



Millville Army Air Field Museum

'America's First Defense Airport'

April 2018

## Museum unveils mural on original WWII Link Trainer Building

The Millville Army Air Field Museum unveiled its fourth WWII-themed mural in Millville Executive Airport's historic district on July 12, 2017.

The curtain was dropped on the new mural depicting the Link Trainer — the only flight simulator used from the 1920s through the early 1950s to teach pilots how to fly under poor visibility conditions. The mural is painted on the original WWII Link Trainer Building that contains a fully operational Link Trainer, one of just a handful left in the world.

The museum owns two Link Trainers. The one in the Link Building is of the 1950s era. Another, a WWII-era Link, is located in the main museum

building, formerly the Millville Army Air Base headquarters.

Link Trainer is a name that was given to an innovative series of flight simulators that were designed and built by Edwin Albert Link at his family business in Binghamton, NY. The Link Trainer became famous during World War II when thousands were produced to help train pilots for war. The United States Army and Navy alone purchased 7,000 of these trainers.

In its day, and for more than 30 years, the Link Trainer was the premier equipment used for instrument flight instruction, up until the introduction of computerized simulators.

*Continued on page 5*



Millville Army Air Field Museum volunteers Tim Jacobsen and Dick Goldstine drop the curtain on the new mural on the historic WWII Link Trainer Building at Millville Executive Airport at the dedication ceremony held on July 12, 2017. The building houses an original, operational Link Trainer, one of just a handful in the world today. The Link was used to train pilots to fly by instruments, in the dark and in poor visibility, for more than 30 years before the development of computerized flight simulators.

## Crowds thrilled by US Navy Blue Angels at Millville Airshow 2017!

**More than 50,000 people enjoyed awesome aviation performances at the 2017 Millville Airshow held on Memorial Day Weekend!**

The Millville Army Air Field Museum hosted the US Navy Blue Angels along with a list of aviation performers and displays for this spectacular event recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the dedication of America's First Defense Airport.



Millville Mayor Michael Santiago (left), Cumberland County Freeholder Director Joe Derella (right) and Lisa Jester, Millville Airshow 2017 director, welcomed F-18 pilot Lt. Brandon Hempler at the arrival of the US Navy Blue Angels Jet Demonstration Team on May 24, 2017.



"It is so exciting and gratifying to see the community come out and support our airshow in so many ways," expressed Lisa Jester, airshow director. "First, our sponsors, then our many public servants and first responders, and then, of course, the many, many visitors — enthusiasts and families, young and old, who come out to experience aviation at its best and support our museum!"

The Airshow featured the US Navy Blue Angels jet demonstration team consisting of six air combat F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets flown by America's finest pilots, who came from their headquarters in Pensacola, Florida. Millville Executive Airport was the only performance location in New Jersey, Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania in 2017!

*Continued on page 12*

**A salute to all American veterans!**



For more about the Veterans Appreciation Day events, turn to page 6.



MAAFM received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of the Department of State.

## MAAFM Directors/ Officers

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Pilot, Flight Instructor, Aviation Art Collector

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**Kimberly Wood**

Cumberland County Deputy Administrator

## MAAFM Staff

**Lisa Jester, Executive Director**

**Joan Legg, Display Coordinator, Donations**

**Patty Oliver, Receptionist, Memberships**

## President's Message



A recent Strategic Meeting retreat gave our board the opportunity to think about the museum's next 30 years and discuss goals, opportunities and challenges facing our 501(c)(3) organization.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is blessed to have such a strong board of directors who are providing sound direction to ensure its existence into the future.

One of the museum's main goals is to raise funds to restore and maintain the green Hangar #8 at Millville Executive Airport. To us, the preservation of this WWII historical building at the airport is critical, but certainly no easy task. This 75-year-old structure has been unoccupied for quite some time, making for an expensive restoration.



Like most non-profit organizations, we find raising money is increasingly more challenging, as funding grants are quite competitive. A capital campaign is expected to be in motion soon to help the museum pursue this multi-million-dollar restoration goal.

Our main mission, however, remains the same — to preserve and share the Millville Army Air Field's amazing World War II history. Some 10,000 men and women served at America's First Defense Airport, which was used as a P-47 pilot training base. The majority of the 1500 pilots that trained here were then shipped off to England to fight in the European Theatre and help secure the future of America.

The museum is very fortunate to have such a strong support group, that includes the Delaware River and Bay Authority, City of Millville and Big Sky Aviation. They have all been instrumental in helping the museum remain admission free. We also greatly appreciate the local community's wonderful support of our airshows and especially last Memorial Day's airshow featuring the US Navy Blue Angels. We, as a museum, are honored and proud to have the opportunity to host such an elite military jet team that has enabled the museum to make money and allow it to continue its mission.

Another goal that remains important to the museum is making sure the area's school children get the opportunity to visit and see first hand the many displays and artifacts of the Millville Army Air Field Museum and experience the rich WWII history of America's First Defense Airport.

The museum and its board of directors are excited to pursue these important goals and look forward to a bright future.

— Chuck Wyble



## Executive Director's Report

2017 was an exciting year for our museum, especially as we hosted the United States Navy Blue Angels Jet Demonstration Team on Memorial Day Weekend! So many special things took place on that weekend with special

friends, veterans, sponsors, government officials, first responders, and, of course, the many visitors making this outstanding community event successful. I personally thank everyone involved for their assistance, dedication and hard work.

Another highlight of 2017 was the unveiling of our new mural on the historic Link Trainer Building. As part of this dedication ceremony, we honored volunteer member Ron Frantz, who served as our link trainer director for many years. As Ron is no longer able to help with this, we want to be sure he knows how much his work was appreciated. We thank Ron for keeping our link trainer well maintained and educating students and visitors over the years.

Murals continue to define the history of the Millville Army Air Field at Millville Executive Airport and I am pleased to announce that we received a grant from the Cumberland County Cultural and Heri-

tage Commission that is designated for a new mural. It will be located on the side wall of the Henry E. Wyble Research Library and Education Center and its design will salute the work of the base fire department during WWII. This will be the sixth mural in the museum's historic complex.

We are pleased to welcome new Rowan University interns Matthew Buchberg, Michelle Mesiano and Brooke McGovern. They will assist museum staff with social media and marketing programs. We value their interest, ideas and enthusiasm. We also continue to recognize our Millville High School students who participate in our Veteran Interview Project and at museum events. Students play a critical role in keeping our museum vital and we thank them all for their participation.

As I enter my 14th year at the museum I can honestly say I love my job because of the people and the history and am so proud to be part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.

— Lisa Jester



## Millville Army Air Field Museum

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## 'Thunderbolt' Newsletter Staff

**Donna Vertolli, Editor**

*Contributors:*

Lisa Jester, Jerry Carey, Bob Trivellini, Chuck Wyble

*Photographic contributions:*

Lisa Jester, Joan Legg, Bob Trivellini, Donna Vertolli

# Museum welcomes WWII veteran B-26 Flight Engineer back to Millville Airport

The museum was honored and excited to have George Washington Whitehouse, a 98-year-old WWII Army Air Corps veteran from Emmaus, Pennsylvania, who served at Millville during the war, return for a visit on Saturday, February 24, 2018.

Whitehouse is the first Millville veteran to visit the museum who flew in the B-26 Marauder while stationed here. He was a flight engineer/crew chief who spent nearly 15 months serving at Millville.

The B-26 was used to pull a massive mesh tow target. P-47 fighter pilots would practice their gunnery skills by shooting at it. In order to tell who had hit the target, each pilot used different color painted bullets. One of the few remaining tow targets in existence from the WWII era is hanging up in the museum.

Whitehouse arrived with his family, three sons and one daughter, with their spouses, to see the museum and the airport with its historic buildings, and to be video interviewed by students and museum members for the national Library of Congress. Recordings of his wartime experiences will be a priceless asset to the museum and important documentation for future generations.

FYI, George Washington Whitehouse had just turned 98 on February 22, President Washington's birthday, hence the name given to him by his mother at birth!

We truly want to thank the Whitehouse family for taking the time to visit the museum, and especially George for offering valuable insight into life at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII. Please come visit again!



George Washington Whitehouse receives his "Life Member" name plate from Bob Trivellini, museum vice president.



George describes the power and reliability of the Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine, the one used in the B-26.



WWII veteran George Washington Whitehouse, 98, from Emmaus, PA, surrounded by family members



George Whitehouse's daughter, Lynn Birney, points to the name of another WWII veteran from Millville that her father remembered.



George explains the role of the B-26 and the tow target in training P-47 pilots.



George Whitehouse in front of his B-26 at Millville during WWII



George with a model of a B-26 Marauder

Museum volunteer Rachel Corma (below), Rowan University graduate with a masters in history, assisted with the interview for the Library of Congress.



WWII veteran George Washington Whitehouse with his interview team (left to right): Rachel Corma and Millville High School students Alexandra Kukal, Bryce Brunetta and Andrew Hickman.



Photo of a B-26 Marauder at Millville courtesy of George W. Whitehouse



# MHS students tour museum and historic complex

Twenty students from Millville Senior High School enjoyed a tour of the museum on March 8, 2017, and had the opportunity to spend time with WWII veterans Walt Kocielski from Millville and Owen Garrison from Bridgeton, who shared their incredible wartime personal experiences.

Students also received a special tour of the original Link Trainer Building in the museum's historic complex. Here they were greeted by Ron Frantz,

museum veteran volunteer and Link Trainer director, who explained the operation of the "Link," which was the flight simulator used from the 1920s to 1950s, prior to computerized training equipment. Students had the chance to try their hand at computer flight simulation. They also toured the military vehicles and aircraft outside in the museum's courtyard. The student field trip was organized by Dan Lalli and Mike Schenck, MHS history teachers.



MHS students with US Marine Corps WWII veteran Walter Kocielski, tour guide (center), are, l-r: Nakaiya Butler, Kapree Holden, Tiyon Bryant, Marcus Perez, Austin Bartleson, James Watson, Paul Parker, Kocielski, Evonte Newton, Nahilea Ortiz, Samantha Williams, and Dominic Reed.

Left to right: Kiyanni Debarry, Mr. Dan Lalli, Luis Vargas, Helena Zeller, Jada Rainey, Kemar Yancy, Alden Simpkins, and Sequan Brown



Left to right: Teacher Mr. Dan Lalli with students Samantha Williams, Evonte Newton, and Austin Bartleson at the newer model flight simulator



US Navy WWII Veteran Owen Garrison served as one of the tour guides for students.



Millville High School student Samantha Williams takes a turn in the original, operational Link Trainer.



MHS student Paul Parker holds an MRE (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) used by the military. Parker's brother is a Specialist (E-4) in the Army and sometimes comes back with MREs when he drills at Fort Dix.

# Link Trainer director Ron Frantz recognized

The museum was pleased to honor Ron Frantz, longtime director of the Link Trainer that is located in the original WWII Link Trainer Building at Millville Executive Airport.

A longtime museum volunteer from Millville, Ron, a US Army veteran of the Cold War era, has provided countless hours to maintaining and displaying the museum's historic "Link."

The museum acquired this Link in 2002, and Ron, a retired electrician, along with Don Kinney, a flight instructor from northern New Jersey, helped restore it. The restoration project took about two years to complete. You can rest assured that Ron Frantz knows the Link from the inside out.

"It's an important piece of aviation equipment and of WWII history," points out Ron. "With routine attention and repairs of its out-of-production parts it still does the job with reasonable accuracy and efficiency even though it is nearly 70 years old."

Ron has given countless demonstrations of the Link's capability over the years — to both young and old audiences.

"People are fascinated by the Link Trainer," says Ron, "and part of the total experience is being in the original WWII Link Trainer Building. Preserving both the Link and the building is another important way that the museum honors the WWII aviation history here at Millville Airport."

*The museum honors and thanks Ron Frantz for his dedicated contributions of time and talent!*



Ron Frantz, Link Trainer director, received a certificate of appreciation from museum president Chuck Wyble (left).

Right and below left: Ron Frantz describes the instruments in the Link Trainer and explains how a pilot's flight is monitored using a "crab" that follows the course over a map of the given territory.



Ron Frantz proudly takes a seat in the cockpit of the Link.



# Mural unveiled on historic Link Trainer Building Continued from page 1

“We are honored to unveil this new mural located in the museum’s historic complex at the corner of Peterson and Leddon Streets at Millville Executive Airport,” announced Chuck Wyble, MAAFM president. “It highlights a very important historic artifact displayed in an equally historic building, where 1,500 pilots received integral flight training during WWII. We are proud to underscore its historic importance to visitors.”

Approximately 50 guests, including city and county officials, attended the unveiling of the mural, which was created by Sam Donovan, mural artist from Woodstown, NJ. This is the fifth mural created by Donovan that highlights the important WWII history at the Millville Army Air Field. The first, Millville’s WWII ‘Wall of Remembrance,’ was created and dedicated in 1998 and continues to be displayed on the north face of Millville’s City Hall building located at High and Main Streets (Rte. 49). It was the vision of WWII veteran B-24 gunner and community leader George M. Curio and sponsored by the MAAFM.

In the years that followed, murals were added in two locations at Millville Executive Airport and one at the original WWII Bosesight Range that



*Lisa Jester, executive director of the Millville Army Air Field Museum, welcomed more than 50 guests to the dedication of the new mural on the historic WWII Link Trainer Building at Millville Executive Airport.*

was part of the Millville Army Air Base but is located on the property of New Jersey Motorsports Park.

“We thank Sam Donovan for his incredible artistic talent and unique depictions of Millville’s WWII history. His work is awesome and truly tells the Millville story visually,” said Wyble. “We also thank Matt Pisarski and the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission for assisting with funding for these very informative and educational murals.”

As part of the Link Trainer mural dedication ceremony, WWII veteran P-47 pilot Charles Osborne, from Laurel Springs, NJ, spoke about his experiences in the Link Trainer. Osborne did his advanced gunnery training at the Millville Army Air Field in 1943.

*Charles Osborne, of Laurel Springs, NJ, tells how he trained in a Link Trainer during WWII to be able to fly solely by instruments. Osborne was a P-47 pilot who served in the US Army Air Corps, trained at the Millville Army Air Field and went on to fly 26 missions in Europe.*



*After the dedication ceremony, Charles Osborne, WWII veteran P-47 pilot who trained at Millville, climbed up in the Link Trainer and gave it a spin. “Ozzie,” now 93, felt real comfortable back in the cockpit!*

“Learning to fly by instruments only was one of the most important parts of flight training for all pilots,” noted Osborne. “I remember training in the Link in this very building. The instruction I received here prepared me for combat missions overseas.”

Also offering more information about the history of the Link Trainer were Bob Trivellini, Millville Army Air Field Museum vice president, and Shoanne Seijas, a Millville High School graduate and longtime student volunteer, who now studies anthropology at Stockton University.

Funding for the Link Trainer Mural project was made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Cumberland County Board of Chosen Freeholders through the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

“The MAAFM has made a commitment to keep its Link Trainer safe and operational,” added Wyble. “Visitors can view the trainer by appointment and those who wish to experience it may do so for a donation.”



*The new mural on the original Link Trainer Building in the historic complex at Millville Airport with the P-47 Thunderbolt commemorative mural in the background.*



*Millville Army Air Field Museum president Chuck Wyble (fourth from left) thanks Sam Donovan, mural artist from Woodstown, NJ, at the dedication. Also pictured (left to right): Joe Derella, Cumberland County freeholder director; Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director; and Matt Pisarski, director of the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission.*



*Shoanne Seijas, Millville High School graduate and longtime student volunteer for the Millville Army Air Field Museum, spoke about the history of the Link Trainer flight simulator.*

# 16th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

WWII veteran Tim Kiniry, of Minotola, NJ, was the featured speaker at the Millville Army Air Field Museum's 16th Veterans Appreciation Day held on November 4, 2017. More than 200 visitors, young and old, attended to honor the service of all veterans at this special commemorative event.

With the help of Kiniry the museum featured a tribute to Military Medical Staff, honoring all veterans who served in the medical field. Kiniry, now 96 years old, spoke about his experiences as a medic in the US Army from 1942 to 1945. He was with the 45th Evacuation Hospital attached to the First Army and then the Third Army at the end of the war. Kiniry served as a medic at the Battle of the Bulge and other European Theatre battles. He treated prisoners at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp after it was liberated.

"The museum salutes America's veterans of all wars at our unique commemorative ceremony at Millville Airport," said Robert Trivellini, MAAFM vice president and educational coordinator. "This year, we offered a special tribute to the men and women who served in the medical professions in the military. America's veteran medics, doctors, and nurses made tremendous contributions throughout history — saving lives both on the front lines and off. We thank veteran Tim Kiniry for offering insights from his personal experiences to help us better understand the role of military medical personnel during WWII."

Dr. Frank DeMaio from Vineland, NJ, a retired physician and longtime area historian, and his daughter, Dr. Marlene DeMaio from Philadelphia, PA, also contributed to the event, offering enlightened information about the military medical field. Dr. Marlene DeMaio is a retired captain, in the Medical Corps of the US Navy. She talked about medical advancements, with so many developed during WWII and the Vietnam War. Reaching back to early American military history, Dr. Frank DeMaio presented his collection of Civil War medical instruments, a display he created just for the day. He shared his expertise on the topic.

"We were honored to have Dr. Frank DeMaio and his daughter Dr. Marlene DeMaio be part of the military medical theme at Veterans Appreciation Day," noted Trivellini. "Their knowledge and insights were both interesting and fascinating. On behalf of the museum, we thank them for their participation."

The museum was proud once again to have more than a dozen area WWII veterans attend and be recognized. Numerous other veterans of all American conflicts were part of this special day. Keeping with tradition, the event also featured student re-enactors and youth members of the civil air patrol.

"Special thanks goes out to the students from the Millville Public Schools and the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol who helped us 'entertain the troops' and took part in the commemorative ceremony," said Joan Legg, MAAFM student program coordinator.

Displays on the museum grounds included re-enactment groups, military vehicles, antique automobiles, an A-4 Skyhawk, the C-23 Short Sherpa, and model airplane exhibits.

The 11am ceremony included a presentation of the colors by Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland, a special musical presentation by the Millville High School Chamber Choir, and Taps performed by Millville High School student Evonte Newton. Prayers were offered for veterans both alive and deceased. In commemoration, there was a wreath laying and moment of silence.

We thank our government officials who attended this event and helped honor our veterans. Included were Congressman Frank LoBiondo, Senator Jeff Van Drew, Assemblymen Bob Andrzejczak and Bruce Land, Cumberland County Freeholder Director Joe Derella, and Millville Mayor Michael Santiago.

"The Millville Army Air Field Museum is dedicated to honoring veterans. Veterans Appreciation Day offers us the opportunity to educate and entertain the community using the talents and energy of our young people," says Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director. "Together we recognize and honor the valuable role of America's veterans and thank them for their many contributions and sacrifices."

Veterans Appreciation Day featured a FREE "Canteen" lunch for all visitors, sponsored by Verna's Flight Line Restaurant and Catering, who donated all of the food and drinks for the event. Special thanks to both Verna's Flight Line, and to South Jersey Paper Products for donating paper products.



Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland presented the colors.



WWII veteran Tim Kiniry from Minotola, NJ, keynote speaker for VAD 2017



Lariha Cottrell, soloist for the MHS Chamber Choir, sang "God Bless America."



Left to right: WWII veteran and guest speaker Tim Kiniry from Minotola; Patty Oliver, museum membership chair; Michelle Malave, Patty's daughter; and Walter Kocielski, WWII veteran and museum docent

Millville High School Chamber Choir



Tribute bagpiper Jim Rembisz played the official song for each branch of the armed forces.

# celebrates military medical staff



Millville High School students served as "Donut Dollies" in WWII-period uniforms. Pictured left to right: Alexandra Kukal, Amanda Stellwag, and Lora Harris.



MHS student Evonte Newton was happy to meet WWII veteran Walter Kocielski.



Dr. Frank DeMaio of Vineland describes his display of Civil War medical instruments.



Dr. Marlene DeMaio from Philadelphia talked to a veteran about medical advancements in the military.



Congressman Frank LoBiondo addressed veterans and visitors.



WWII veterans Jerry Gillespie, 8th AF, and Walter Kocielski, USMC



Michelle Malave of Millville, dressed in a vintage Navy uniform, greets a US Army veteran.



View of the outdoor ceremony at Veterans Appreciation Day 2017



Members of the Cumberland County Civil Air Patrol who participated in Veterans Appreciation Day 2017. The cadets are (left to right) Shawn Ronan, Wyatt Harrison, Tadden Rempel, Harrison Bruck, Jacob Currey, Victor Morales, and Matthew Currey.



Donut Dolly Amanda Stellwag served up the sweets to visiting veterans!



Warren Kepner (center) and Ralph Williams (right) were both B-17 guys stationed in Foggia, Italy. They are talking with Mike Jordan (left), a World War II Navy veteran from Vineland.



Millville High School student Samantha Wilson helped serve up the free "Canteen" lunch to visiting veterans and their families.



One of many visiting veterans who took time to look at the displays at the museum



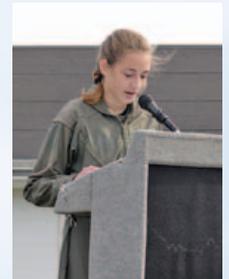
MHS student Kayla Grablow greeted veterans as they arrived.



WWII veteran P-47 pilot Charles Osborne from Laurel Springs, NJ, who trained at Millville



Left to right: MHS students Joei Sutton, Samantha Wilson, Kayla Grablow, Lora Harris



MHS student Alexandra Kukal read the list of 14 pilots who died while training at the Millville Air Base during WWII.



Millville Mayor Michael Santiago, Lisa Jester, museum executive directors; Joe Derella, Cumberland County Freeholder Director; and Chuck Wyble, museum president



Millville High School student Montana Silvers welcomed veterans with a commemorative medal.



Millville High School student re-enactors who participated in Veterans Appreciation Day 2017



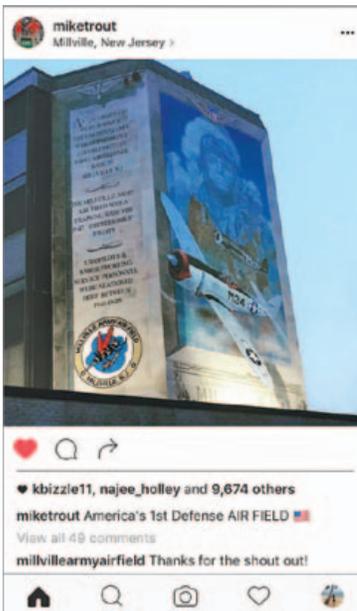
*Introducing...*

## The new Thunderbolts team logo

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Education of Millville, New Jersey, has adopted a new logo for its **Thunderbolts** sports teams. The redesign was done by Nike, Inc., through an affiliation with Mike Trout, baseball superstar, who hails from Millville.

Trout is a center fielder for the Los Angeles Angels. He is a six-time MLB All-Star, and received the American League Most Valuable Player award in 2014 and 2016.

### Thanks, Mike Trout!



Mike Trout proudly shares his pride in Millville's WWII history on Instagram

*We salute the Thunderbolts of yesterday, today and the future!*



The new logo on turf shoes that were given to the MHS baseball team by Mike Trout and Nike.



The **Thunderbolts Sports Teams of Millville** were proudly given their name in 1945 in honor of the WWII **P-47 Thunderbolt** fighter planes that flew over Millville from 1941 to 1945. The Thunderbolt was the primary aircraft used for pilot training at the Millville Army Air Base — America's First Defense Airport — during WWII. P-47 Thunderbolts played an integral role in the success of numerous air battles in both the European and Pacific Theatres of conflict.

Ned Cowgill, whose son George played on the 1945 Millville High School football team, is credited with originating the idea of making the P-47 Thunderbolt the team mascot. This served as a way to memorialize the air field's important role in city, national and world history, and to honor the 14 pilots who lost their lives while serving at Millville. The name Thunderbolts was publicly announced by local sports columnist Dave Gifford in the October 23, 1945, issue of the local newspaper, *The Millville Republican*.

The **Thunderbolt** was a symbol of strength and durability in its many missions during WWII and has continued over the years to reflect those virtues in the sports teams of Millville, NJ.

## Former MAAFAM student volunteer now flies the F-15 Eagle

We are very proud to announce that Matthew Riggins, who was a student volunteer at the museum, participating in the Congressional Awards Program in 2008, is now a United States Air Force 1st Lieutenant flying the F-15 Eagle!

Lt. Riggins, from Dorchester, NJ, graduated from Millville High School in 2010 and Virginia Tech in 2014. He is currently stationed at Okinawa, Japan. Matthew is the son of Roger and Alice Riggins.



*At the Millville Army Air Field Museum we like to take some credit for inspiring Matt's interest in aviation and serving his country.*

**Thank you for your service, Lt. Matthew Riggins!**

## 2018 MAAFAM Calendar of Events

**June 12, September 11, December 11** (Tuesdays)

**Movie Nights** featuring special veteran speakers

**Where:** Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum

**Time:** 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Free. Limited seating capacity of 50. *Call to reserve your seat.*

**August 29 thru August 31** (Wednesday-Friday)

**Wings of Freedom Tour – Collings Foundation**

**B-17, B-24, B-25, and P-51 Tours and Rides Available**

**Where:** Millville Airport

For Flight Reservations call 800-568-8924

or visit [www.cfdn.org](http://www.cfdn.org) for additional information

**September 7** (Friday)

**Golf Tournament to benefit the MAAFAM**

**Where:** White Oaks Country Club

2951 Dutch Mill Road, Newfield, NJ

**Time:** 12:00 noon check-in 1:00 pm shotgun start

\$100 includes greens fees, carts, dinner, and raffle ticket!.

**November 3** (Saturday)

**17th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day**

**Where:** Millville Army Air Field Museum

**Time:** 10:00 am

Free: All veterans and general public invited to attend.

11:00 am Ceremony. Canteen lunch for all! "Rain or Shine"

**November 7** (Wednesday)

**50-50 Cash Raffle (only 500 tickets available)**

**Where:** Millville Army Air Field Museum

First prize \$10,000; or one of 5 prizes of \$500 (Prize amounts based on all 500 tickets sold)

Cost: \$50.00 per ticket. *Call for more information.*

**December 7** (Friday)

**Annual Museum Membership Christmas Party**

**Where:** MAAFAM Conference Room

**Time:** 5:00 pm (covered dish) "Toys For Tots" Drop Off at Museum

**Note:** Dates and prices are subject to change.

## *A special day for two very special people...*

# WWII veteran Owen Garrison and his wife Flo

Museum volunteers Flo and Owen Garrison from Bridgeton, NJ, were very special guests at the commissioning of America's new aircraft carrier, the USS *Gerald R. Ford*, which took place on July 22, 2017.

Thanks to special planning carried out by museum board member and US Navy veteran Dave McCarthy, Flo and Owen were able to make the trip to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, and be honored guests at the ceremony aboard ship.

The USS *Gerald R. Ford* is the lead ship of her class of United States Navy supercarriers. It is named after the 38th president of the United States, Gerald Ford, whose World War II naval service included combat duty aboard the light aircraft carrier *Monterey* in the Pacific Theatre.

Owen was aboard the *Monterey* with then Lt. Gerald Ford during the horrific Typhoon Cobra, more famously known as Halsey's Typhoon, which hit on December 17, 1944. There were 100-mph winds and 80- to 100-foot waves. Owen credits Ford's heroic actions for saving the ship.

"He saved my life," said Owen. "He saved many lives. When we were told to abandon ship, young Lt. Gerald Ford led a group of men down to the engine room and restored one of the damaged boilers, enough to get the ship running, so that it could limp back to a safe harbor. We all would have died without the determination of Gerald Ford."

There were 790 men lost during Halsey's Typhoon. The USS *Monterey* lost just eight of approximately 1,800 men onboard, but there were many injuries.

Truly important history. And... important history recognized by Dave McCarthy when he began the process of contacting the Navy League to acquire a

special invitation for Seaman 1st Class Owen Garrison and his wife Flo to attend the commissioning of the new aircraft carrier.

And history was made again when the invitation came through and Owen and Flo, escorted by Dave and his wife Joann, were guests aboard for the commissioning.

Owen Garrison was the only WWII veteran who served aboard the USS *Monterey* with Gerald Ford who attended this distinguished ceremony.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is very honored to have Owen Garrison as a member and volunteer and so happy that he was able to make this trip and be recognized for his service during WWII.



*US Navy WWII veteran Owen Garrison and wife Flo at the commissioning ceremony in Norfolk, VA.*



*Flo and Owen Garrison with Linda Erman (center) of the United States Navy League*



*USS Gerald R. Ford*

### **The MAAFM proudly honors Flo and Owen Garrison and thanks them for their many years of volunteer service as our Saturday docents.**

Flo and Owen have opened the museum each Saturday for more than five years, welcoming visitors and providing information. Owen has given countless tours and interviews recounting his experiences during WWII as a Seaman First Class on the USS *Monterey*.

*Many, many thanks go out to our museum friends Flo and Owen!*



*Commissioning ceremony of the USS Gerald R. Ford, July 22, 2017, Norfolk, VA*

# WWII aviator's helmet tells a heroic story

The Millville Army Air Field Museum was privileged to have a very special historic WWII artifact on display that tells a story of skill, bravery, and honor — one that made the young men of “the greatest generation” such true heroes.

Anthony C. Isabella of Mullica Hill, NJ, and family members provided notable historic items for a display at the museum that featured his father's (US Army Air Corps Lt. Anthony A. Isabella) WWII aviator helmet that has a story of its own.

The steel-lined helmet, clearly showing three shrapnel hits (top right), saved the senior Isabella's life and that of eight crewmen on his B-17 Flying For-



*Anthony C. Isabella talks about his father, WWII veteran Anthony A. Isabella, and the helmet that saved his life and the lives of eight of his B-17 crewmen.*

ress, *Leading Lady*. Isabella was the pilot of that plane when it was severely damaged by fighter aircraft after it had bombed a target in Germany. Many crew members were wounded, Isabella himself critically wounded, and the B-17 was out of control and in a steep dive. Thanks to his helmet, Isabella



*Lisa Jester, museum director, and Anthony C. Isabella of Mullica Hill, NJ, hold a display of medals belonging to Isabella's father.*

recovered enough to pull his aircraft out of the dive. Realizing that the wounded men would be unable to bail out, Lt. Isabella flew his plane back to England and made a successful crash landing, saving nine lives including his own.



Lt. Isabella spent the next 14 months in the hospital and rehab. He suffered the loss of his left eye and the hearing in his left ear, among other injuries.

For his heroism in saving the lives of eight members of his flight crew, Lt. Isabella was awarded the Purple Heart, a European/African/Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with One Battle Star, a WWII Victory Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation Silver Star, and an Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters. Isabella served from 1940 to 1944 with the 305th Bomb Group, 356th Squadron of the 8th Air Force. He passed away in 1994 at the age of 77.

Lt. Isabella's helmet was on loan from the National Museum of the Air Force through the Air Mobility Command Museum at Dover Air Force Base. The helmet, along with Isabella's other personal artifacts documenting his incredible experience and military contributions, were on display in the main conference room of the Millville Army Air Field Museum through April 1, 2018.

## World War II Navy veterans reunited to share stories

On December 29, 2017, five US Navy veterans of World War II were gathered at the museum to share their wartime experiences. All had served in the Pacific and were either stationed in Pearl Harbor or their ships spent time there from 1944 to 1945.

The youngest two were 92 years old, the oldest 96.

They told stories of Japanese kamikaze planes shooting up their ships and ships nearby, and of the survival of those who were on ships battling not just the enemy, but the brutality of nature — navigating the high seas during Halsey's Typhoon. There were stories of heroism and those of everyday life in the Navy during WWII.

“This is what our mission is — to preserve World War II history,” said Lisa Jester, director of the Millville Army Air Field Museum. “So, to have five Navy World War II veterans in our conference room talking about their experiences is just incredible.”

All five of these veterans were video interviewed for the Library of Congress as part of the museum's Veteran Interview Project, that involves students from Millville Public Schools.

According to Bob Trivellini, museum vice president and interview project director, 128 interviews, mostly WWII veterans, have taken place to date.

“When we get veterans together like this and capture their stories on tape, their experiences are preserved forever,” Trivellini said. “So, long after they are gone and we are gone, 100 years from now, these important stories will be here for people to research and understand. We are privileged to record these important histories.”

“The Millville High School students who conduct the video interviews receive history lessons like no others — from veteran heroes who tell us their experiences first hand,” added Trivellini.

*Five US Navy veterans had the opportunity to talk about their experiences during WWII in the conference room at the museum.*

*We thank area media for their great coverage of this gathering.*



*WWII US Navy veterans from South Jersey include, left to right: Ed Turner, Leesburg; Dick Young, Woodstown; Bob Westcott, Upper Deerfield; Owen Garrison, Bridgeton; and Jack Williams, from Hopewell Township.*



## Thank You!

On behalf of the Millville Army Air Field Museum, we thank the many sponsors, partners, and volunteers who helped make the 2017 Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow a success!

Special thanks to Big Sky Aviation, the Delaware River and Bay Authority, and New Jersey Motorsports Park, who played key roles in making this outstanding community event possible.

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### PATRIOT SPONSORS

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# Millville Airshow 2017 *Continued from page 1*

The airshow also featured vintage warbirds, modern military and civilian aircraft, and award-winning performers including Greg Shelton PT-17 Stearman Demonstration featuring Ashley Shelton Wingwalking and FM2 Wildcat demonstrations, a New Jersey National Guard UH-60 SPIES Demonstration, Kevin Russo SNJ-6 Demonstration, Scott Francis MXS Aerobatics, the USMC Blue Angels C-130T Hercules Demonstration, Paul Dougherty Christen Eagle Aerobatics, Jacquie B Airshows in her Extra 300, a Coast Guard MH-65D Dauphin Search and Rescue Demonstration, numerous warbird flights, and a parachute demonstration performed by Skydive Cross Keys.

In addition, the event featured hundreds of cars in its classic car show presented by the South Jersey Cruisers Association, interesting and educational ground displays, vendors, bouncies for children, lots of food, and great fun!

"The airshow is a world-class aviation event," added Jester, "right here at our historic Millville Airport.

"We're pleased to once again thank our airshow producer, David Schultz of David Schultz Airshows, LLC, for coordinating our event and ensuring its success," notes Jester, "and special thanks to Warren Schultz, our on-site airshow coordinator for his outstanding assistance."

The Millville Army Air Field Museum thanks its many sponsors who made Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2017 possible.

"It's amazing to see the number of community and area businesses and individuals who stepped up before the airshow event to show their support and actually make this airshow happen," said Chuck Wyble, MAAFAM president. "Our airshows cannot take place without tons of financial support up front and it is always encouraging to see the patriotism and generosity of our sponsors. We thank everyone, and, on behalf of the museum, we are proud to host the Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow."



*Children enjoyed their special day at the Millville Airshow.*



*Airshow crowds enjoyed the ground displays as well as the planes in the air.*



*South Jersey Cruisers hosted the car show that featured hundreds of cool classics.*



*Singers Kim Wozunk, left, and Alyssa Lopez sang the National Anthem at opening ceremonies for our patriotic visitors.*

*Airshow sponsor Northeast Precast brought an 80-foot crane for the American flag.*



*Left to right: Russell Davis, MAAFAM chairman; Millville Mayor Michael Santiago; Peter Galetto, president of Stanker and Galetto Builders, opening ceremonies sponsor*

**Special Thanks...** to photographic contributors Michael LoBiondo, Jonathon Yerkes, Mike and Sue Cooper, Dale Wettstein, and Howard German.



**MILLVILLE**  
Wheels & Wings  
**AIRSHOW**  
2017



US Navy Blue Angels



Wingwalking



F4F Wildcat



Skydive Cross Keys



NJ National Guard Demo



F4F Wildcat



SNJ-6 Texan



MAAFM board member Rick Adams brought a 1960 Daimler SP250 classic English race car from Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum where he works as director of education.



B-25 Panchito



SNJ Trainers



Christen Eagle

Incredible aerial displays — jets, warbirds, aerobatics, wingwalking, helicopters — kept all eyes to the sky for five hours each day!



Airshow sponsor John Scarpa enjoyed the view from the VIP tent with family and friends.



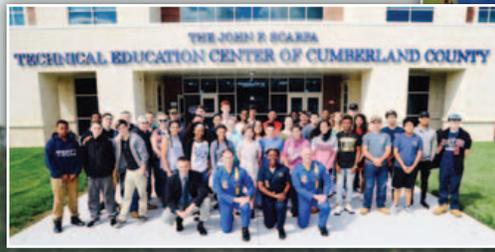
Airshow director Lisa Jester with WWII veteran P-47 pilot Charles Osborne from Laurel Springs, NJ



Super volunteers Cammy, Gina and Bob Trivellini



US Navy Blue Angels' early arrival allowed them to make a special visit to the new John F. Scarpa Technical Education Center of Cumberland County



# Some highlights of the Millville Airshow 2017 Pilots' Party



WWII veteran Charles Osborne chats with Blue Angels pilots about flying the P-47 Thunderbolt fighter bomber.



Local artist Diane Roberts (center) created a special drawing commemorating the Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2017 and presented it to the US Navy Blue Angels.



Museum VP Bob Trivellini with WWII veterans Ralph Williams and John Quinesso at the pilots' party



Blue Angels flight crewman shakes hands with WWII veterans Tim Kiniry and Owen Garrison.



Lisa Jester, airshow director, accepted the US Navy Blue Angels airshow signed lithograph from Commander Ryan Bernacchi.

**CORNERSTONE**  
Cornerstone Capital Group, Inc.

Very special thanks goes to **Cornerstone Capital Group, Inc.** for their generous sponsorship of this outstanding event!



Zachary King, CEO of Cornerstone Capital Group, Inc., offered a very patriotic message on behalf of his company's sponsorship of the pilots' party.



Kristin LoBiondo, from Durham, NC, sang the National Anthem.



Chuck Wyble, museum president and master of ceremonies, welcomed pilots, crews and guests.



Blue Angels pilot Lt. Brandon Hempler with museum members Sandy Kasprzak, Silvana Jester, and Lisa Jester.

## WWII veterans honored by US Navy Blue Angels at Millville Airshow Pilots' Party



Photo courtesy of Michael LoBiondo Photography

**WWII Veterans with United States Navy Blue Angels Pilots and Crew**  
May 26, 2017

Left to right: **John Quinesso**, US Navy, Vineland, NJ • **Ralph Williams**, US Army Air Corps, Brigantine, NJ • **Alfred Maser**, US Army Air Corps, Haddon Heights, NJ • **Charles Titone**, US Army, Burlington, NJ • **Charles Osborne**, US Army Air Corps, Laurel Springs, NJ • **Tim Kiniry**, US Army, Minotola, NJ • **Owen Garrison**, US Navy, Bridgeton, NJ • **Walt Kocielski**, US Marines, Millville, NJ • **Sandy Wentzell**, US Army Air Corps, Salem, NJ • **Charles Harned**, US Navy, Millville, NJ



# THE ADVOCATES BRIEFING THE ADVOCATES BRIEFING

## Remembering WWII veteran P-47 pilot Al Rifino

Al Rifino, from Dunellen, NJ, flew P-47 Thunderbolts as well as many other aircraft during WWII. Al enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942, received his wings and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in August 1944. He flew the BT-12A, AT-6 and P-47, and was a co-pilot in B-29s until the war ended. He then became a flight instructor and flew the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star and Republic F-84G Thunderjet. He retired as an Air Force Captain after 20 years of active, reserve and National Guard service.

Al was very active in the P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots Association, which was founded in 1956 to preserve the memories of the men and women who flew the P-47 Thunderbolt 'Jug' during World War II. The organization consisted of P-47 pilots only and had 2,400 members world wide — 31 of whom were WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots). They met at the prestigious Wings Club in New York City.

A longtime member of the museum here, Al shared his history and his love of the P-47 with the museum on many occasions but particularly at a movie night in September 2010.

While the P-47 Pilots Association was instrumental in recognizing the P-47 Thunderbolt fighter bomber and honoring the pilots who flew it, the association disbanded in 2006. Shortly before that, the P-47 Advocates Organization was founded by David Eldridge, one of its members, to continue the mission of the Pilots Association to recognize the P-47, its pilots and its important role in history during WWII.

The P-47 Advocates became part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum in 2001 where the legacy of the P-47 Thunderbolt lives on!

*The Millville Army Air Field Museum honors the memory of Al Rifino.*



**Al Rifino**

*Died June 10, 2017,  
at age 92*

**The museum is proud to continue the mission of the Thunderbolt Advocates through our events, displays, and publications.**



## Thank You, First Responders

The Millville Army Air Field Museum thanks the many First Responders who gave their time and talent to support the **Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2017** featuring the **US Navy BLUE ANGELS** on Memorial Day Weekend.

With an event as large and daring as the Millville Airshow, **SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY!** Our area's First Responders are to be commended for their contributions — keeping our residents and visitors safe and mobile during this signature two-day event.

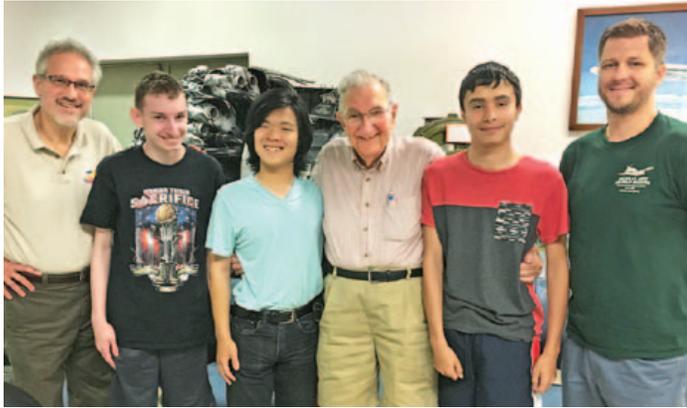
*Many thanks to all who participated.*

- Delaware River & Bay Authority Police Department
- Millville Police Department
- Millville Fire Department
- Cape May County Sheriff's Department
- Cumberland County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center
- Cumberland County Fire Police
- Cumberland County Office of Emergency Management
- Cumberland County Sheriff's Department and Sheriff's Explorers
- Inspira Health Network Emergency Response Team
- New Jersey Forest Fire Service
- New Jersey State Police
- Millville Rescue Squad/Medical Response Services
- New Jersey Department of Corrections Officers
- New Jersey Department of Homeland Security
- Vineland Police Department

## Student Summer Program at Millville Airport offered history and aviation

A month-long summer program offered by the Millville School District and hosted by the museum at Millville Airport offered an enlightening experience for the students who participated in 2017. Each Tuesday and Thursday during the month of July, young people had the opportunity to get an up-close look at planes, meet pilots, use flight simulators, fly model aircraft, view historical artifacts and documents, and maybe most importantly meet and interview World War II veterans. All of this while learning about the vital role Millville Air Base played during a critical time in America's history.

The special summer program was provided by the ACE Program of the Millville Board of Education and the Millville Army Air Field Museum through a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.



Some of the students in the summer program assisted with veteran interviews, including this group with WWII veteran Newell Comish. Pictured left to right: Bob Trivellini, program coordinator; Justin Stellwag; Justin Gerrells; Comish; Zach Fiomingo; and history teacher Mike Jones.

## MAAFM awards Kayla Piper as outstanding student volunteer



Millville High School junior Kayla Piper was recently selected as **Student Volunteer of the Year** for 2017 by the Millville Army Air Field Museum. Kayla volunteered many hours and participated in numerous interviews for the Veteran Interview Project, a partnership between Millville Public Schools and the museum. She also participated in a panel discussion about the impact of the interviews at a New Jersey Council for Humanities public event. Kayla was a key reader at the museum's 75th Anniversary ceremony recognizing the dedication of Millville Airport as America's First Defense Airport.

The **Student Volunteer of the Year Award** is given annually to a high school student who has devoted time and effort to helping the museum achieve its mission of educating youth and preserving the history of what occurred at the Millville Army Air Field and during World War II in general. Kayla was presented with a certificate and given gifts by the museum at a recent World War II Speaker and Movie Night event.

*Many thanks to Kayla Piper for her outstanding contributions to the museum!*



The MAAFM Student Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Kayla Piper by Russell Davis, museum chairman.

## German exchange students come to the MAAFM

*We were pleased and honored to have twenty exchange students from Heidelberg, Germany, visit the museum on October 26, 2017.*

The German exchange students were here in Millville from October 21 to November 4, through a program coordinated by Millville High School German teacher Graham Gant. They spent two weeks going to school with their host students. In addition to spending time at our museum, they visited Wheaton Village, Philadelphia, and spent time at some of Millville's elementary schools talking to younger students.



German exchange students inside the C-23 Sherpa



WWII veteran Owen Garrison (center) gave part of the tour.



Museum volunteer Bob Philbin took students through the museum's C-23 Sherpa historic aircraft.



Donna Pio, center, an exchange student host from Millville, with Konstantin Von dem Bussche and Lotta Schaffer



German exchange students surround WWII veteran museum volunteer Walter Kocielski.

# 2017 MAAFAM Movie Night Stars

Movie Nights, sponsored by the P-47 Thunderbolt Advocates, are held quarterly in the Wyble Library and feature veteran speakers who offer incredibly interesting accounts of their military experiences. We proudly honor them for their service and thank them for being the “stars” of MAAFAM Movie Nights!



## Marianne Lods ★ March 14

Local author and community leader Marianne Lods was guest speaker. She wrote and published a book, *It's Been a Long, Long Time*, which tells the true story of her family in Belgium from 1936 to 1948. Her book describes the Belgian underground and how her family members helped save the lives of Allied airmen and civilians during WWII. The movie shown that night was closely related. *Ghost Train* is the story of the Belgian underground saving Allied airmen, just like her family.



Marianne Lods tells the story of her family who were part of the Belgian underground during WWII.

Marianne was born in Brussels, Belgium, and declared an American citizen because her father was a US Army soldier during WWII. Having moved to Vineland, NJ, at a very young age, she spoke both French and English at home. Marianne always had a hunger for learning about the history of her Belgian family and a thirst for knowledge about the war. The lives of Marianne's family were forever changed by World War II. D-Day not only altered the course of history, but also of her family.



Bob Trivellini, museum vice president, thanks Marianne Lods, guest speaker, for sharing her story.

## John Quinesso ★ June 13



WWII veteran John Quinesso told about his experiences in the Navy during WWII.

John Quinesso, from Vineland, NJ, served as Radioman 2/c on the Landing Ship LSM-302 that shuttled men, tanks, aviation fuel and supplies to Pacific island battle sites during WWII. His service took him to Wake Island, Guam, Okinawa, and Saipan. Aviation fuel was critical to the war effort to create and maintain functioning airstrips on the islands.

John served in the United States Navy from January 1944 to May 1946. His home base was Pearl Harbor.

He had the unforgettable experience of receiving the cable that the war was over and reporting to his captain that the Japanese had surrendered.



John Quinesso and Gavin Watts (right) the Millville High School student who interviewed John for the Veteran Interview Project



Left to right: Jerry Benfer, MAAFAM secretary and movie night director; WWII veteran John Quinesso; Dave McCarthy, museum board member; and Russell Davis, museum board chairman

## Tom Wajda ★ September 12

Tom Wajda, from Sewell, NJ, enlisted in the Army on July 3, 1941, and served until 1947. He then served an additional 30 years in the Reserves, eventually achieving the rank of Major.

Tom was a B-24 bombardier in the 8th Air Force, 97th Squadron. As a Second Lieutenant, he flew in the famous first mission to Berlin. His plane was shot down on his third mission over Belgium. He safely parachuted out, but a traitor eventually turned him in to the Nazis. He spent the remainder of the war as a POW, mostly in Stalag Luft III.

Sadly, Tom Wajda passed away on November 1, 2017. The MAAFAM is thankful to have had Tom tell his story to our movie night visitors. Our condolences to his wonderful family members.



WWII veteran Tom Wajda talks about his experiences as a B-24 bombardier during WWII.



Rusty Marshall helped introduce his father-in-law, Tom Wajda.



Bob Trivellini, MAAFAM vice president (left), with WWII veteran Tom Wajda and museum board member Paul Blackstock

## Jack Williams ★ December 12



WWII veteran Jack Williams told about his experiences in the Pacific on the USS Peto.

Jack Williams, from Hopewell Township, NJ, is a World War II veteran who served on the submarine USS *Peto* in the Pacific. The *Peto* sank nine freighters and rescued 21 aviators from the treacherous ocean during its Pacific patrols which included hot spots off New Guinea, Guadalcanal, and Saipan. Jack joined the military at age 17 and served in the US Navy from October 1942 through October 1945. His rank was Electrician 1st Class. Jack received the Submarine Combat Medal with Three Stars.

For this movie night, an episode from the old television series *Silent Service* was shown, which told the story of Jack's ship — the USS *Peto*.



WWII veterans Jack Williams and Walt Kocielski, with Bob Trivellini, museum vice president



Jack Williams with Andrew Hickman, the Millville High School student who interviewed him for the Veteran Interview Project

# MAAFM hosts WWII veterans group for Warbirds Event

Twenty area WWII veterans were guests at an event arranged by the **Millville Army Air Field Museum** on August 31, 2017, where they shared stories and had the opportunity to view visiting warbirds from the **Collings Foundation's "Wings of Freedom Tour"** at Millville Executive Airport.

The special event gave air- and ground-crew members, along with other WWII veterans, the opportunity to share their experiences, enjoy refreshments, and tour the vintage aircraft that included a restored B-17 Flyer Fortress, a B-24J Liberator, and a B-25 Mitchell — all WWII bombers, and a P-51 Mustang fighter plane. The planes were on display for three days, from August 30 through September 1, 2017.

The 20 WWII veterans who attended ranged in age from 91 to 96. They represented four branches of the military — US Army Air Corps, US Navy, US Army and US Marine Corps.

"We were so proud to have had so many veteran heroes of WWII attend and be honored," said Bob Trivellini, vice president of the MAAFM and program coordinator with Millville Public Schools. "Even more special was having the opportunity to hear about their unique experiences and witness the camaraderie among these gentlemen. The added highlight was for these special veterans and their families and friends to have the opportunity to see the four outstanding WWII warbirds that were here on display from the Collings Foundation!"

"The museum is a true living history museum and this is just one of the many ways we carry forth our important mission of honoring veterans," continued Trivellini. "These 20 visiting WWII veterans offered fascinating true stories about WWII and our guests were delighted to hear their first-hand histories and thanked them for their service."



Twenty WWII veterans from southern New Jersey shared personal stories of their experiences during the war at a gathering hosted by the Millville Army Air Field Museum. Ranging in age from 91 to 96, these American heroes were honored by the museum, visitors, and guests, and given the opportunity to see four rare WWII warbirds that were visiting Millville Executive Airport from the Collings Foundation of Stow, Massachusetts.



Mike Frey, Chief Warrant Officer 3 with the US Army Reserve, addressed the WWII veterans and thanked them for their service.



WWII veteran Walter Sierocinski stands before the P-51D Mustang fighter plane named *Toulouse Nuts*. Sierocinski, from Carney's Point, a ground crewman who worked on P-51s during his service in the US Army Air Corps, was able to see the warbird along with three WWII bombers that were on display.



Walt Kocielski, US Marine Corps veteran from Millville, and Jack Williams, US Navy veteran from Bridgeton, NJ, enjoyed comparing notes about their experiences during WWII.



WWII veteran Edward Turner from Leesburg, NJ, stands with his daughter in front of the B-17 *Nine-O-Nine*. Ed was in the US Navy during WWII, serving on the USS *Bataan*.



George Rubin, WWII B-17 waist gunner, US Army Air Corps, from Medford, NJ, stands behind the Collings Foundation's B-17 Flying Fortress *Nine-O-Nine*.



B-25 Mitchell *Tondelayo* and P-51 Mustang *Toulouse Nuts*



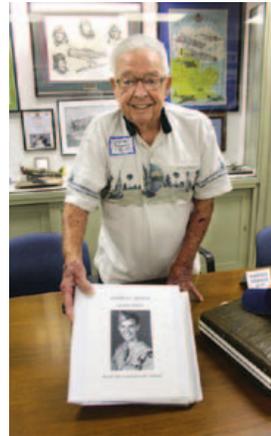
Three Paulsboro High School graduates each served in the US Army Air Corps during WWII. L-r: Joseph Thomas, ground crewman from Pitman, NJ, with Dr. Bill Holdcraft, P-47 Thunderbolt pilot and mechanic, and John Ferguson, ground crewman, both from Mickelton, NJ.



Herbert "Ralph" Williams (left), from Brigantine, NJ, and friends under the wing of the B-17 Nine-O-Nine. Ralph was a B-17 ground crew member in the US Army Air Corps during WWII.



The museum was pleased to have Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Frey (right) and Chief Warrant Officer Tim Clarke make a visit during the Collings Foundation warbirds event. Mike Frey, originally from Vineland, NJ, is with the US Army Reserve, and the plane he flew in is a UC-35A, a Cessna Citation 560 that belongs to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, 244th Aviation Brigade, USAR. They flew in from McGuire AFB. Here, Frey and Clarke took time to meet and chat with WWII veteran Tim Kiniry.



Warren Kepner, from Columbus, NJ, a B-17 flight engineer in the US Army Air Corps, had the opportunity to share his memories of WWII with a book he created that documents his experiences during the war.



Tim Kiniry, 96 years old, a WWII veteran from Minotola, NJ, climbed inside the B-17 Flying Fortress. Kiniry was a US Army medic during the war.



WWII veteran Charles Titone (right) from Burlington, NJ, stands with his son Bob in front of the B-17 Nine-O-Nine. Titone was a US Army Infantryman during the war, who survived the sinking of the SS Leopoldville.



B-24 Liberator Witchcraft

**The WWII veterans who attended the event included:**

**Newell Comish**  
US Army Infantry, Woodstown, NJ

**Edward Corker**  
B-17 radio operator, US Army Air Corps, Mickleton, NJ

**John Ferguson**  
US Army Air Corps ground crew, Mickleton, NJ

**Owen Garrison**  
US Navy, USS Monterey, Upper Deerfield, NJ

**Louis Gerlack**  
B-17 engineer and aerial gunnery instructor, US Army Air Corps, Glassboro, NJ

**Dr. Bill Holdcraft**  
P-47 Thunderbolt pilot and mechanic, US Army Air Corps, Mickleton, NJ

**Warren Kepner**  
B-17 flight engineer, US Army Air Corps, Columbus, NJ

**Tim Kiniry**  
US Army medic, Minotola, NJ

**Walt Kocielski**  
US Marine Corps, Millville, NJ

**Charles "Ozzie" Osborne**  
P-47 Thunderbolt pilot, US Army Air Corps, Laurel Springs, NJ

**George Rubin**  
B-17 waist gunner, US Army Air Corps, Medford, NJ

**Walter Sierocinski**  
P-51 Mustang ground crew, US Army Air Corps, Carneys Point, NJ

**Nick Silvestro**  
B-24 ball turret gunner, US Army Air Corps, Cherry Hill, NJ

**Joseph Thomas**  
US Army Air Corps ground crew, Pitman, NJ

**Charles Titone**  
US Army Infantry, Burlington, NJ

**Edward Turner**  
US Navy, USS Bataan, Leesburg, NJ

**Charles "Sandy" Wentzell**  
B-17 radio operator, US Army Air Corps, Salem, NJ

**Jack Williams**  
US Navy, USS Peto, Hopewell Twp., NJ

**Herbert "Ralph" Williams**  
B-17 ground crew, US Army Air Corps, Brigantine, NJ

**Richard Young**  
US Navy photographer, Woodstown, NJ

Photo courtesy of Rachel Corna

# Veteran Interview Project continues to document oral histories for the Library of Congress



*The MAAFM is proud to continue its documentation of important WWII history through our Veteran Interview Project — a partnership between the MAAFM and the Millville Public Schools.*

Since its inception in 2001, nearly 130 interviews, primarily of WWII veterans, have taken place. Original videotaped interviews, produced by high school students, are sent to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

DVD copies of these interviews are available in the museum's Henry E. Wyble Historic Research Library and Education Center for research, used in history classes in area schools, and given to the veterans for their families to treasure.

## *Veterans who were recently interviewed include:*



*Victor Muzio with the Japanese flag and gun he got in Korea when they took it back from the Japanese.*

**Victor Muzio**, from Voorhees, NJ, served in the US Army in the Pacific during World War II. He was with the 31st Infantry, 7th Division. He fought in the Battle of Okinawa and was later stationed in Korea where he was part of the forces that oversaw the surrender of the Japanese there.



**Angelo Branca** was a radio man and gunner with the 15th Air Force from 1942 to 1945. He flew on 27 combat missions against the Nazis in a B-25 out of Fano, Italy, during World War II. He achieved the rank of Sergeant. He lives in Haverford, PA.



**Jack Williams**, from Hopewell Township, NJ, is a World War II veteran who served on the submarine USS Peto in the Pacific. The Peto sank nine freighters and rescued 21 aviators from the treacherous ocean during its Pacific patrols, which included hot spots off New Guinea, Guadalcanal, and Saipan. Jack joined the military at age 17 and served in the US Navy from October 1942 through October 1945. His rank was Electrician First Class. Jack received the Submarine Combat Medal with Three Stars.



**John Ferguson** was in the 14th Air Force during World War II as a ground crew member in the China-Burma-India Theatre. He achieved the rank of Sergeant as an Electrical Aircraft Specialist. He was first stationed in India and then Burma, working on the C-46 transport and other aircraft that flew "the hump" over the Himalayas in the fight against the Japanese. He lives in Paulsboro, NJ.



**Bob Westcott**, from Pittsgrove Township, NJ, served in the United States Navy from 1942-1945, achieving the rank of Radioman First Class. He was a "plank owner," part of the original crew of the USS *New Jersey*. He served as a radio operator during many of the major battles in the Pacific, including Iwo Jima, Leyte Gulf, Luzon, Marshall Islands, Battle of the Philippine Sea, and Okinawa. The *New Jersey* also survived the infamous Halsey's Typhoon.



**Clark Katz** served in the US Army from 1966 to 1972, during which time he spent two years as a general's aide stationed in Berlin, Germany. He later enlisted in the Air Force in a medical unit, serving from 1975 to 1995, including Operation Desert Shield. He related a wide variety of interesting experiences, such as being in East Germany during the Cold War and seeing a U2 spy plane. He is a Bridgeton, NJ, resident.

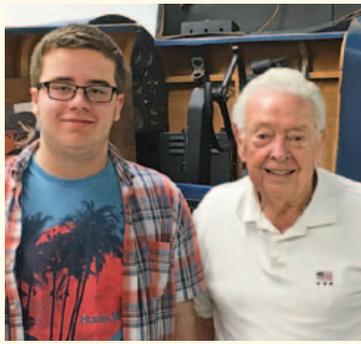


**June Rimmer Dortch**, from Vineland, NJ, enlisted in the Women's Royal Naval Service (known as the Wrens) in 1942 at age 18. She was one of 12 women who worked in the famous underground bunker in the Westminister War Office with Winston Churchill. Using radar via headphones, her mission each day was to plot and follow ships and submarines at sea. June and her fellow Wrens were greeted each morning with "Good morning, ladies" from Mr. Churchill. She shared her first-hand observations of Churchill's great leadership as he consistently reassured English citizens during the bleakest moments of the war. In 1943, she danced with comedian Bob Hope on stage at the Burtonwood 8th Air Force Base Officer's Club during a Saturday night social.



NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

*Thanks to a 2016 grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities for the Veteran Interview Project, some of the interview clips can be viewed on iPad stations at the museum.*



Warren Kepner with MHS student interviewer Bryce Brunetta

**Warren Kepner**, of Columbus, NJ, flew 52 missions in a B-17 from September 1943 to June 1944 during World War II. He served with the US Army Air Corps with the 97th Bomb Squadron out of Foggia, Italy. He was a Flight Engineer and received the rank of Technical Sergeant. He later served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars and totaled 26 years in the military.



**Newell Comish** began his service with the Army Specialized Training Program. He was assigned to the infantry with the 328th Regiment of the 26th Division, fighting across Europe in Belgium, France, Austria, and Germany. He was wounded in a battle where several of his friends were killed, for which he received the Purple Heart. He later returned to his unit, and in the last days of the war, they met the Russians in Czechoslovakia.

*Newell lived in Woodstown, NJ, but passed away suddenly a few months after we interviewed him.*

**George Rubin**, of Medford, NJ, served in the 8th Air Force, 486th Bomb Group, 835th Squadron during World War II. He was an Armorer-Waist Gunner on a B-17. His plane was shot down on a mission to bomb Neuburg's marshalling yard on February 25, 1945. After surviving the crash landing, while still in Germany, he was nearly executed by members of the Hitler Youth. He spent the remainder of the war in POW camps, including Stalag 13D, before being liberated by the US Army's 14th Armored Division.

*George Rubin and his wife Margery with (left to right) Millville High School students Theodore Georgis, Alyssa Soto, Damion Scarlato, Shiann Wilson, Daniel Wright, and Manuel Melendez.*



Joseph Thomas (right) with Army Air Corps veteran Ralph Williams

**Joseph Thomas** was an Aircraft Electrical Specialist, who rose to the rank of Sergeant during his service from April 29, 1943, to February 9, 1946. He served in the 20th Air Force, 534th Air Engineering Squadron, 77th Air Service Group. He worked on the B-29s, stationed in Tinian in the Mariana Islands. While there, he saw the nuclear bomb before it was loaded into the Enola Gay, which took off from there to bomb Hiroshima. He lives in Pitman, NJ.



**Nick Silvestro**, of Cherry Hill, NJ, served in the US Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1945. He flew nine combat missions against the Nazis as Ball Turret Gunner on a B-24 out of Foggia, Italy. He was a Sergeant with the 15th Air Force, 456th Bomb Group. His plane was escorted by Tuskegee Airmen on several missions and once encountered a Me 262 German jet-powered fighter. He was later recalled during the Korean War and served from 1951 to 1952.



**Capt. Charles Harned**, from Vineland, NJ, enlisted in the US Navy Flight Program in 1942. As a pilot, he flew off carriers and did observation in the South Pacific during WWII. He flew a number of different aircraft, including the OS2U Kingfisher float-plane. He also had a long, distinguished career in the Naval Air Reserves, retiring in 1984. He served two tours with the Blue Angels in a non-flying capacity as a Senior Officer.



**Tom Wajda**, from Sewell, NJ, was drafted into the Army on July 3, 1941, and served until 1947. He then served an additional 30 years in the Reserves, eventually achieving the rank of Major. Tom was a B-24 bombardier in the 8th Air Force, 97th Squadron. As a Second Lieutenant, he flew in the famous first mission to Berlin. His plane was shot down on his third mission over Belgium. He safely parachuted out, but a traitor eventually turned him in to the Nazis. He spent the remainder of the war as a POW, mostly in Stalag Luft III.



Michael Jordan with his daughter, Kathy Ross

**Mike Jordan**, of Vineland, NJ, joined the Navy in 1945, just prior to his 18th birthday. He trained at the Sampson, NY, Naval Training Base and was assigned to the troop transport ship the USS Hermitage (AP-54). The ship was an Italian cruise ship seized by the United States in Panama in 1942 and returned to Italy after the war. On his first voyage, they sailed to France to return soldiers from Europe. He was able to disembark and see war-torn France. The ship later made trips to the Pacific to bring troops home and he viewed the damage in Pearl Harbor and Japan as well. On one of the trips, the Hermitage carried the air crews of planes that participated in the nuclear bombs raids on Japan. He achieved the rank of Seaman First Class and served until 1946.



Richard Young with student interviewer Kyle O'Flynn from Somers Point, NJ

**Richard Young**, from Woodstown, NJ, was a Photographer's Mate 3rd class in the US Navy during World War II. He served in the Pacific with Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Area (JICPOA). They developed and examined aerial surveillance photos for information prior to battle landings on the islands. He was stationed in Pearl Harbor and later in Japan during the early months of the occupation.

# In Memoriam



## **Ed Lazarcheck** *Died November 20, 2017, at age 69*

Ed Lazarcheck, MAAFM board member and director of outreach, was the key person who coordinated the effort to bring from the World Trade Center the commemorative steel beam that is now on permanent display at the MAAFM.

On the September 11, 2012, Movie Night, Ed shared what he observed while volunteering at the morgue following the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11.

Ed joined the US Navy and served from 1968 to 1971 during the Vietnam War as an Aviation Ordnanceman and Aircrewman. He was part of a flight crew in a VP-49 and flew on a P3C anti-submarine warfare (ASW) plane. From 1985 to 1986 he served in the NJ Army National Guard as an M60 Tank Gunner.

A tireless volunteer for the museum, Ed will be sadly missed.



*US Navy veterans Ed Lazarcheck (Vietnam), right, and Owen Garrison (WWII)*

## **Maryann Gibbons**

*Died December 14, 2017, at age 69*



Maryann Gibbons was a founding and honorary member of the Millville Army Air Field Museum. She and her husband Jack owned Rainbow Aviation, an FBO and Flight School which operated from the late 1980s to the late

1990s at Millville Airport. Maryann was instrumental in starting the airshow at Millville Airport, called Wheels and Wings. She and Jack were founding members of the museum, assisting in every way possible with its building and growth. Rainbow Aviation brought numerous WWII warbirds and veteran aviators to visit the airport, including the Memphis Belle and its legendary captain, Colonel Robert Morgan. Maryann gave her whole heart to aviation, the museum, her friends, and family, as well as to the patients she treated in her later career as Physicians Assistant.

## **Bob Westcott**

*Died March 5, 2018, at age 95*



Bob Westcott served in the United States Navy from 1942-1945, achieving the rank of Radioman First Class. He was a plank owner, part of the original crew of the battleship USS New Jersey. He served as a radio operator during many of the major battles in the Pacific, including Iwo Jima, Leyte Gulf, Luzon, Marshall Islands, Battle of the Philippine Sea, and Okinawa. Bob lived in Pittsgrove Township.

## **Tom Wajda**

*Died November 1, 2017, at age 98*



Thomas Wajda, from Sewell, NJ, enlisted in the United States Army on July 3, 1941, and served until 1947. He then served an additional 30 years in the Reserves, eventually achieving the rank of Major. Tom was a B-24

bombardier in the 8th Air Force, 97th Squadron. As a Second Lieutenant, he flew in the famous first mission to Berlin. His plane was shot down on his third mission over Belgium. He safely parachuted out, but a traitor eventually turned him in to the Nazis. He spent the remainder of the war as a POW, mostly in Stalag Luft III. We are thankful to have had Tom Wajda as the museum's speaker at Movie Night on September 12, 2017.

## **Clegg Langley**

*Died July 12, 2017, at age 89*



Clegg Langley, from Millville, NJ, was a WWII and Korean War veteran. He was a volunteer at the Millville Army Air Field Museum who shared his experiences, gave tours, and also did presentations about the Berlin Airlift.

Clegg enlisted in the Merchant Marines at the age of 16 and served two years during WWII. He then enlisted in the US Army in 1948 and served in Korea during the Korean War. He was also stationed in Germany and Japan among many other places during his 23-year career. He retired from the military in 1970 and settled in Millville.

## **Charles Harned**

*Died September 8, 2017, at age 93*



Captain Charles C. Harned, USNR-Retired, from Vineland, NJ, enlisted in the US Navy Flight Program on December 8, 1942, and became a Naval Aviator serving in the South Pacific. Harned had a distinguished career in

the Naval Air Reserve before his retirement in 1984. He received two SECNAV commendations along with several other service medals and awards. While he was Commanding Officer of the NARDIV 933, his unit was awarded the Noel Davis Trophy as the top division in the entire Naval Air Reserve in 1968. He was one of two Naval Air Reserve Captains to be recalled to active duty during the Pueblo Incident in 1969 to work on force requirements and combat readiness in the event of war with North Korea.

## **Mary Barbagello**

*Died December 15, 2017, at age 83*



Sad to say goodbye to Mary Barbagello, Lisa Jester's mother. Mary was born in Italy, lived most of her life in Rosenhayn and died at the NJ Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland, NJ. She was often seen at the museum, volunteering her time at special events. Mary will be sadly missed by her husband John, family and friends.



# MEMBERS & FRIENDS



## Charles Osborne receives a Quilt of Valor



One of the museum's very special WWII veterans, Charles Osborne, from Laurel Springs, NJ, a P-47 pilot who trained at Millville during the war, received a Quilt of Valor on May 11, 2017, in recognition of his service to our country. Pictured l-r: Patt Osborne (Charles' daughter); Patsy Tallman from Egg Harbor Township representing the Quilts of Valor Foundation, the international organization whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor; Charles Osborne; Lisa Jester, executive director of the MAAFM; and Barbara Rell, from Haddonfield.



Lisa Jester was proud to present Charles Osborne with his veteran trading cards. Charles received his advanced gunnery training at the Millville Army Air Field and was a P-47 pilot during WWII. He flew 26 combat missions.



The MAAFM was happy to have WWII veteran Rocky Gannon back for a visit on July 12, 2017. Rocky, from Ocean City, NJ, and Darlington, SC, was a B-17 pilot who flew five missions in Europe at the age of 19 just before WWII ended. He flew combat missions in Korea, the Belgian Congo and Vietnam during his 37 years in the US Air Force. During his career, he flew 34 different types of aircraft including the C-47, DC-3, the T-6 Texan in Korea, the O-1, O-2, OV-10 Bronco, and the C-130 in Vietnam, among others. Rocky is pictured here with museum VP Bob Trivellini.



Family members surrounding WWII vet Tom Wajda on Movie Night in September. Left to right: Giovina Bellia (baby), Andrew Bellia, Bonnie Marshall, Walter Marshall, Mike Bellia, Thomas Wajda, Thomas Bellia, Marge Wajda, Francesca Bellia (baby), Margie Bellia, and Maria Bellia



Tim Kiniry, WWII veteran from Minotola, NJ, with his niece Rachel Corma at the Collings Foundation warbird event. Rachel works for Stenton House Museum in Philadelphia and received her Master's in History from Rowan University.



Lisa Jester congratulates museum volunteers Ken Austin (left) and Owen Garrison at a birthday celebration held on July 18, 2017.



WWII vet Jack Williams with his family, who visited on Movie Night in December. Left to right: Alicia Ross (baby's mom), Katie Moris (Jack's granddaughter), Jack Williams holding great-grandson Jedidiah Ross, Joe Ross III (baby's dad and Jack's grandson), Pat Ross (Jack's daughter), Joe Ross, Jr. (Pat's husband and Jack's son-in-law).



Robin Adams from *The Daily Journal* (right) recently presented a check for \$100 to the museum. The check represented the generosity of shoppers at Boscov's of Vineland who donated during a Wrap for Charity event held on December 9. Thank you to the DJ and all who donated!

Folks at the museum were happy to see WWII veteran Walter Johnson, a longtime volunteer who now lives at the NJ Veterans Home in Vineland, NJ. Walter visited on October 23, 2017, along with some other WWII vets.



Above left to right: son Bill Johnson, friend David McDonald, and son Bob Johnson



Left: museum receptionist Patty Oliver gives Walter a big welcome!



# Millville Army Air Field Museum Membership Application

**Please  
join!**

**Preserving History • Honoring Veterans • Educating Youth**

**Yes!** I want to help the Millville Army Air Field Museum recognize the history of America's First Defense Airport and support its mission of patriotism, preservation, and education. I want to help keep alive the memory of those who sacrifice so much for our freedom!

PLEASE PRINT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:  New Membership *or*  Renewal Membership

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check here if this is a new address
- Check here to receive newsletters and notifications by e-mail

Please make checks payable to MAAFM and mail to:

**Millville Army Air Field Museum**  
1 Leddon Street, Millville Airport  
Millville, New Jersey 08332

*MAAFM is a federal non-profit 501(c)(3). Your donation is tax deductible.*

- Please send me information on how I can put MAAFM in my will.
- MAAFM is already in my will.

**Matching Opportunities:** Check with your employer. Some employers will match your donation!

Your membership entitles you to **10% Off** all Museum Store merchandise.

**Thank you very much for your continued support!**

**You can renew your membership online at [www.p47millville.org](http://www.p47millville.org)**

### Membership

- Individual – \$25
- Family – \$40
- Student – \$10
- Life Member\* – **No charge** (Donations appreciated)
- Booster – \$100
- Patron – \$250
- Guardian Angel – \$500

### Friends of the Museum

- Pilot – \$1,000
- Element Leader – \$2,500
- Flight Leader – \$5,000
- Squadron Commander – \$10,000
- Top Gun – \$25,000
- Group Commander – \$50,000
- Endowment/Naming Opportunity – \$100,000

\*WWII Millville Army Air Field military personnel.

*If you served here at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII, you are considered a **Life Member** and there is no membership fee. However, if you would like to make a donation, it will be greatly appreciated.*

If possible, provide Military Serial #

*Volunteers, including airshow volunteers, are encouraged to become members*

----- FOR MUSEUM USE ONLY -----

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_