



Millville Army Air Field Museum

'America's First Defense Airport'

December 2022

Outdoor interpretive displays describe the important history of the Millville Army Air Field during World War II

A visit to the Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) at Millville Executive Airport includes seeing a number of large outdoor murals that tell visually some of the important history that took place here during World War II. Now, added to the visuals are interpretive displays that describe these murals in detail.

The MAAFM unveiled three outdoor interpretive displays at their 20th annual Veterans Appreciation Day that was held on November 6, 2021, in the museum's historic courtyard.

"The museum is extremely proud to be able to recognize the World War II history that took place here at Millville Executive Airport," says Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director. "Our largest collections of artifacts are displayed in the former base headquarters building, but each of the buildings in the historic district was significant. Young servicemen came here from all over the country to train in

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Donna Vertolli, MAAFM board member, thanks Omarey Williams, shared service coordinator for the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs (second right), for the county's assistance through the Cultural & Heritage Commission in producing three interpretive displays which describe murals in the museum's historic complex. Also pictured are Jerry Carey, MAAFM president, and Lisa Jester, museum executive director.



21st Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

Saturday, November 5, 2022

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The US Air Force F-22 Raptor and US Army Golden Knights headlined the Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2021

Celebrated the 80th Anniversary of America's 1st Defense Airport on Labor Day Weekend

Exciting military aircraft, warbirds, and thrilling aerobatics returned to Millville Executive Airport on Labor Day Weekend 2021 as the MAAFM presented its Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow.

The **United States Air Force F-22 Raptor Jet Demonstration Team** and the **United States Army Golden Knights** parachute team headlined a list of modern military and historic aircraft as the museum saluted America's military and veterans on September 4 and 5, 2021.

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F-22 Raptor and P-51 Mustang performed the **Heritage Flight** each day.

Lisa Jester, director of the Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2021, proudly received an award on behalf of the museum from the US Air Force F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team.

Left is United States Air Force Major Joshua "Cabo" Gunderson, Commander/Pilot, and right is MSgt. George Fagan, Superintendent, of the F-22 Demo Team Leadership.

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Joe Nocera, Frank Nucito, Steve Franz

NJ Workforce 55+ Maintenance Assistants



JERRY CAREY

they see the unique artifacts, photos and displays at the Millville Army Air Field Museum.

Our museum tells the story of America's preparation for World War II, and of Millville's unique place in that military history. It's the story of the heroes who answered America's call during her time of peril, whether here in Millville or on battlefields around the world. When those stories come together in a place like our museum, they unveil the story of Millville's contributions to America's proud military history.

Every museum has a story to tell. Ours is the story of the thousands of soldiers who came to

President's Message

"Wow!"

"I never knew that..."

"Look! Isn't that..."

It's not unusual to hear these and similar comments from visitors when

Millville to help America's fight to preserve freedom. Some were stationed here at America's First Defense Airport and, after the war, remained in this area to raise their families. Others went overseas to join the battle against America's enemies and, years later, returned to their lives before the war. Some never came back. At the MAAFM, we remember all of them. And we invite you to visit us to see and hear their stories or share the story of your family's connection to the heroic generation that saved the world from tyranny.

In 2023, the Millville Army Air Field Museum will celebrate its 35th year. Our museum's mission is both simple and inspiring: honor all veterans, preserve Millville's proud place in military and aviation history, and provide unique educational opportunities for students of all ages.

I hope you will consider joining us.

Executive Director's Report

The Millville Army Air Field Museum entered its 34th year of being open to the public in 2022, and we have had an incredible year. It is wonderful to see so many visitors return here, and to meet so many new guests. Our museum tours and outreach events have reached a whole new level — with numbers doubling from prior years. We are proud to present first-class tours of the inside of our museum, and then include our amazing artifacts on display in the courtyard area. Many tours include a visit to our newly remodeled Link Trainer, located in the original WWII Link Trainer building. There is so much to see right now, and I can't wait to announce some exciting things that are coming.

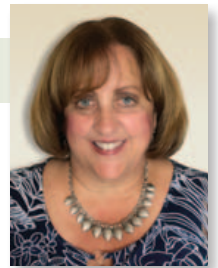
While we did not host an airshow in 2022, we were proud to present our 2021 Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow, which featured the United States Air Force F-22 Raptor and the United States Army Golden Knights Parachute Team, last year on

September 4 and 5. It was another spectacular aviation event hosted by our museum and enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

FYI... our paperwork has been submitted to acquire a military jet team for a future Millville Airshow. Keep your fingers crossed and we will keep you posted.

I want to commend and thank all of our museum volunteers, especially our veterans, who are such a crucial part of our organization. They bring a wealth of talent and we are so fortunate to have all of them. And, of course, we thank our many members who renew each year and continue to support us in so many ways.

I am very grateful to have such a rewarding job and am looking forward to the museum's exciting future.



LISA JESTER



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History made at the Millville Army Air Field Museum...

77 years after liberation of Buchenwald, Holocaust survivor, 91, and US Army medic, 100, meet formally for first time.

Both were at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in Spring 1945.

On August 31, the Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) hosted a rare and historic meeting between a 91-year-old Buchenwald concentration camp survivor and a 100-year-old World War II US Army medic who treated prisoners at Buchenwald when the camp was liberated by US Army forces.

The MAAFM collaborated with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, to arrange a virtual get-together between Steven Fenves, a Holocaust survivor who was at Buchenwald, and MAAFM member and volunteer Tim Kiniry — 77 years after they were at the camp at the same time.



WWII veteran Tim Kiniry, 100, and Buchenwald survivor Steven Fenves, 91, during a historic virtual meeting.



WWII veteran Tim Kiniry was videotaped by the National Holocaust Museum during the interview with Steven Fenves.

Kiniry and Fenves met for a conversation, via Zoom, in the MAAFM's main conference room, located in the historic World War II base headquarters building. A reception followed with guests attending.

Buchenwald was a Nazi concentration camp located near Weimar, Germany. It was one of the largest concentration camps in Germany and included more than 130 subcamps. The Nazis imprisoned a variety of people in Buchenwald; among them were political opponents, Jews, and prisoners from Nazi-occupied Europe. The camp inmates had to perform forced labor, working primarily in local armament factories. Insufficient food and poor conditions, as well as deliberate executions, led to more than 56,000 deaths of the 250,000 prisoners who passed through the Buchenwald camp system.

Fenves was deported, along with his family, to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center in 1944. At the age of 13, he joined the camp resistance, served as an interpreter for Polish political prisoners and was smuggled onto a transport to a Buchenwald sub-

camp, where he spent six months as a forced laborer working on the assembly line in a Junkers aircraft factory. He was sent on a death march to the main camp and liberated from Buchenwald by American soldiers on April 11, 1945.

Kiniry served in the US Army from 1942 to 1945 with the 45th Evacuation Hospital attached to the First Army and then later the Third Army at the end of the war. He was a medic at the Battle of the Bulge and at other European Theatre battles where his group treated thousands of soldiers in field hospitals located just behind battle lines. His unit set up operations inside the Buchenwald concentration camp for two weeks after it was liberated, treating gravely ill prisoners and saving numerous lives. Kiniry has, in previous interviews with Millville High School students at the museum, described the horrific conditions in the camp and praised the valiant efforts that were made at that time.

"Tim Kiniry recently said that he wished he had the opportunity to meet a Buchenwald survivor once again," explains Bob Trivellini, MAAFM vice president. "With that incentive, we reached out to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in search of a Holocaust survivor who was imprisoned at Buchenwald in April 1945."

The conversation was genuine, interesting and informative, as each man described conditions and locations that were part of their experiences at

Buchenwald. The film crew from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and one from the MAAFM, videotaped all of the conversation that documented information about conditions at the concentration camp at the end of the war. We were pleased to also have Philadelphia Channel 6ABC News there to report on this historic event.

The MAAFM thanks Diane Saltzman, Director of Constituency Engagement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, who helped make this opportunity become a reality. She said, "These two gentlemen have shared their stories with countless audiences, testifying to the truth of what they experienced and witnessed. It's an honor to help bring them together."

The MAAFM also thanks museum advisory board member Richard Walzak for initiating the connection with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," notes Trivellini. "As a museum preserving World War II history, the MAAFM was thrilled to make this meeting happen. These two men offered details about the liberation of Buchenwald and the treatment of prisoners that are unique and possibly undocumented."



Tim Kiniry
US Army Medic



Steven Fenves
Buchenwald survivor



Tim Kiniry during World War II

Outdoor Interpretive Displays

Continued from page 1

various jobs before heading overseas to defend our country's freedom.

"Our outdoor murals, with their recently installed interpretive displays, tell valuable histories," continues Jester. "Probably our most important historic artifact is the museum's operational Link Trainer flight simulator which is kept in the original World War II Link Trainer Building. Visitors can learn more about this premier equipment that was used for more than 30 years for instrument flight instruction by seeing the mural and reading its interpretive display — even when the museum is closed."

Two additional interpretive displays include one in front of the mural that honors the Millville Fire Department and its important role at the

Millville Army Air Field during World War II, and another alongside of a mural entitled *Gunnery Practice over the Atlantic*, on historic Building 31. This mural features a huge rendering of a B-26 Martin Marauder and describes the type of air-to-air gunnery training that took place at Millville during the war.

"We were very fortunate to have World War II veterans George Washington Whitehouse who flew the Marauders at Millville and Charles Osborne who flew P-47 Thunderbolts attend the mural unveiling in November 2020," points out Jester. "These two veterans of Millville Army Air Field gave their input into the creation of the gunnery practice mural and are noted in the text of its interpretive display."



Millville Army Air Field Museum executive director Lisa Jester, right, and museum president Jerry Carey, left, thank Omarey Williams, shared service coordinator for the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs, for the county's assistance through the Cultural & Heritage Commission in producing three interpretive displays describing the WWII history shown on the murals in the museum's historic complex at Millville Executive Airport.



Museum executive director Lisa Jester thanks Brian Gifford, owner of Arbrisco Enterprises, Inc., and his crew for their help installing interpretive displays in front of the museum's outdoor murals.

The MAAFM murals were designed and produced by Sam Donovan, mural artist, from Woodstown, NJ, who also created the *Wall of Remembrance Mural* on Millville City Hall and several other murals located in the historic complex of the museum at Millville Executive Airport, each documenting a specific aspect of the World War II history of the Millville Army Air Field — America's First Defense Airport.

Funding for the new displays 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 Commissioners through the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission (CCCHC).

"We sincerely thank the CCCHC for their continued support for historic preservation at the airport," notes Jester. "In addition, the MAAFM thanks Brian Gifford, a member and friend of the museum, for his assistance in installing the interpretive displays."

"We invite everyone to come to Millville Executive Airport, visit our museum, see our very special murals and learn from their interpretive displays," adds Jester. "The museum's mission is to preserve the amazing history that took place here during World War II. It is a very special place."



MAAFM Fire Department Mural



MAAFM Link Trainer Mural



MAAFM Gunnery Range Mural

Millville Army Air Field Museum adds M60A3 tank to its military artifact collection

Our museum recently acquired a United States Army 1960s-era tank to display in our historic courtyard! This very exciting acquisition came to us from the VFW 8838 chapter in Roebling, NJ.

The M60 is an American second-generation main battle tank (MBT). It was officially standardized as Tank, Combat, Full Tracked: 105mm Gun, M60, in March 1959. Although developed from the M48 Patton, the M60 tank series was never officially christened as a Patton tank. The US Army considered it a “product-improved descendant” of the Patton tank’s design, so it is sometimes informally grouped as a member of the Patton tank family.

The United States fully committed to the MBT doctrine in 1963, when the Marine Corps retired the last (M103) heavy tank battalion. The M60 tank series became America’s primary main battle tank during the Cold War, reaching a production total of 15,000 M60s. Hull production ended in 1983, but 5,400 older models were converted to the M60A3 variant ending in 1990.

The United States’ largest deployment of M60s was in the 1991 Gulf War, where the US Marines equipped with M60A1s effectively defeated Iraqi armored forces, including T-72 tanks. The United States retired the M60 from front-line combat after Operation Desert Storm, with the last tanks being retired from National Guard service in 1997. (Wikipedia)



US Army M60 tank

Although not yet in its permanent display location at the Millville Executive Airport, the M60 was transported from Roebling to Vineland, NJ, through the generosity of Northeast Precast by Garton’s Rigging, Inc. The tank weighs more than 50 tons. It is currently and temporarily located at Northeast Precast where they are donating the prep work of sandblasting, welding and painting. So many thank yous go to John Ruga, owner of Northeast Precast, and his crew of assistants for their generous donations of time and talent.



Moving day for the M60 (left to right): Travis Garton, Garton’s Rigging; Justin Wigglesworth, head of steel fabrication at Northeast Precast; Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director; Kalli Knoop; and John Knoop, MAAFM board member and project engineer for Northeast Precast.



The M60 in transit from Roebling, NJ

A very special thank you to John and Lorie Ruga, owners of Northeast Precast, for their generosity toward this project!



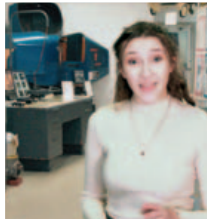
Josh Grossman, fabrication manager at Northeast Precast, and John Knoop, MAAFM board member and project engineer for Northeast Precast, inspect the M60 from above.

Link Trainer educational video wins a prestigious “Telly” Award



L-r: Lisa Jester, museum executive director; Steve Graham, and Jerry Carey, president, proudly present the Telly Award trophy.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is very proud to recognize board member Steve Graham, president of Graham Communications, for winning a prestigious Telly Award for the educational Link Trainer video he created for the museum. Telly Awards recognize excellence in local and regional digital and non-broadcast video, and television programming. Thank you, Steve, for your tremendous talent and expertise! The video is available on the museum's website: p47millville.org.



Ava Hojnowski, a graduate of Gateway Regional HS in Woodbury Heights, NJ, truly made the educational Link Trainer video interesting and engaging.



L-r: Steve Graham; Melissa Eckstein, Career Counselor, Gateway High School; Clair Delany and Ava Hojnowski, GHS graduates and participants in the video.

New US Marine Corps display features donations from the LaBelle family



L-r: Joan Legg, museum display coordinator; Lisa Jester, executive director; Ed Cox, volunteer; and Thomas “Ted” LaBelle.

A multitude of items donated by the LaBelle family formed the foundation for a new US Marine Corps display at the MAAFM. In June 2022, artifacts belonging to Edward LaBelle, a WWII and Korean War veteran, were donated by his son Thomas “Ted” LaBelle from Toms River, NJ, and Ted’s brother, who still serves in the Marines. Ted is a retired New Jersey State Trooper. The donations include uniforms, books, plaques, photos, medals, and much more.

We sincerely thank the LaBelle family for sharing this history at our museum and with all those who visit here.



Note: special thanks to Joan Legg, museum display coordinator for an outstanding job creating the new US Marine Corps display!

MAAFM World War II lecture series held at the Wyble Museum



Ralph H. Thomas
WWII historian

The Millville Army Air Field Museum was very proud to present a free lecture series on World War II focused on the European Theatre of Operations (ETO), highlighting less frequently covered topics of the war.

The lectures were held biweekly on Saturdays from January through May 2022 in the Henry E. Wyble Historic Research Library and Education Center, which is located at 23 Peterson Street, Millville Executive Airport, Millville, NJ, on the campus of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.

The lecture series was presented by Ralph H. Thomas, local amateur World War II historian and author of the book *WWII: 50 Objects That Helped Win The War and The Companies That Made Them*.

Topics ranged from the *Rise of the Third Reich* to the *U.S. Home Front*, to *Allied Secret Operations*. The lectures were interesting and informative. Ralph is planning to hold another lecture series in 2024.

Thank you, Ralph, for sharing your knowledge and expertise!



Ralph Thomas' presentations were educational, accurate, and often fun, and he supported his presentation with many rare and interesting World War II artifacts.

Veteran Interview Project marches forward

The Veteran Interview Project, a partnership between the MAAFM and the Millville Public Schools, continues to expose many students to the amazing opportunity to meet and ask questions of World War II veterans. Due to COVID and the distance some of the veterans live, a number of interviews were done virtually to keep this important initiative going strong. Among those were Rocky Gannon, Charles Osborne, George Rubin, and Tim Kiniry. Gannon was a B-17 pilot during World War II, then flew for 18 months in Korea, during the Belgian Congo War, and a remarkable 387 missions in Vietnam. After 37 years of service, he retired from the Air Force with more than 6,000 hours in 34 different types of aircraft.

96-year-old Navy veteran John Quinesso, pictured far right being interviewed by Millville High School freshman Leighanna Teti, was interviewed twice by Millville High students. He was a Radioman on the Landing Ship LSM-302 that shuttled men, tanks, aviation fuel and supplies to Pacific island battle sites during World War II. He received the exciting message that World War II was over and notified the Captain.



100-year-old WWII veteran Tim Kiniry, from Minotola, NJ, did a virtual interview via Zoom.



Millville High School student Leighanna Teti interviews John Quinesso from Vineland, NJ, a US Navy WWII veteran.

Students soar with the 2022 Summer Aviation and History Program

Area high school students were able to attend in-person and virtual experiences through the summer program hosted by the Millville Board of Education and the Millville Army Air Field Museum. The program took place from June 28 to July 28, 2022.

The program included presentations about aviation and World War II history, touring the museum, speaking to and interviewing World War II veterans, an experience in the Link Trainer flight simulator, and much more!



Students learn about the US Navy A-4 Skyhawk on display in the museum's historic courtyard from Navy veteran and museum volunteer Ed Cox.



Jim Crispo, museum volunteer, explained the uses of the 1967 M151A1 Jeep.



Mike Castania from the New Jersey Civil Air Patrol directing an activity on aerospace.



Macey Williams, a sophomore at MHS, learns the principles of using a WWII sextant, an artifact that was donated to the museum by MHS history teacher Bill Branin.



Millville High School student Jacob Falcon takes flight in the original Link Trainer flight simulator.



Museum volunteer Roy Wilson teaching students the fundamentals of flight.



Students watching the Link Trainer video

Museum's World War II-era C-3 Link Trainer restoration completed by dedicated volunteers

A full cosmetic restoration of the museum's original World War II-era C-3 Link Trainer was completed in April 2022 by a group of dedicated volunteers. Ed Possenti, Jim Crispo and Ed Cox began the project in January 2022 when they discovered many of the component parts for the Link stored away in Building 31.

While the C-3 is not restored to operational, all of the components are now in place and historically correct. This WWII-era Link is on display next to the museum's C-8 fully operational 1950s-era Link in the original Millville Air Base Link Trainer building that is part of the Millville Executive Airport's historic district.

These Link Trainers, flight simulators that were used from the 1920s through the early 1950s, were the only pieces of apparatus used to teach pilots how to fly under poor visibility conditions. There are just a handful of them left in the world. The museum is very fortunate to have two WWII-era and one 1950s-era Links.

The restoration of the C-3 Link Trainer included repair and/or replacement of the wings, canopy, rudder and rear stabilizer. Some pieces had to be totally re-fabricated such as metal parts, brackets and braces. In addition, a new step up was fabricated from aluminum diamond plate, to assist with viewing the inside of the cockpit.

In the cockpit, the throttle was rebuilt and installed and a museum mannequin is seated wearing an authentic US Army Air Corps shirt with brass tabs on the shoulders that belonged to Ed Possenti's father, who served during WWII.

The volunteers used online photos and information from universities and other museums to insure historic authenticity wherever possible.

As a supplement to the C-3 restoration, two showcases were set up with additional parts, pictures and informational pieces that further explain how the Link Trainers operated.



C-3 Link Trainer before its restoration.



Ralph Thomas, museum member and local WWII historian, inspects the C-3 Link Trainer.



Interior of the cockpit of the C-3 Link.



Jim Crispo points to the aluminum step that was fabricated.

The MAAFM sincerely thanks our talented volunteers, and all of the members and friends of the museum who made financial contributions toward this wonderful restoration project.



New Link Trainer showcases display component parts.



Ed Possenti, from Vineland, shows some of the inner workings of the C-3 Link.



MAAFM officers thank volunteers for their outstanding work on the C-3 Link Trainer. Left to right: Bob Trivellini, vice president; Jim Crispo and Ed Possenti, volunteers; Jerry Carey, president; and Chuck Wyble, vice chairman.

Millville Wheels & Wings 2021 Pilots Party...

An evening of celebration and recognition the night before the airshow, sponsored by Donald Daigle, president of Charles Schwab of Millville



Lisa Jester accepted commemorative lithographs from the US Army Golden Knights on behalf of the museum.



WWII veteran Charles 'Sandy' Wentzell, 99 years young, from Salem, NJ, was able to attend the pilots party and meet US Air Force Major Cabo Gunderson, pilot of the F-22 Raptor (left). Sandy Wentzell was a radio operator on an 8th Air Force B-17 during WWII, and saw service again during the Korean War where he was captured by the enemy and spent time as a prisoner of war. Sandy is shown here on the right with Donald Daigle, president of Charles Schwab, Millville, NJ, who sponsored the 2021 pilots party.



Guests at the pilots party, held at the New Jersey Motorsports Park Officers Club, were treated to a performance by the US Army Golden Knights Parachute Team.



The Golden Knights presented their show baton to John and Lorie Ruga, owners of Northeast Precast, the airshow's Top Gun Sponsor.



WWII veteran John Quinesso, Sr., age 95, of Vineland, NJ, expresses his excitement to attend the pilots party. John served in the US Navy from January 1944 to May 1946. He was a Radioman Second Class on the USS LSM 302 (Landing Ship Medium) in the Pacific Theatre.



John Quinesso with US Army Golden Knight Ty Kettenhofen



MAAFM board member CJ Wettstein, left, and wife Nicole, with US Air Force Major Cabo Gunderson, pilot of the F-22 Raptor



Members of the US Army Golden Knights Parachute Demonstration Team recognized and thanked the MAAFM at the Pilots Party.



Logan Fisher, age six, with some members of the Golden Knights

Millville Airshow 2021 Continued from page 1

The highly acclaimed Lockheed Martin **USAF F-22 Raptor** — the most dominant and advanced air superiority fighter in the world — presented a “loud, fast and powerful” demonstration of modern American air power.

The **US Army Golden Knights** — the official 18-person parachute team of the United States Army — performed twice daily during the two-day airshow. The **Knights** jumped from 13,000 feet above the airport, traveling nearly 120 miles per hour and landing with pin-point precision.

“We had a very exciting Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2021,” said Jerry Carey, MAAFM president. “The weather cooperated and the museum was

honored to host another outstanding community event that showcased the fastest, loudest military jets, rare historic warbirds and a list of aviation performers.

“It was a fun-filled family day, with five hours of aerial performances, dozens of static aircraft and hundreds of classic cars on the ground, great food, vendor displays, bouncies for the kids, and of course, many visits to the museum, where the important WWII history of Millville Airport is preserved for future generations. This year we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Millville Army Air Field — America’s First Defense Airport — which was dedicated on August 2, 1941.

“On behalf of the museum, I thank our volunteer committee, headed up by Lisa Jester, airshow director, along with many community-minded individuals and sponsors who assisted in making the Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2021 such a success,” noted Carey.

Special thanks go out to David Schultz Airshows LLC, Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow producer, for their assistance and expertise in creating another great airshow here at Millville Executive Airport!



On the ground...



US Army Golden Knights Parachute Demonstration Team



WWII B-25 Mitchell Panchito



WWII veteran Tim Kiniry, from Minotola, NJ, received the commemorative performance baton from the US Army Golden Knights on Saturday, September 4.



Steve Graham, MAAFM social media director, and assistant Gina Trivellini (shown here in their orange volunteer shirts) had the opportunity to fly with the US Army Golden Knights during one of their performances.



P-51 Mustang



TBM-3E Avenger operated by the CAF Capital Squadron from Culpeper, VA



Lisa Jester, Airshow Director



B-25 Mitchell Panchito WWII bomber



US Air Force F-22 Demonstration Team



Verna's Flightline Restaurant and Catering crew, left to right: Brenda Kelley, Whitney Kunkle, Lauren Tobolski, Rebecca Tobolski, and Verna Herman, owner.



Logan Fisher, age 6, with US Army Golden Knight



MAAFM vice president Bob Trivellini with WWII veteran Stan Tarquinio



Crowds lined the runway ramps.



Warbirds on static display



Millville Mayor Michael Santiago addressed the crowd during opening ceremonies and then hugged his grandson!



US Army Golden Knights Team jumper lands right on the X.



The Randazzo family from Bridgeton, NJ, with WWII veteran John Randazzo in the driver's seat of their 1954 Jeep. Left to right: Vincent Randazzo, WWII veteran John Randazzo Sr., John Randazzo Jr., Jamie Leigh (standing); Eric Randazzo, Andrew Randazzo (kneeling)



American flag on an 80' Crane provided by Northeast Precast



Russell Davis, Museum Chairman



The museum's historic C-47 Skytrain Nose had many visitors, both young and old.



An airshow guest took time to shake the hand of WWII veteran Tim Kiniry.



Hundreds of beautiful classic cars and trucks were on display for the "Wheels" part of Wheels & Wings 2021.



Museum member and friend Scott Sheppard displayed his 1941 Plymouth convertible, which is believed to be one driven by a pilot at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII.



Beth Smithson, from Cape May, NJ, owner of Big Sky Aviation, the FBO at Millville Executive Airport, received the commemorative performance baton from the US Army Golden Knights on Sunday, September 5.



50-50 winners

Aircraft on static display



Peter Galetto, president of DunRite Sand and Gravel, welcomes the crowd. DunRite was the opening ceremony sponsor.



In the air...

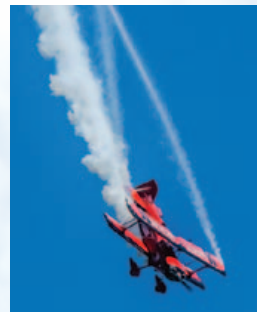


F-22 Raptor and P-51 Mustang performed the Heritage Flight each day.



Kevin Russo SNJ-6 Demonstration

Trojan Thunder T-28s



Jacquie B. Extra 300



A member of the Golden Knights Parachute Demonstration Team prepares to jump.



PT-26 flown by Ron Gerstner

DH-115 Vampire from Vampire Airshows flown by Jerry Conley



Jerry Conley de Havilland Vampire

PROFILES IN SERVICE

The Cox Family — *three generations of U.S. Navy veterans... and more!*

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is proud to have solid connections to the Cox family of Millville, NJ — a family that has given selflessly of their lives serving our country with pride and dedication.

Ed Cox, a volunteer at the MAAFM, his father Jack Cox and son Ed Cox Jr. all served in the U.S. Navy, and there are others!

Seaman 1st Class John E. Cox

Let's begin with Jack Cox, who left high school to enlist in the U.S. Navy in February 1944. Jack had two older brothers who were serving in the U.S. Army at that time and one younger brother who served later in Korea in the National Guard.

John E. (Jack) Cox served from 1944 to 1946 on the USS LCSL III, a landing craft support ship that was commissioned in 1945. Notes son Ed about the LCSL III, "The U.S. built 130 of these boats during WWII, pumping out one every 29 days, a great achievement and a great amount of work back then."



The LCSL III was designed for massive shore landings, known then and now as amphibious assaults.

Jack received his amphibious training at Little Creek, VA. He traveled from there to Florida as crew of the LCSL III, headed through the Panama Canal to San Diego, from there to Pearl Harbor, and on to Okinawa, Japan, where he arrived on April 1, 1945. There he was part of the Invasion of Okinawa.

Ongoing, Jack's LCSL III was often used to "skunk patrol" — looking for small Japanese boats that attacked ships in the harbor at night.



Jack Cox's ship, the USS LCSL III, returning to San Francisco after the war in 1946.



Crew on board the USS LCSL III. Seaman 1st Class Jack Cox is circled.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Edward J. Cox, Sr.

Ed Cox had many interesting experiences during his years of service in the U.S. Navy. He enlisted in 1966, trained in Great Lakes, IL, and had technical training on jet engines in "A" School at Naval Air Station Memphis. He was sent to a patrol squadron in Washington State, at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), in July 1967, where he was part of an air crew assigned to the Lockheed P-2 Neptune. The Lockheed P-2 Neptune was a maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft.

Ed was assigned to the powerplant shop and Flight Crew 9, which had 10 crew members. He was second mechanic answering to the plane captain/flight engineer.

At the end of October 1967, Ed landed at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, a U.S. Air Force Base that was also a major naval base. His missions there were part of Operation Market Time, the United States Navy and South Vietnam's successful effort, begun in



attempting to infiltrate the area. Two were engaged and destroyed by Navy ships, one "blew itself up," and the fourth turned and left the area.

Ed's crew was then called to action to be part of a task force at Iwakuni, Japan, where they assisted with the search for the USS Pueblo, an intelligence-gathering ship that was attacked and captured by North Korean forces on January 23, 1968. This was later known as the Pueblo incident or alternatively, as the Pueblo crisis — the seizure of the U.S. Navy ship and her 83 crew members, one of whom was killed and 82 who were imprisoned, tortured and humiliated by their North Korean captors. North Korea claimed that the Pueblo was not in international waters but had crossed into their territorial waters. Finally, after 11 months in captivity, political negotiators settled on a release of the Pueblo crew.

The efforts to find and free the Americans who were captured on the USS Pueblo involved numerous planes of all types, loaded with weapons to retaliate. They worked around



Ed Cox Sr.'s P-2 Neptune taxiing — the one he crewed in. Est. 1967

1965, to stop the flow of troops, war material, and supplies by sea, coast, and rivers from North Vietnam into parts of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Ed's crew and the P-2 were used to monitor up and down Vietnam's coastal shipping area, "looking for 100-foot fishing trawlers that were used to bring in enemy armament."

Early in March 1968, Ed's squadron was able to locate four enemy trawlers

the clock searching for submarines, pending messages that didn't happen. Ed Cox and many U.S. military servicemen were part of that effort and are to be commended.

In February 1968, Ed was promoted to an E-4 — Petty Officer 3rd Class and Machinists Mate. In May 1968 he married his high school sweetheart, Joan Estadt, and they moved to Whidbey Island, WA. While at Whidbey, the P-2 transitioned to the P-3 Orion and

Ed was sent to Moffett Field, San Francisco, for training. Ed was then stationed at Naval Air Station Barbers Point in Oahu, HI, with his wife. Their daughter Michelle was born there.

In August 1969, Ed was once again deployed to Iwakuni, Japan. In January 1970, daughter Michelle was born in Hawaii. Ed was deployed again in October 1970, so they shipped everything back to Millville — Joan and baby — where Joan's parents lived.

Ed went to the U-Tapao, Thailand AFB, where his crew did similar missions up and down the coast of Vietnam. There were 10 aircraft in his squadron.

Petty Officer 1st Class Edward J. Cox, Jr.

Ed's son Ed Jr. served in the U.S. Navy for nine years from 1992 to 2001. He began his career with nuclear school in Orlando, FL, for six months, followed by another six months of prototype training in Balston Spa, NY. More education followed in nuclear welding school and machine shop training in Groton, CT.



In the middle of January 1971 Ed left the squadron for Naval Air Test Facility, Lakehurst, NJ, where he spent the next four years working on jet engines. His son Edward, Jr., was born in 1972 in Toms River. From 1971 to 1975 Ed was at Lakehurst.

Ed left the military in January 1975 — after almost eight and a half years and just prior to the end of the Vietnam War in April. Since then, Ed and his family have lived in the Millville area. Before his retirement, Ed worked for Glass Machine in Vineland, Airwork Corporation in Millville, and Durand Glass in Millville.

Ed Jr. was deployed several times on the USS Augusta SSN-710 submarine. He later re-wrote the quality assurance procedures for that submarine. Ed Jr. spent four years in Charleston, SC, as an instructor at nuclear school as a Petty Officer First Class.

Ed Jr. currently resides in the Millville area and is a vice president of sales for DMC Power.



Above and right: Ed Cox Jr.'s Augusta SSN 710 submarine returning from deployment in 1994/95.



The Cox family's military service doesn't end there.

In addition to Jack, Ed and Ed Jr. there are these family members who have served: brothers-in-law Mike McNiss, U.S. Navy; Mike Stanek, U.S. Navy; Al Priest, U.S. Air Force; nephews Jon Erber, U.S. Navy, and Mike Stanek, Jr., U.S. Navy.

Such outstanding examples of military service for our country. The MAAFM is proud to honor the Cox family.

USS LCSL III ship model on display at the Museum

World War II veteran Jack Cox hand built a model of his gun boat USS LCSL III in 1991. The model is an exact 1:48 scale replica.

Jack was a mold maker by trade and cut and carved the ship model out of a solid block of sugar pine, 4' x 8" x 8". The model was on display at the Recruitment Command Center in Great Lakes, Illinois. When the Command Center closed, the model went to the Great Lakes Museum. In recent years, the model was not displayed and Ed began contacting them to see if he could retrieve it, but was getting no response. It was not until Ed talked to Lisa Jester, executive director of the MAAFM, and Lisa reached out — museum to museum — that a plan went into motion. Lisa requested that the model come to the MAAFM where it could be displayed much closer to the Cox family. Lisa received a positive response.

April 10, 2022: Ed Sr. and Ed Jr. took a road trip to Illinois, where the model had been in storage, and picked it up. They had the original case that their father/grandfather had built to ship it in.



The MAAFM is very proud to now have on display this beautiful model of the USS LCSL III, built by WWII veteran Seaman 1st Class John E. (Jack) Cox. The model is surrounded by artifacts that document his service and that of the U.S. Navy ship.

Ed Cox as he picked up his father's model in April 2022 from Illinois, where it had been in storage.



MAAFM's 21st Annual Veterans Appreciation Day honored Korean War veterans and POWs

The MAAFM paid tribute to our nation's veterans on Saturday, November 5, 2022, at its 21st annual Veterans Appreciation Day at Millville Executive Airport. More than 250 veterans and visitors attended the event. The program recognized the many contributions of Korean War veterans and Prisoners of War (POWs), but honored all American veterans.

The 2022 event featured guest speaker 100-year-old Charles "Sandy" Wentzell, from Salem, NJ, a World War II veteran who later served in Korea. During WWII, Sandy was a B-17 Radio Operator who flew 30 combat missions in the 8th Air Force, including the first mission to Berlin. He was called back into service during the Korean War, serving as an observer on the ground, guiding aircraft to enemy targets. He was captured and spent time as a prisoner of war before escaping. He has been honored by the government of South Korea for his heroism.

Bob Trivellini, MAAFM vice president and master of ceremonies, introduced Barry Smith, from Millville, NJ, a dear friend of Sandy Wentzell, who told about Sandy's military career, accomplishments and sacrifices. Barry then turned the microphone to Sandy who gave first-hand accounts of his experiences.

Bob then introduced Anthony DiStefano, museum volunteer and research historian, who read the names of the 14 young airmen who perished while training at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII. Anthony did extensive research on the fallen airmen of Millville, reaching out to family members and gathering detailed information about each.

Keeping with a pre-COVID tradition, the event also featured 11 Millville High School student volunteers and four members of the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol — welcoming veterans and assisting with the day's activities. The museum was also pleased to have youth from the Cumberland County Sheriff Explorers group attend and assist.

During the 11am ceremony, museum executive director Lisa Jester presented commemorative plaques to the wives of two beloved MAAFM board members who passed away in 2021 — Paul Black-

stock and Jerry Benfer. Paul Blackstock was a board member from 2017 to 2021 and was instrumental in acquiring a Home Depot Grant that allowed restoration of historic Building 31 in the museum's historic complex. Jerry Benfer was a board member and secretary from 2006 to 2021 who gave countless volunteer hours to the benefit of the MAAFM. Bernadette Blackstock and Rita Benfer received the plaques, which are now displayed in the main museum headquarters building and Building 31 respectively.

The colors were again presented by Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland, the national anthem was sung by Cody Miller, from Williamstown, Taps was played by Raymond Bates of Buena, NJ, and Jim Rembisz from Pennsylvania played the military tribute medley on the bagpipes.

The free "Canteen" lunch for all visitors was once again sponsored by Verna's Flight Line Restaurant and Catering, that donates all of the food for the event. Special thanks to Verna's Flight Line, Bottino's ShopRite, Angelic Health, and South Jersey Paper Products for their donations.

Sincere thanks go out to all participants, sponsors and volunteers who helped make the day so special for our visiting veterans and their families!



Members of the Cumberland County Sheriff Explorers assisted with Veterans Appreciation Day.



Sgt. Edward R. Cole, from Pennsville, NJ, Vietnam veteran, with his outreach display on the Vietnam War

Charles "Sandy" Wentzell
Guest Speaker
WWII US Army
Air Corps and
Korean War veteran



Barry Smith, close friend of Sandy Wentzell, provided a special introduction.



WWII veteran Charles "Sandy" Wentzell, 100, speaker for the VAD ceremony, enjoys conversations with other WWII vets Richard Young, 97, left, veteran US Navy, and John Ferguson, 99, center, US Army Air Corps. John Ferguson was a ground crew member in the China-Burma-India Theatre. Both live in Woodstown, NJ. Behind them is George Reese, who is Richard's son-in-law.

The MAAFM was honored to recognize board member and secretary Jerry Benfer, from Bridgeton, NJ, who passed away in December 2021. A commemorative plaque was presented to his widow Rita.

Pictured from left to right: Judy Benfer, sister-in-law; Mike Benfer, brother; Rita Benfer, spouse; Jayne Benfer, daughter-in-law; Andrew Benfer, son; Bob Trivellini, museum vice president; Jack Benfer, grandson; and Grace Benfer Bostwick, sister-in-law.



Bob Possumato, US Navy Captain (retired) talks to US Navy WWII veteran Mike Jordan from Vineland, NJ.



Paul Blackstock, from Franklinville, NJ, MAAFM board member who died in August 2021, was recognized with a plaque presented to his widow, Bernadette Blackstock.



Veteran George Martin, past commander of the Millville American Legion Nabb-Leslie Post 82, with MHS students Layla Narzikulov and Amiyah Byers.



Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland presented the colors.



C/MSgt Hayden Smith doing the Pledge of Allegiance



US Army veteran Bob Dalessandro, center left, and US Navy veteran Ed Cox carry the commemorative wreath, escorted by Cumberland Civil Air Patrol members C/A1C Josh Carstens, left, and C/A1C August Gay, right.

Cumberland Civil Air Patrol Members, l-r: C/MSgt Hayden Smith, C/Lt Shawn Ronan, C/A1C Josh Carstens and C/A1C August Gay



Omarey Williams from the Cultural and Heritage Commission watches with pride during the MAAFM's commemorative ceremony.

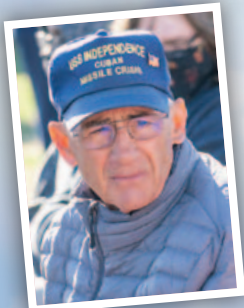
Jim Rembisz played a military tribute on the bagpipes. A number of seats designated for WWII veterans were empty this year but the spirits of those we lost were remembered and honored.

All of the photos on these pages were taken by **Scott Sheppard** of Millville. We thank Scott for these outstanding photos and for the 12-minute highlight video he created, which is available on the Millville Army Air Field Museum Facebook page.



The Faces of our Visiting Veterans...

at Veterans Appreciation Day 2021 & 2022



Thank you to our veterans!

Museum welcomes new director of the Wyble Library

Our museum is very pleased to welcome Charles Brozina to serve as our new director of the Henry E. Wyble Historic Research Library and Educational Center located at 23 Peterson Street in the historic complex at Millville Executive Airport.

Charles Brozina, from Millville, NJ, has a bachelors degree in history and a masters degree in library science. He began his career as a librarian at three different elementary schools in Millville — Wood, Mt. Pleasant and Western — for seven years. He then moved to Millville High School where he was the school librarian for 36 years.

With so much library experience and a genuine passion for history, the MAAFM is honored to have Charles Brozina as our library director for the Wyble Library.

The Wyble Library, which officially opened in April 2007, is located in one of the historic WWII buildings at Millville Executive Airport and is part of our museum.

The MAAFM sincerely thanks our previous library director, Norm Gluckman, for volunteering his time and expertise for so many years.



Lisa Jester, executive director of the Millville Army Air Field Museum, welcomes Charles Brozina as the museum's new library director. Charles immediately got to work organizing and documenting new acquisitions.

His interest in and knowledge of WWII history will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Charles, for taking on this volunteer position!



The Millville Army Air Field Museum thanks TrustFlow Digital Solutions for their generous contributions.



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MAAFM's 20th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the Millville Army Air Field

The museum once again was honored to pay tribute to our nation's veterans at its 20th annual **Veterans Appreciation Day**, held on Saturday, November 6, 2021. The program celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Millville Army Air Field, which was dedicated by the US War Department in August 1941.

"As always, our salute to veterans was very memorable," said Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director. "We had more than 200 people attend and beautiful weather — making our commemorative day very special. While we honored the service of the many veterans who attended, along with all who served, we also celebrated the 80th anniversary of the airport — America's First Defense Airport — as we keep its history alive and preserved here at the Millville Army Air Field Museum."

Guest speaker for the event was World War II veteran Charles "Ozzie" Osborne, from Laurel Springs, NJ. Ozzie was stationed at the Millville Army Air Field, where he received his advanced gunnery training in P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend for health reasons. However, museum president Jerry Carey read Ozzie's message, which told of his experiences with and appreciation of fellow veterans.

Several World War II veterans and their families attended Veterans Appreciation Day, including John Quinesso and Mike Jordan from Vineland, NJ, and Charles "Sandy" Wentzell, from Salem, NJ, who presented the commemorative wreath at the 11:00 am ceremony.

Along with them, veterans of all American conflicts and peacetime servicemen and women were honored on this special day.

During the ceremony, Donna Vertolli, longtime museum board member, made a presentation to the family of Andy Kondrach, from Hammonton, NJ, who was one of the original founders of the

Millville Army Air Field Museum. Andy, who passed away in May 2020, served as president for many years and was chairman emeritus. He was instrumental in the founding, building, sustaining, and promoting of the museum for more than 30 years.

Also, as part of the day's program, and on behalf of the museum, Lisa Jester thanked Omarey Williams, shared service coordinator for the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs, for the county's assistance through the Cultural & Heritage Commission in producing three interpretive displays which describe the WWII history shown on the outdoor murals in the museum's historic complex

The colors were presented by Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland, the national anthem was sung by Kim Wozunk, also from Vineland, Taps was played by Raymond Bates of Buena, NJ, and a military tribute medley was played on the bagpipes by Jim Rembisz from Pennsylvania. Our sincere thanks go out to them and all of our volunteers who helped make the day so special once again. In addition we thank the members of the Cumberland County Civil Air Patrol for their assistance with the event.

The day's activities featured a free "Canteen" lunch for all visitors, sponsored by Verna's Flight Line Restaurant and Catering, that donates all of the food for the event. Special thanks to Verna's Flight Line, Bottino's ShopRite, Angelic Health, and South Jersey Paper Products for their donations.



Museum volunteer Anthony DiStefano from Washington Township is a US Marine Corps veteran.



Jim Vertolli, museum member, was happy to say hello to Lisa Jester's father, John Barbagello, US Air Force veteran, who sadly passed away on April 27, 2022.



Mike and June Chiola from Millville. Mike is a US Navy veteran.



Most of all...
**thank you to all
of our veterans
for your service!**



C/MSgt Hayden Smith with WWII veteran Sandy Wentzell from Salem, NJ



C/SrA Olivia DeCicco of the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol helped serve up donuts.



Museum volunteer Willard Graham from Millville is a veteran of the US Air Force, 1965 to 1969.



Museum member and volunteer Adrienne Possenti with WWII veteran Mike Jordan from Vineland, NJ



C/Ltd Shawn Ronan and C/MSgt Rusteum Kultanov from the Cumberland County Civil Air Patrol helped distribute donuts to visiting veterans.



Members of the Cumberland County Civil Air Patrol escorted WWII veteran Sandy Wentzell from Salem, NJ, to carry the commemorative wreath forward, followed by a salute to veterans. Bugler Raymond Bates played Taps.



MAAFM president Jerry Carey (left) read a message from WWII veteran Charles "Ozzie" Osborne.



Joe Derella, former director of the Cumberland County Commission, offered appreciation to all veterans.



Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director, welcomed more than 200 guests to Veterans Appreciation Day 2021.

Jim Rembisz played the Armed Forces Medley on bagpipes during the ceremony.



Members of the Cumberland County Civil Air Patrol assisted with the ceremonies. Pictured from left to right: C/Lt Jacob Currey, A1C August Gay, C/MSgt Hayden Smith, C/MSgt Jebediah Echus, C/SrA Olivia DeCicco, C/Ltd Shawn Ronan, and C/SMSgt Rusteum Kultanov.



Semper Marine Detachment #205 from Vineland, NJ, posted the colors.



The Cole Mobile was present to visit veterans. On the right is Cole the Deaf Dog, a therapy dog and the official mascot of the New Jersey Veterans Home in Vineland. He is shown with his partner Chris Hannah of Millville. On the left is wife Nicole Hannah and her partner Cece.



2022 MAAFM Movie Night Stars

Bob Leicht ★ March 8

US Army Col. Bob Leicht (Ret.), museum member and volunteer, described the time in 2007 when he and his brothers took their father, US Army veteran Bill Leicht, back to Europe to trace the path of his unit, the 11th Armored Division, as it fought across the continent during the Battle of the Bulge. The 11th ended the war in Austria, where then-Sgt. Leicht witnessed the Mauthausen camp.



Bob Leicht answered questions regarding his trip back to Europe.

Bob's presentation was followed by the movie *The Photographer of Mauthausen*, which tells the story of one man's heroic efforts to survive in a death camp and document the horror to hold the Nazis accountable for their crimes after the war. Mauthausen was a brutal concentration camp and headquarters for the Nazi 'gulag' in Austria, which held hundreds of thousands of prisoners. It was liberated by the 11th Armored Division in May 1945.



Children whose fathers served in the 11th Armored Division — Left to right: Donna Vertolli, Bob Leicht, Bob Trivellini, Paul Trivellini, and Mark Stullenburger, whose father Stoney Stullenburger, from Millville, NJ, was in the 10th Armored Division.

George Rubin ★ June 14

George Rubin was a B-17 armorer-waist gunner in the 8th Air Force. His plane was shot down on a mission to bomb Neuberg's marshalling yard. He survived a frightening encounter with the Hitler Youth and spent the remainder of the war in German POW camps.



World War II veteran George Rubin received a warm welcome from museum officers, left to right: vice president Bob Trivellini, George, president Jerry Carey, and board member CJ Wettstein.

Below: Jerry Carey thanks George for his movie night presentation.



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 MAAFM Movie Nights!

John Quinesso September 13

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 World War II. 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.



Bob Trivellini, MAAFM vice president, left, thanks World War II veteran John Quinesso, center, and his son John, right.



Guest Ron McMahon with John

John with a photo of himself as a young serviceman during WWII



Special Tribute to the USO Women of World War II

August 23

Historical re-enactor Lee Ann Rose from Shades of Our Past, LLC, portrayed the USO entertainment director Dorothy Tully and described what it was like to be in Atlantic City during the war as a junior hostess at the USO.

Shades of Our Past provides historical education and entertainment from America's founding through all four centuries of our nation's past. Lee Ann Rose founded the organization in 2014 and was later joined by her husband Bill. Between them, they have interpreted American history for more than fifty years.

Lee Ann has extensive experience in all facets of stage presentation, combined with 20 years of creating programming as a theatrical interpreter and character interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg. Her husband Bill served as a Seabee in the United States Navy Reserves and has 30 years' experience as an interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg as a military history interpreter and character interpreter.



Lee Ann Rose
Shades of Our Past, LLC



After Lee Ann's presentation, guests enjoyed the 1944 movie *Four Jills in a Jeep*, which tells the true story of the first female performers to join the USO. The presentation by Shades of Our Past was truly awesome, fun, and informational!

We thank Lee Ann for this generous donation of her time and talent, and we thank our museum volunteer Jim Crispo, who connected us with her.



Jim Crispo, MAAFM volunteer; Bob Trivellini, vice president; Lisa Jester, executive director; Lee Ann Rose, owner of Shades of Our Past, LLC; and Mark Holfelder, public relations

MHS student Ewan Wickward named Volunteer of the Year

Millville High School senior Ewan Wickward was selected Student Volunteer of the Year for 2021 by the Millville Army Air Field Museum at its World War II Movie Night held on December 14, 2021.

Wickward volunteered many hours during his high school career and interviewed a number of World War II veterans as part of the Veteran Interview Project, a partnership between the Millville Public Schools and the museum.

The award is given annually to a high school student who has devoted volunteer 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.

Wickward was presented a certificate and given gifts by the museum at the December World War II Speaker and Movie Night event. The presenter at that event was 97-year-old veteran John Christman, of Leesburg, NJ, who was a member of the little-known Ghost Army that used elaborate deception tactics to fool the Nazis and saved many lives.

Congratulations to Ewan Wickward and thank you for your volunteer time!



Ewan Wickward proudly shakes the hand of 97-year-old WWII veteran John Christman.

Millville Army Air Field Museum vice president Robert Trivellini recognizes and thanks Ewan Wickward.



Ewan, who interviewed WWII veteran Tim Kiniry on a number of occasions, was there when 100-year-old Tim was able to meet Holocaust survivor Steven Fenves, 91, virtually, at the collaborative event between the MAAFM and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum held on August 31, 2022.

Ewan is now a college student but still attends the museum's veterans' events.



Ewan Wickward with World War II veteran Tim Kiniry.

2021 MAAFM 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 MAAFM Movie Nights!*



Roland “Rocky” Gannon ★ March 9

Rocky Gannon, from Darlington, SC, and Ocean City, NJ, enlisted when he was just a 17-year-old high school junior. He soon became a B-17 pilot and flew five missions in Europe at the age of 19 just before World War II ended.

He flew combat missions in Korea, the Belgian Congo and Vietnam during his 37 years in the 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 — totaling more than 6,000 hours.

Rocky retired from the USAF with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

His many awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star, and he was inducted into the South Carolina Aviation Hall of Fame.

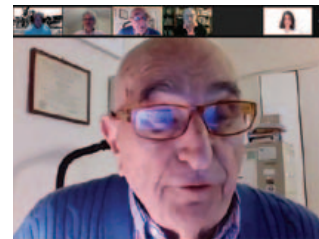


(Virtual)

Rocky Gannon circa 1943

George Rubin ★ June 22

George Rubin, from Medford, NJ, was a B-17 armorer-waist gunner in the 8th Air Force. On this 18th combat mission, his plane *Oh! Miss Agnes* was shot down on a mission to bomb Neuberg’s marshalling yard. Prior to the plane crash landing, he was able to disarm its bombs and safely release them.



(Virtual)

After the crash, he and his crew were nearly executed by members of the Hitler Youth outside of Sonthofen, Germany.

He spent the remainder of World War II in German POW camps, including Stalag Luft 13D and Moosburg.

George achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant during his service.



George Rubin, top center, with the crew of his B-17, *Oh! Miss Agnes*

Charles “Sandy” Wentzell ★ September 14

Charles “Sandy” Wentzell, from Salem, NJ, was a B-17 Radio Operator who flew 30 combat missions with the 8th Air Force, including the first mission to Berlin.

He was called back into service during the Korean War, serving as an observer on the ground, guiding aircraft to enemy targets. He was captured and spent time as a prisoner of war before escaping.

Charles was honored by the government of South Korea for his heroism.



High school students Matt and Mike Grimpley were happy to shake the hand of Sandy Wentzell.

John Christman ★ December 14

John Christman, of Leesburg, NJ, served in the US Army from March 1943 to November 1945.

He was with the 406th Combat Engineers of 23rd Headquarters Special Troops as a member of the incredible Ghost Army. They used inflatable tanks, sound effects, and extensive deception to fool the Nazis in Europe. The unit, which contained many well-known artists, deployed various theatrics to make German units think they were an entire division and not attack or defend certain areas.

The Ghost Army is the subject of a recent book, a PBS documentary, and potentially a feature film.

John was a Private First Class who fought across Europe and ended up in Germany as the Ghost Army used their deceptive operations at the crossing of the Rhine River.



John Christman spoke of his experiences in the Ghost Army.



THE ADVOCATES BRIEFING

THE ADVOCATES BRIEFING

The Millville Army Airfield Museum is proud to continue the mission of the Thunderbolt Advocates in honoring the important history of the P-47 Thunderbolt Fighter-Bombers of WWII and the men who flew them, through our events, displays, and publications.



Lisa Jester with Ozzie at Veterans Appreciation Day 2017

It was difficult to say goodbye to Charles "Ozzie" Osborne. He may be the last of our P-47 pilots who trained at Millville and lived near enough to be a very special part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum. Ozzie was another of those "greatest generation" heroes that our museum respects and honors. Vibrant and friendly until his passing at age 98, Ozzie has left a legacy of knowledge and experience for our members and visitors to cherish.

Ozzie felt his passion for flying at a very early age when his father, Charles Osborne, Sr., took his five-year-old son for a ride in an open cockpit biplane from the beach along the New Jersey shore. Ozzie fulfilled that passion for flying by enlisting in the US Army Air Corps in the Aviation Cadet Program in 1942. He did his basic training in Atlantic City and flight training (primary, basic, and advanced) at Buffalo University, becoming a P-47 pilot in 1944. Ozzie was assigned to train in P-47s in Camp Springs, MD, and then on to Millville to instruct new pilots.



...a proud P-47 Thunderbolt pilot

In Memoriam

Charles "Ozzie" Osborne

Died March 17, 2022, at age 98

"I was 20 years old when I started training in Millville," Ozzie reflected in an interview with Rachel Corma, MAAFM advisory board member, in 2016. "Training was fun. I learned to fly the P-47 out over the Atlantic Ocean and fire at targets. We would meet the tow plane carrying a long net to learn how to fire at a moving target. We learned to fire in front of the moving target in order to hit it. We learned to dive bomb. We had dummy bombs under the wings so we could practice diving and releasing the bombs."

"I was here at Millville for two months. Every two months a new group of pilots would come in. There were about 1,000 personnel on the field and 50 pilots. I lived in Laurel Springs,

which is close to Millville, so it was a nice place to train. My dad gave me his car, so I could drive home almost every night after training, and I would come back to Millville around 2:00 each morning."

When asked about some memorable training experiences at Millville, Ozzie said, "We were coming back from a mission of firing at targets over the marshes in the Delaware Bay. We were flying low at 350 mph, and we saw guys in a boat duck hunting. By the time they heard us, we had already flown past them, but they threw up their guns and shot at our planes."

"Our instructor loved to fly low. One time he took three guys, one by one, under a bridge. The commanding

officer's wife was driving over that bridge and knew to look at the numbers on the side of the planes. She told her husband what she saw and he punished the instructor. Every instructor wanted to go overseas, but the commanding officer made that instructor stay here."

Ozzie shipped out to the European Theatre in winter 1944 and flew multiple missions in Europe in the winter and spring of 1945. Their job was to support the ground troops as they advanced across Europe against Nazi Germany. First Lieutenant Charles "Ozzie" Osborne flew 26 combat missions from airstrips in Belgium, Holland and Germany in 1944 and 1945. His squadron, the 410th Fighter Squadron, received a Presidential Award for their service in 1945.

Each year on his birthday in late February, Ozzie would recall that he flew his first mission on his 21st birthday and told himself that day that he likely would never celebrate his 22nd.

How mistaken he was, as he lived to celebrate his 98th birthday a few weeks before his death.

Ozzie, the Millville Army Air Field Museum honors you and thanks you for your service during World War II, as well as for all of the wonderful first-hand historical knowledge of Millville's World War II aviation history that you shared with us and our visitors throughout the years. Our hearts are with you!



Ozzie gives a thumbs up to the museum's original Link Trainer flight simulator.



First Lieutenant Charles "Ozzie" Osborne



Ozzie with the museum's R-2800 Pratt and Whitney Double Wasp engine — the engine that powered the P-47 Thunderbolts



In 2020, Ozzie gave valuable input into the creation of the museum's mural describing P-47 Thunderbolt gunnery training shooting tow targets pulled by B-26 Marauders at Millville during WWII.

Remembering these special individuals...



Paul M. Blackstock

Died August 18, 2021, at age 69

Paul Blackstock, from Franklinville, NJ, was a very important part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum. Paul served on the MAAFM Board of Directors since 2017, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience on veteran programs to our museum. He was the founding president of the non-profit People for People Foundation in the greater Gloucester County area, and was very dedicated to helping veterans.

The MAAFM owes Paul Blackstock a huge debt of gratitude on many levels, but one of the most significant was his assistance in connecting us with The Home Depot Foundation that made the restoration/renovations to one of the historic WWII buildings at Millville Executive Airport possible. The museum was notified in August 2018 that it would receive a grant designated for improvements to Building 31. The **Team Depot** project was part of the *Celebration of Service* campaign to improve the homes and lives of US military veterans and their families. Building 31 was restored and is currently being used as a maintenance and model shop for ongoing work on artifacts and displays, and for educational purposes — for veterans, students and visitors.

The MAAFM was honored to have Paul Blackstock, who was always a gentleman with a dedicated caring for veterans, as a board member, volunteer and friend.



Jerry W. Benfer

Died December 14, 2021, at age 79

Jerry Benfer, from Upper Deerfield, NJ, served on the MAAFM board of directors for 15 years and was involved in nearly every aspect of the museum's programs and events. But what we will probably remember most was Jerry's subtle humor and ability to make us all laugh.

Jerry, a retired teacher and principal in the Bridgeton, NJ, school system, was a tremendous asset to the museum and spent countless hours volunteering his time and talent.

Some of Jerry's many contributions to the museum included being the Wyble Library Director, Millville Airshow Volunteer Coordinator, Thunderbolts Advocates treasurer and secretary, and Movie Night director (choosing appropriate movies to match up with our veteran speaker of the night and handling technical details), running our bus trips for many years, working in our library and education center, being captain of airshow volunteers, serving as racetrack box coordination for airshow track shutdowns and serving as chairman of the museum by-laws committee, among many others.

The MAAFM is so thankful to have had Jerry Benfer as part of its every mission for so many years, and is grateful to his wife, Rita, for sharing him with us. He is truly missed.



In Memoriam

Walter "Loggie" S. Kocielski

Died January 12, 2022, at age 95

The MAAFM lost another good friend and World War II veteran in 2022. Walter Kocielski, from Millville, NJ, was a longtime museum member and volunteer who offered his extensive knowledge, positive good-natured outlook, and many very compelling stories about his experiences on the beach at Iwo Jima during the war.

Walt joined the US Marine Corps in 1944. He valiantly served our country in the 4th Marine Division, 25th Regiment, 3rd Battalion, I Company, 1st Platoon, quickly achieving the rank of Corporal at the young age of 18.

At the height of WWII, Walt was deployed to Iwo Jima, in the Pacific Theatre, where he was involved in some of the fiercest battles of the war. Walter's experience at Iwo Jima at age 19 was one that would rattle any man. His division arrived at the beach on the island by amphibious craft on February 19, 1945, where the battle was already in progress. He was fortunate just to make it to a foxhole alive during the first day, as Japanese were shooting knee mortars (phosphorus grenades that were shot from tubes on the ground). By evening, as they were setting up defenses, they were pinned down by machine guns. It took five days to advance 500 yards. During those five days Walter lost many buddies who were serving right alongside of him. The stories were too sad and too scary for him to recall without becoming emotional.



WWII veteran Walt Kocielski

Of the 56 men in Walter's unit who landed on the beach that day, only six survived the first week. Walt was very fortunate to be one of them.

Several months later, Walt was about to be deployed to Japan, but when the bombs were dropped in August 1945 he was told that he could go home.

Walt never spoke about the war, battle, or life itself to promote himself; he would instead tearfully and humbly express how grateful he was to have survived and that he was able to come home and live his life with his family and friends.

Sometimes, Walt would repeat his war experience, and everyone would always listen with respect and awe as if they were hearing it for the first time. This proud veteran reliving the intense battle with vivid descriptions and emotions was truly a sight to see. The sorrow that he felt when he talked of his fellow Marines that he was friends with and then witness their tragic death would leave his captive audience speechless every time.

One of Walt's favorite sayings was "I had a foxhole buddy who was with me in battle. His name was Jesus." During the height of the battle, Walt prayed and asked the Lord to wake up his parents back home and have them pray for him. In the middle of that night in their house on Fairton Road in Millville, his mother woke up and then woke her husband up and they began to pray for him. Walt's stories of survival and love for Jesus have inspired many people over the years.

Walt was a lifelong resident of Millville. Sadly, Walt's wife Doris passed a few months after Walter on March 5, 2022, at the age of 89. They had been married nearly 70 years.



...sharing his experiences with Travis Vertolli in 2016



Walt in 1944



...at the WWII Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC



...describing his experiences at Iwo Jima



...celebrating Walt's 92nd birthday in 2018 with his wife Doris (right)



...with the display of his personal history uniform and artifacts at the museum

In Memoriam

Ron Frantz

Died September 6, 2022, at age 90

The MAAFM was sad to learn about the passing of museum member and volunteer Ron Frantz. A lifelong resident of Millville, NJ, Ron served in the US Army from 1951 to 1959 during the Cold War era and was stationed in Germany.

Ron devoted many volunteer hours to our museum with special focus on the preservation and promotion of one of our most valuable assets — the Link Trainer flight simulator, located in the original WWII Link Trainer Building within the historic complex at Millville Executive Airport.

For many years, Ron Frantz was the museum's director of the Link, providing countless hours for its maintenance and display, and giving many tours to visitors. The museum acquired this Link in 2002, and Ron, a retired electrician, helped restore it. The restoration took about two years to complete and Ron knew the Link from the inside out. We are indebted to Ron for his dedicated contribution of time and talent.

The museum proudly honors the memory of Ron Frantz.



Ron Frantz with Lisa Jester in 2019



President Chuck Wyble presented Ron Frantz with a certificate of appreciation from the museum in 2018.



Ron Frantz in the cockpit of the museum's Link Trainer

Dorothy (Dottie) Cullen

Died April 26, 2022, at age 96

Vineland resident Dorothy Cullen, a small-town girl from West Virginia, was a volunteer with the USO in Washington, DC, while her husband fought in Europe. She entertained many troops in locations throughout DC, including the famous Stage Door Canteen.

A lifelong advocate for veterans, Dottie hosted parties and organized activities honoring both veterans and active military.

The MAAFM was very fortunate to have Dottie speak about her experiences in the USO at our movie night in September 2016, and also attend and participate in several Veterans Appreciation Days.



Frances (Francy) Hyson

Died January 21, 2022, at age 97

Frances Hyson, from Salem, NJ, was an active member of the USO for three years during World War II. She participated in USO events across the Delaware Valley, including attending dances right at the Millville Army Air Field.

She celebrated V-J Day dancing with soldiers on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. She later flew gliders at the Millville Airport in the 1950s.

Francy also spoke about the USO at the museum's movie night in September 2016, sharing fun stories about the contributions made to the war on the home front.



George Mitchell

Died December 24, 2021, at age 92

George Mitchell, from Millville, NJ, joined the US Navy at the age of 18 where he studied electronics and served as a radioman for a blimp squadron that was used to monitor submarine activities off the west coast of the United States during the Cold War. He was also a crew member on the world record blimp endurance flight in 1954. He served several years at the Naval Station in Key West, FL.

A MAAFM member and friend, some of George Mitchell's Navy artifacts, including his uniform, are on display at the museum.



John Wilhelm

Died February 10, 2022, at age 66

John Wilhelm, from Vineland, NJ, was a renaissance man who was a pastor, pilot, businessman, and musician. The MAAFM was very fortunate to have John as a member and friend. Sadly, John passed away at too young an age, but the museum was very proud to have had him at the airport in 2013 for a flight in a World War II P-51 Mustang. We all miss you, John.





MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD MUSEUM

MEMBERS & FRIENDS



New museum display documents life at the Millville Air Base during WWII



MAAFM board member **Steve Graham**, Graham Communications, finishes installation of a wall display that he designed which is located in the museum. The display tells the story of the Millville Army Air Field from 1941 to 1945 with existing photos from the museum's archives. In addition to military training and preparation, the photos include social activities that took place at the base and surrounding area. The display went up in September 2022. A special thank you goes out to Steve for his inspiration and talent on this project!



Lisa Jester shows off the 1925 Player Piano, made by Schenck Piano Company, which was donated to the museum by Susan Stowe of Millville, NJ. Another wonderful asset. Thank you, Susan!

Museum members **Caroline Owens**, widow of WWII B-17 pilot Jim Owens, left, and **Carol Bradford** enjoyed the June 2022 Movie Night.



MAAFM volunteer **Ed Possenti** did outreach at the Senior Expo Fall Show at Total Turf Experience in Pitman/Mantua, New Jersey. The event, which is directed by Bob Dalessandro, another museum volunteer, took place on October 12, 2022.



Flo Garrison took a short break after her husband WWII veteran Owen passed away in 2021, but returned a few months later to volunteer as the museum's Tuesday receptionist and greeter. She is always ready and willing to help. Thank you, Flo, we love you!



WWII veteran **Tim Kiniry** turned 100 on November 15, 2021, and the MAAFM was well represented at his special celebration! Tim recently turned 101 and is still amazingly sharp and active. The museum is so thankful to have Tim as a member and friend. Shown here with Lisa Jester, museum executive director left, and his niece, Rachel Corma, right, who is on the museum advisory board.

Longtime volunteer **Dick Goldstine** (son of Bob Goldstine, who served at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII) celebrated his 75th birthday on June 8, 2021 — surrounded by the museum team of volunteers who handle all of the engineering and maintenance projects. Left to right behind Dick are Ed Possenti, Frank Nocito, Jim Crispo, and Ed Cox.



2021 Christmas Party





Millville Army Air Field Museum Annual Membership Application

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Contact the museum to arrange
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*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.

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

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