn. I never saw such a lesson be taught. Demino. He would hit him with a left jab. That thing was coming out there like a snake's tongue. Demino's nose must have been broken. A couple of days later it was all swelled up. He tried to pick a fight with me again and a buddy that was with me said, "No you will fight with me." He hit him one shot in the nose and blood went all over the place. I had some good protectors there, my shipmates.

If you notice, I never was attached to a ship. I was always attached to a Naval Air Station or a land station.

*End of Interview*

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September 12, 2012

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