



Personal info

Full name

MAHONEY, John Francis

Date of birth

15 May 1923

Age

21

Place of birth

Norfolk, Litchfield County, Connecticut

Hometown

Norfolk, Litchfield County, Connecticut

Military service

Service number

31312836

Rank

Staff Sergeant

Unit

**700th Bombardment Squadron,
445th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Distinguished Service Cross,
Purple Heart**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

6 September 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
D	31	3

Immediate family

Members

Matthew G. Mahoney (father)

May O. Mahoney (mother)

Malcolm Mahoney (brother)

William Mahoney (brother)

Richard Mahoney (brother)

Daniel Mahoney (brother)

David Mahoney (brother)

Wayne Mahoney (brother)

Plane data

Serial number

41-29306

Data

Type: B-24H

Destination: Hamm, Germany

Mission: Bombing of the marshalling yard

MACR: 4172

More information

The airplane was on a mission on 22 April 1944, when it was hit by flak on the way to the target. Bombs were dropped and the plane turned and headed back home. Two engines began to fail and the pilot ordered to bail out.

Statement of 1st Lt Gerald E. Rodenbaugh:

'I heard Lt Sneed thanking the fighters for their support and saying goodbye. He had two engines feathered when he had reached Ghent. He was ordering his men to bail out.'

The plane crashed in the garden of the Castle of Spiere.

S/Sgt John Mahoney and S/Sgt James Cockriel were sheltered by the Belgians at Waregem, Belgium. When the news about the landing in Normandy reached Waregem, they got restless and they decided to join the Secret Army of Waregem. On 5 September the Secret Army decided to leave the town to protect the inhabitants. When they stumbled upon a patrol of retreating Germans the day after, this incident would become fatal. According to a statement of Father Rathe, priest of Ingooigem, Mahoney tried to warn an approaching British spearhead of the proximity of strong German forces. Mahoney and Cockriel were surrounded and machine-gunned by the Germans, execution style. Sgt Cockriel survived but John Mahoney died almost immediately.

S/Sgt Mahoney was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for his actions. The citation stated: ' For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving as Gunner on a B-24 Heavy Bomber in the 700th Bombardment Squadron, 445th Bombardment Group (H), while participating in bombing missions from April through September 1944, against enemy ground targets in the European Theater of Operations. The personal courage and zealous devotion to duty displayed by Staff Sergeant Mahoney on this occasion have upheld the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 8th Air Force, and the United States Army Air Forces.'

Together with the executed resistance members, he is remembered on the memorial that is situated at the place where they were killed.

Photos



Source of information: Raf Dyckmans, Peter Schouteten, Terry Hirsch, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.archives.gov, www.fold3.com - MACR, www.ancestry.com - U.S., Headstone and interment Record, <http://blog.seniorennet.be>, <https://taxichauffeur.wordpress.com>, WWII Draft Card, 1940 US Census

Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Patrick Lernout