



THE MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD



Thunderbolt

Millville Army Air Field Museum

'America's First Defense Airport'

December 2023

WWII veterans honored at MAAFM's 22nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

The Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) honored American veterans on Saturday, November 4, 2023, with a crowd of more than 200 attending. The museum's 22nd annual Veterans Appreciation Day commemorative ceremony took place in the museum's historic courtyard at Millville Executive Airport at 11am. The program recognized the many contributions of our World War II Veterans along with all veterans at the free event that was open to the public.

Guest speaker for the 2023 event was Andrew "Tim" Kiniry, from Minotola, New Jersey — a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1945 with the 45th Evacuation Hospital attached to the First Army, and later the Third Army at the end of the War. Tim 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.

Continued on page 12



Semper Marine Detachment #205 from Vineland, NJ

US Air Force F-22 raptor and US Army Golden Knights will headline Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow 2024

The MAAFM is thrilled to announce that our Millville Airshow will take place on July 20 and 21, 2024, featuring the spectacular F-22 Raptor Jet Demonstration Team and the amazing US Army Golden Knights Parachute Team! Along with an extensive list of exciting aviation performers, the museum will continue its tradition of presenting a world-class airshow that honors our military and veterans.

The Millville Airshow will also feature vintage warbirds, modern military and civilian aircraft, exciting aerobatics, dozens of static aircraft, a classic car show, vendor displays, great food, fun activities for children, and of course, a visit to the museum and historic complex.

Mark your calendars for July 20 or 21!

For information on sponsorships or advance ticket sales, call (856) 327-2347.



Submariners Visit



STSAC Windred "Keith" Cameron, chief of the New Jersey SSN Submarine, left, and his crew with museum outreach director Dave McCarthy and executive director Lisa Jester.

See page 7

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JERRY CAREY

President's Message

If you are already a Millville Army Air Field Museum member, thank you! Your annual, tax-deductible contribution helps us in more ways than I can list here. If you are not currently a member, please continue reading while I share my thoughts on the importance of MAAFM Membership.

Museum membership literally helps us to keep our doors open and our lights on. Throughout its 35 years, the MAAFM has been a free museum. While grants and fundraising activities provide a huge boost, memberships are our museum's financial foundation.

The MAAFM is unique. No other place can claim to be located on the site of America's very first World War II defense airport. Our museum's threefold mission is inspiring — **preserve** that unique history, **honor** all veterans, and **educate** future generations — without charging admission.

I consider my MAAFM membership to be a small, partial payment on a debt of gratitude to every armed service member who swore to protect and preserve our freedoms with their lives.

As a society, we can all do small things to make payments on that debt of gratitude. We can honor the flag. We can thank veterans when we see them. We can remember that some holidays are as much about remembering the sacrifice of veterans as they are about the department store sales.

The veterans of WWII are correctly called the Greatest Generation. We, their children and grandchildren, should consider ourselves the Gratitude Generation, and never forget to honor their memory.

How each of us does that is an individual decision. Purchasing a MAAFM membership is one way I choose to support the museum's inspiring mission. I hope you will consider becoming a MAAFM member to help preserve this unique place in America's history, honor all veterans, and educate future generations.



LISA JESTER

Executive Director's Report

As our museum enters its 36th year, I'm proud to say that we have had another exceptional year, with our visitors continuing to offer positive comments on our progress.

Throughout 2023, museum tours and outreach activities have been extremely busy and we have reached new audiences attracting them to visit. We are proud to present a first-class tour of our museum on the inside and then include several items on display in our courtyard area. There are so many new artifacts and displays to see — especially our new M60 Tank, now in its permanent location in the museum's historic courtyard!

We are very excited to announce our 2024 Millville Wheels & Wings Airshow, scheduled for July 20 and 21, featuring the United States Air Force F-22 Raptor Demonstration and the United States Army Golden Knights Parachute Team.

All of our volunteers, especially our veterans, who come out and show their support, are a crucial part of the success of our organization. I want to offer special thanks to them for all that they do! We have so many talented people volunteering their time toward interesting projects here on the museum site, including restorations of our military vehicles.

Our 2024 calendar is packed and we hope you can join us for the many events scheduled.

I am absolutely thrilled, proud, and grateful to be a part of our unique museum here in Southern New Jersey, and looking forward to its exciting future!

Thank you to all of our members and supporters.



Supported in part by a grant from New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.

NEW JERSEY
Historical
COMMISSION

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



NJ's Southern
Shore
Your journey begins here



Thunderbolt Newsletter

Donna Vertolli, Editor

Contributors:

Lisa Jester, Jerry Carey, Bob Trivellini

Photographic contributors:

Steve Graham, Lisa Jester, Scott Sheppard,
Bob Trivellini



Millville Army Air Field Museum

1 Leddon Street
Millville Executive Airport
Millville, NJ 08332

Phone: (856) 327-2347
E-mail: museum@p47millville.org
www.p47millville.org





Millville Army Air Field WWII History Mural



Original WWII Base Headquarters Building



Many thanks go out to Brian Gifford, owner of Arbrisco Enterprises, Inc., left, and crew member Arthur Hand, for their help installing the interpretive displays!

New interpretive displays enhance the museum's outdoor historic experience

New interpretive displays were added to the museum's historic complex in 2023. These displays continue to tell the history of America's First Defense Airport with descriptive information and visual support that enhances the outdoor experience throughout the museum's historic complex. The displays were installed in early spring 2023.

The first is located in front of the Millville Army Air Field WWII History Mural which is on the side of a 4,000 square foot hangar at the corner of Peterson and Leddon Streets. The interpretive display describes the components of the mural that focus on life at the base from 1941 to 1945. The 50-foot mural was dedicated in 2011.

The next is located in front of the museum which is located in the original World War II Base Headquarters Building. It was one of the first buildings constructed at the base and served as the command center for all operations as servicemen arrived from across the country to receive training before going overseas. The display

also highlights the historic flagpole which still stands today as a tribute to the history of the air field.

Millville's WWII Historic Air Base Towers are described by the third display. The Base Control Tower was the most dominant feature of the Millville Army Air Field and stood above all of the buildings. It was built in 1942. The control tower managed all flying activities on the air field and kept constant communications with all aircraft in the vicinity. In addition the display explains the Field Range Observation Towers that were located at training sites off base. In 2011, local artist David Fisher of Millville, NJ, created a contemporary metal sculpture in the "ghosted image" style that commemorates the historic base towers.

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).



WWII Historic Base Towers Represented by Contemporary Sculpture

Navajo Code Talkers Made History during WWII

The MAAFM is very proud to have a display that honors the Navajo Code Talkers of World War II.

Of the 250 Navajos who went to Fort Defiance, Arizona (then a U.S. Army Base), from the Navajo Nation, 29 of them were recruited to develop a code based on the then-unwritten Navajo language.

They were the first all-Native American unit of the U.S. Marines and were inducted in 1942. The code is recognized for having stumped the Japanese and helped win the war.

The Navajo Code Talkers were widely celebrated years later. The original group received Congres-

sional Gold Medals in 2001. The last of the Code Talkers, Chester Nez, died in 2014.

It's a fascinating part of America's WWII history. If you'd like to learn more, please visit the museum to research our books, photos and documents!



MAAFM Moves Forward with a Professional Strategic Plan

Through a grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust, the board of directors and staff of the Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) undertook a strategic planning process beginning in March 2022, using the services of Lisa Tremper Hanover as a facilitator/consultant.

Major themes of the plan are to provide financial, operational, advancement, and institutional stability direction. The plan objectively guides leadership in more sharply defining the mission and objectives, assessing needs relative to current and future structural and operational vulnerabilities, identifying opportunities for growth, expansion, and diversity of programs, and tightly defining operations while maintaining a realistic sense of financial feasibility.

A Strategic Planning Committee was established, composed of MAAFM Board members, the MAAFM Executive Director, museum volunteers, and business and cultural leaders from the region. This group met four times to review and thoughtfully determine museum priorities related to financial sustainability and development (budget/fundraising/membership), facilities, collections, exhibitions and programming, audiences, market-

ing, and staff/governance. The group also discussed revisions and tightening of the Mission Statement, composed a Vision Statement, and affirmed Core Values for the organization. This group defined a focused vision for the future and identified specific and attainable strategic goals and action steps. Meeting dates were: March 31, 2023; June 2, 2023; October 6, 2023; November 17, 2023.

The Strategic Planning Committee conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis which affirmed strengths and identified specific areas that require attention.

Hanover conducted 16 interviews with regional cultural and business organizations, aviation museums of similar scale in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and individual members of the Board and Steering Committee, in addition to monthly meetings with Executive Director Lisa Jester and Board Chairman Russell Davis. These conversations were a benchmark to assess MAAFM's visibility and relevance and how the operation compares with similar military aviation museums.

In addition, Hanover conducted extensive study of museum documents, policies, budget, collections,

programs, previous strategic planning meetings and other background materials relevant to the MAAFM. Board, member and visitor surveys were developed, distributed and reviewed.

Hanover made three presentations to the MAAFM Board of Directors to frame the strategic planning process, to provide an update on actions and the SWOT analysis, and to present a draft of the plan and implementation strategies. Board Meeting dates were: April 5, 2023, July 12, 2023, December 2, 2023.

Numerous people representing community organizations and agencies were interviewed and their input included in the strategic plan. Hanover met with Jester and Davis to finalize objectives and action steps to support the implementation of the identified themes and goals.

The final strategic plan will come before the board in January 2024 for final approval.

Our museum is very excited to have completed the process and move forward with this comprehensive plan. We thank Lisa Hanover for her exceptional evaluation and her professionalism in developing this strategic plan.



Russell Davis, MAAFM president, right, thanks Lisa Hanover, strategic planning consultant, center. Also pictured are Chuck Wyble, museum co-chairman, and Lisa Jester, executive director.



MAAFM Strategic Planning Committee left to right: Chuck Wyble, Michele Jackson, Donna Vertolli, Russell Davis, Kim Ayres, Lisa Jester, Jim Salmon and Dave McCarthy. Absent from photo: Jerry Carey, Ray Campari, Joe Derella, Ralph Thomas, Barry Smith and Beth Smithson.

MAAFM Welcomes German Exchange Students

Our museum was happy to welcome German exchange students who toured the Museum on October 11. These students attended Millville High for two weeks and stayed with families of Millville students studying Germany.



Dave McCarthy, tour guide.



Ed Cox, volunteer, explains the Link Trainer

M60A3 MAIN BATTLE TANK

**Now proudly on display in the Millville Army Air Field Museum's Historic Courtyard
at Millville Executive Airport.**

The M60A3 Tank was manufactured by General Dynamics Land Systems Division in 1959 and entered service with the United States Army in 1960.

Although not a tank from the World War II era, the Army considered it an improved version of the Patton tank design, sometimes informally grouping it as a member of the Patton tank family.

As an American assault vehicle, the M60 was one of the world's most successful main battle tanks, with 15,000 having been produced and serving the armies of 22 countries.



Congratulations and thank you to the winner of the tank naming contest — Isla Arkainno-McDonald! Her name **American Glory** was chosen as the winner and received a museum gift certificate!! Isla is a 6th grade student at Lakeside Middle School in Millville, NJ. Pictured left to right: Christina MacDonald, Isla's mother; Isla; Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director; and Bob Trivellini, museum vice president.

Scenes from Sparkle: A Unicorn Tale movie, filmed at Millville Executive Airport



The MAAFM is excited to announce that the movie *Sparkle: A Unicorn Tale* has been released and is available on Xfinity OnDemand. This family film contains some scenes shot at Millville Airport. The museum was happy to assist with uniforms, military vehicles, aircraft and access to the runway ramps.

The movie tells the story of 15-year old Annabelle (Molly Jackson) who runs away from an orphanage with two other children to rescue the animals on her family's farm before they are taken by a greedy neighbor. The orphans discover that a magical unicorn has taken up residence and they try to determine the mythical beast's purpose.

A special thank you goes to the DRBA for their assistance with allowing the "unicorn" to trot down the runway!

Veteran Interview Project continues to capture veteran oral histories

Our Veteran Interview Project continues to achieve key components of our mission by preserving the important histories of veterans and educating future generations about their contributions to significant events in history. This long-time project is a partnership between the Millville Army Air Field Museum and the Millville Public Schools. It involves high school students interviewing and videotaping veterans about their service history. We are thankful to Voya Financial for their recent financial assistance through their Unsung Heroes grant to Millville Schools for the Project. Students interviewed a number of veterans, both in person and virtually, over the past year. Ed Cox, Pete Forcinito, and Dave Goodwin were veterans interviewed for the first time.

Ed Cox, Sr. served in United States Navy during the

Vietnam War as an E-4 – Petty Officer 3rd Class and Machinists Mate. He was part of an air crew assigned to the Lockheed P-2 Neptune, a maritime patrol and anti-submarine aircraft that monitored Vietnam's coastal shipping areas. In 1968, their squadron located four trawlers loaded with enemy armaments. Three of the four ships were destroyed before these could be used against United States and South Vietnamese troops. He served a total of eight and a half years from 1966 to 1975.

Pete Forcinito served in the United States Army from 1954 to 1956 during the important and often-overlooked Cold War. He served in Germany at a time of elevated tensions between Russia and the countries of the West, including the Hungarian Revolution. Earning the rank of corporal, he was specifically trained to use both a bazooka and a

machine gun while serving in the infantry. He was also a member of the National Guard for three years.

100-year-old veteran Dave Goodwin served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He was a tailgunner in the China-Burma-India Theater of the War and flew over “the hump” of the Himalayan Mountains on more than 25 missions. He served on a B-29 most of his time, but also served on a B-17. He survived having his planes shot down twice. Once, they were returning to India when it was jumped by three Japanese fighters, and he had to parachute out. Later in the War, his plane had to crash land on the nearest island, which turned out to be Iwo Jima in the middle of the horrific battle there. His pilot landed the huge B-29 less than 100 feet from the edge of a cliff.



Ed Cox



Ed Cox being interviewed by high school student John Carstens

Pete Forcinito's granddaughter, Gina Trivellini listens in during her grandfather's interview



Pete Forcinito



Dave Goodwin

Museum's 1/3 scale P-47 Thunderbolt Razorback replica under restoration

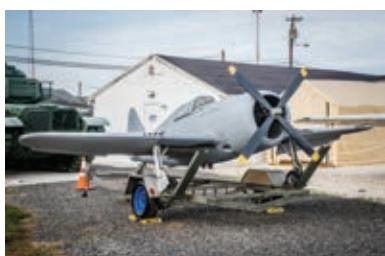


Pictured left to right: Rich Davidson, MHS business administrator; Tony Trongone, Millville superintendent of schools; Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director; Ed Cox, museum volunteer, project director, and former MHS football player; and museum volunteers Ed Possenti, Jim Crispo, Barry Smith, and Paul Lokey.

The Museum's P-47 Thunderbolt replica made its debut at the dedication of Millville Senior High School's new and improved Wheaton Field on September 30, 2023. A group of museum volunteers, led by U.S. Navy veteran Ed Cox of Millville (center), went into high gear with the restoration of the replica which is now prepped to be painted in the authentic Millville Army Air Field paint scheme and markings.

The Thunderbolt sports teams of Millville were proudly given their name in 1945 to honor the World War II P-47 Thunderbolt fighter planes that flew over Millville from 1942 to 1945.

The P-47 Thunderbolt was the primary aircraft used for pilot training at the Millville Air Base — America's First Defense Airport — during WWII. Thunderbolts played an integral role in the success of numerous air battles in both the European and Pacific theatres of conflict.



P-47 Thunderbolt replica on display at Veterans Appreciation Day in the museum's historic courtyard, November 2023.



Thunderbolt replica displayed at the new Millville High School football field in September.

US Navy Chief and Crew of the new New Jersey SSN 796 Submarine enjoyed a special visit to America's 1st Defense Airport

The MAAFM was proud to host members of the U.S. Navy New Jersey SSN 796 submarine crew on August 15, 2023. The new submarine, named after the State of New Jersey, is scheduled for official launch in 2024.

Chief of the submarine, STSMC Windred "Keith" Cameron, along with other crew members and members of the USS New Jersey Commission Committee, toured the Museum and historic courtyard, along with visiting Smith & Jackson Military Antiques, and a visit to the Glasstown Brewery for a Meet-the-Crew Event.



PCU (Precom Unit) New Jersey (SSN 796) is a Virginia-class attack submarine. The Virginia-class is a class of nuclear-powered fast attack submarines in service with the U.S. Navy. The submarines are designed for a broad spectrum of open-ocean and littoral missions.

Our museum was honored to help host this special visit and plans to be represented at the official launch in 2024.



STSMC Windred "Keith" Cameron, chief of the New Jersey SSN Submarine, left, with his crew with museum outreach director Dave McCarthy and Executive Director Lisa Jester.



Dave McCarthy, MAAFM outreach director, tells New Jersey SSN crew members the story of America's 1st Defense Airport. Below: Dave shows the museum's original R2800 P-47 Thunderbolt engine.



USS New Jersey SSN 796



New Jersey SSN crew members pose in front of the museum's U.S. Navy A-4F Skyhawk combat jet aircraft.



The event included a visit to Smith & Jackson Military Antiques at the airport — pictured with owners Michelle Jackson, left, and Barry Smith, right.



STSMC Windred "Keith" Cameron, chief of the New Jersey SSN 796 Submarine, addressed the crowd.



Visitors had an opportunity to meet and greet the chief and staff of the new US Navy New Jersey SSN Submarine

Movie Night Stars 2023

Dr. Eugene Richardson, Tuskegee Airman

March 14

Dr. Eugene Richardson, 98, from Philadelphia, PA, is one of the original Tuskegee Airmen of World War II. He completed 40 weeks of training at Tuskegee Army Air Field and graduated as a fighter pilot on March 11, 1945. He flew both P-40 Warhawk and P-47 Thunderbolt fighter planes as a 2nd Lieutenant.



Robert Trivellini, MAAFM vice president, welcomes WWII Tuskegee Airman Dr. Eugene Richardson, 98, and Mel Payne, President, Greater Philadelphia Chapter Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., to the museum for Movie Night, March 2023.



Tuskegee Airman Dr. Eugene Richardson, standing on the left.

Air Raid Warden Program

August 15

Local Air Raid Warden, Bill Rose, historical re-enactor with *Shades of Our Past*, LLC, discussed the necessity of defense preparedness on the home front and presented a brief lecture with a Q & A afterwards. On this evening, guests were taken back to 1943, where local citizen volunteers recruited for Civilian Defense were given training from an air raid warden. The presentation answered the question: As we fight the Axis, what do you need to know to keep your neighbors safe in case of an air attack?

Shades of Our Past provides historical education and entertainment from our nations' past.



JoAnn Street, niece of Clayo Rice, who was a Tuskegee Airman from Bridgeton, NJ, offers a hug to Dr. Eugene Richardson. Her uncle Clayo and Richardson trained together and were roommates at one point. Left is JoAnn's daughter, JoEllyn Jones.



WWII Tuskegee Airman Clayo Rice, at the museum for Movie Night, September 2009. Clayo passed away on June 12, 2013, at the age of 89.



Bill Rose, re-enactor from *Shades of Our Past* historical interpretation company.

Movie Night Stars 2023

Carl May

June 13

World War II veteran 1st Lieutenant Carl May, USAF, from Delran, NJ, was a B-26 Marauder pilot who flew 32 combat missions against the Nazis. He was with the 9th Air Force serving in the European Theater.

Carl May was recently featured on ABC World News Tonight

He was interviewed by David Muir, and flew a plane to celebrate his 100th birthday which was on March 25, 2023. At his birthday party, Carl was joined by his 13 children, 31 grandchildren, and 40 great-grandchildren.



Carl May during WWII



Robert Trivellini, MAAFM vice president, right, gave Carl May a gift from the museum of photos that were taken throughout the years when he visited or spoke at Movie Nights.



WWII Veteran Carl May taking flight on his 100th birthday in March 2023, sporting his MAAFM hat on national television! Thanks, Carl!

Special Movie Night Event: Honoring Bob Mills and his Legacy

September 12

Bob Mills flew a U.S. Navy TBM Avenger torpedo bomber during WWII and was the longtime operator of the Philadelphia Seaplane Base Museum which was founded his father in 1915. Speaker of the evening was Walt Ellis from Blackwood, NJ, a longtime friend of Bob Mills and the Philadelphia Seaplane Base. Ellis received awards

from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as both a pilot and A&P mechanic. He gave a heartfelt presentation honoring his friend Bob Mills and describing important aviation history of the Philadelphia Seaplane Base which was located in Essington, Pennsylvania.

The collections of the Philadelphia Seaplane Base Museum — its history and artifacts — were entrusted to the Millville Army Air Field Museum in November of year 2000 and are proudly displayed for all to appreciate and enjoy.

Our special thanks to Walt Ellis for sharing his time, expertise, and passion.



Walt Ellis shows early photos of the Philadelphia Seaplane Base in Essington, PA.



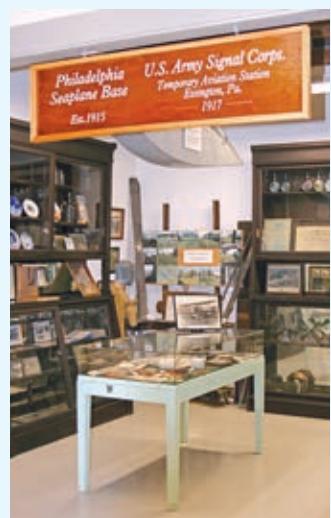
Guests were treated to a taped interview of Bob Mills done by museum chairman Russell Davis in the year 2000.



Walt Ellis explains the logistics of important early aviation history along the Delaware River.



MAAFM Chairman Russell Davis, thanks Walt Ellis for his presentation on the Philadelphia Seaplane Base Museum, along with museum vice president Bob Trivellini, left, and Jim Vertolli, one of the founders of the museum who knew Bob Mills and helped with the acquisition artifacts early on.



Inaugural Museum Open House Successful and Fun!

Our museum held its first ever open house on March 23, 2023, to a full house of guests. Museum board members and staff were excited to greet new visitors and show off our beautiful museum and its interesting and important displays of artifacts honoring the World War II aviation history of the Millville Army Air Field. Guests were treated to refreshments and a special visit from WWII veteran 101-year-old Tim Kiniry from Minotola, NJ. We are happy to report that of approximately 50 guests, 24 of them signed on for membership. Thank you all for your interest and support!



Joan Legg keeps the MAAFM exhibits accurate and interesting

The Museum is so thankful to have Joan Legg as its display coordinator and director of collections. Joan accepts and documents all donations that come to the museum and keeps accurate records using Past Perfect Museum Software for collections archiving.

In addition, Joan devotes her time and talent to creating interesting and unique displays throughout the museum using artifacts and documentation. Joan also creates special displays that change quarterly. Very special thanks go out to Joan!



Joan Legg, museum display coordinator, (right) and Lisa Jester, executive director, proudly show the expanded U.S. Marine display that Joan created.



Joan Legg with a recent donation from a WWII nurse, Florence E. Hunter. These artifacts are original pieces of shrapnel from wounded soldiers that are now displayed in the museum's military nurses show case.

Remembering and Honoring WWII Veteran William P. Duncan

William P. Duncan served in the United States Army, 69th Division, 271st Infantry & Regiment Platoon. Born in Linden, New Jersey, he signed up illegally in 1940 while still in high school. After an honorable discharge with many other underage young men he volunteered for service in December 1943. He trained in Mississippi with the 69th Division, 271st I&R Platoon and was platoon commander in Europe for the Battle of the Bulge in Germany via France. Since he was in Recon, he traveled only at night, they went via France then on into Germany. Instrumental in liberating Buchenwald as well as capturing the underground stash the Germans had for chemical warfare, along with Army Engineers blew up the bridge at Remagen. Bill served for 32 years. Received a battlefield promotion to Lieutenant during the war, but declined as he wanted to continue to lead his platoon. After the war he accepted the promotion, stayed in the Reserves and was recalled for Korea, Berlin Crisis, Bay of Pigs (Cuban Missile Crisis), Vietnam and his last command was Managing Fort Hamilton which was an Army/Navy Reserve base (now gone) where they were called for four days for the New York City mail strike. He retired in 1976 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After moving to California, he served as a volunteer on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien in the engine room as he had an extensive knowledge of steam engines, underground piping and mechanical maintenance from his private sector career. He sailed to Normandy on the ship for the reenactment of The Normandy Invasion.

After 20 years of volunteer service and working his way up to Staff Chief Engineer on the ship, he retired and returned to New Jersey. He passed away peacefully in September of 2011, always remembering his WWII experience. He was an active member of the 69th Infantry Division Reunion group that met annually for many years as well as a Mason. He was a teacher on the O'Brien, writing the program which was accepted by ABS for training men and women to get a Merchant Sea License without years of sea time. His wife, Dorothea, for 46 years also volunteered on the O'Brien and sailed for three months on the trip. After Bill passed away, he had a collection of military books old and new which she donated to the Millville Army Air Field Museum. Since Bill always had a love of flying, Millville was of great interest to him. As a couple, Dorothea and Bill visited the Museum when there were still planes that flew on occasion.



Bill Duncan in uniform in France during the celebration of the Normandy Invasion. It was taken by the O'Briens professional photographer at the time, Michael Emery.

High school students take part in Museum's 2023 Summer Aviation and History Program

In-person and virtual experiences were presented to area high school students at the museum's 2023 summer program hosted by the Millville Board of Education and the Millville Army Air Field Museum and held in July.

The program included presentations about aviation and World War II history, touring the museum, speaking with and interviewing veterans, experiencing the Link Trainer flight simulator, and much more.



Museum Volunteer Bob Dalessandro, tells the history of the C-47 in WWII to Emily Kukal and Samantha Busler, MHS Students



Museum volunteer Jim Crispo explains the function of the Link Trainer to visiting students.



Josh Carstens, member of the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol who attends Fairton Christian Center Academy, poses at the C-47 nose with museum volunteer and U.S. Navy veteran, Ed Cox.



Samantha Busler, left and Emily Kukal, right, MHS Student participants.

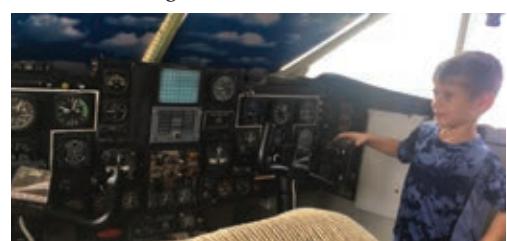


Ed Cox shows Josh Carstens the instrument on the dash of the museum's 1967 military Jeep.

Elementary students "soar" at Summer Fun Day

Elementary students had the opportunity to tour the museum and historic complex at a special fun day held on August 3, 2023.

These younger students had the opportunity to learn about aviation, fly model airplanes, tour the Link Trainer flight simulator, and much more.



Connor Harris investigates the instrument panel of the museum's US Air Force /US Army C-23 Short Sherpa Transport Airplane.



Students in front of the C-47 Nose left to right are: Keenan Ridgway, Gary Kessler, Amir Yates, and Lillianna Ridgway, all from Mount Pleasant School.

MAAFM's 22nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

Gathering of World War II Veterans

The event served as the museum's annual Gathering of WWII Veterans, giving them the opportunity to share experiences and receive special recognition from guests. In addition to Tim Kiniry, there were six other WWII veterans who attended and whose lives were celebrated: **John Quinesso**, U.S. Navy, from Vineland, NJ; **Charles "Sandy" Wentzell**, U.S. Army Air Corps, from Salem, NJ; **George Rubin**, U.S. Army Air Corps, from Medford, NJ; **Mike Jordan**, U.S. Navy, from Vineland, NJ; **Charley Pierce**, U.S. Army, from Vineland; and **Leon Struzinski**, U.S. Navy, from Williamstown, NJ. Our museum was honored to have these veterans present and we thank them and their families.



WWII Veterans John Quinesso and Mike Jordan, both US Navy from Vineland, and Charley Pierce, US Army, from Cedarville.

Dedication of the museum's M60A3 Tank

Part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum's Veterans Appreciation Day program was the dedication of the newly acquired United States Army M60A3 Tank. The 1960s-era tank is on display in the museum's historic courtyard. It came from the VFW 8838 chapter in Roebling, NJ.

"We dedicated the tank and also recognized the generosity of Lorie and John Ruga, owners of Northeast Precast, and their crew of assistants, for their help in getting the tank here to Millville," adds Jester. "Without their assistance, this project would have been a tremendous challenge. This is an awesome historic artifact and we are so thankful to the Northeast Precast team for helping with its acquisition."

Special recognition to local U.S. Navy Veteran Dave McCarthy

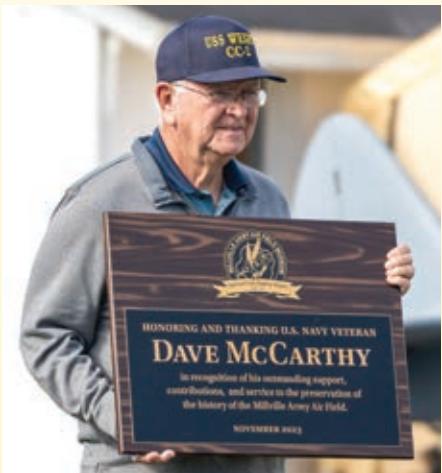
"In addition, the museum recognized the many contributions of U.S. Navy veteran Dave McCarthy, of Millville, who is a longtime museum volunteer docent and tour guide extraordinaire," continues Jester. "Dave makes continuous donations to the museum and offers his expertise on so many levels, both as a past member of the board of trustees and as a longtime museum member and volunteer."

Keeping with past traditions, the event featured Millville High School students and youth members of the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol, welcoming veterans and assisting with activities.

Displays on the museum grounds include the newly acquired M603A Tank, a U.S. Navy A-4 Skyhawk, the U.S. Army C-23 Short Sherpa aircraft, the restored original Millville Air Base fire truck, a 1967 M151A1 Jeep, the C-47 Skytrain Nose, and a 2-1/2 ton military truck. Additionally, visitors can see the four impressive outdoor murals that tell the history of the Millville Army Air Field during World War II.

The 11am ceremony also included a presentation of the colors by Semper Marine Detachment 205 of Vineland, and a musical salute to veterans. Prayers were offered for veterans both alive and deceased. In commemoration, there was a wreath laying and moment of silence.

The day's activities featured a free 'Canteen' lunch for all visitors, sponsored by Verna's Flight Line Restaurant and Catering, that donated all of the food for the event. Special thanks to Verna's Flight Line. In addition we thank Supply It All, Bottino's ShopRite of Millville, Wawa, Angelic Health, and the many sponsors who generously donated to the event.



Dave McCarthy, US Navy Veteran, was honored for his many contributions to the museum. A former board member, Dave continues to take an active role at the museum as its outreach director. He is a wealth of knowledge on aviation and military history and always make himself available for important tours where he shares his knowledge. The MAAFM offers special thanks to Dave for his ongoing support.

World War II Veterans

WWII Veteran George Rubin from Medford, NJ, with US Navy veteran and museum volunteer, Pat Peters.



WWII Veteran, U.S. Navy in the Pacific, Leon Struzinski from Williamstown, NJ



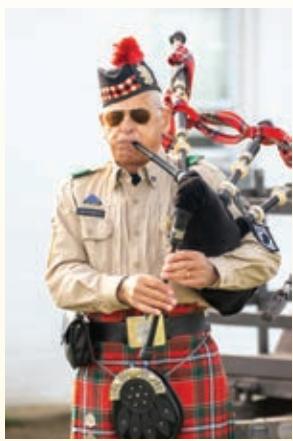
MAAFM's 22nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Day



In tribute, Macey Williams, 11th grade student at MHS, read the names of the 14 pilots who died while training at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII.



Tribute bagpiper Jim Rembisz from Pennsbury, PA, played the official song for each branch of the armed forces.



Cadet Tech Sgt. Carsten of Civil Air Patrol Cumberland Composite Squadron lead the Pledge of Allegiance.



Anthony DiStefano, US Marine Corps veteran from Washington Township, NJ and John Quinesso, U.S. Navy WWII veteran from Vineland, NJ



Milenka Zamalloa and Cheyenne Snyder served as our "Donut Dollies" of the day! They are both Millville HS seniors.



Michelle Schantz and her granddaughter Eleanor with WWII veteran Tim Kiniry.



U.S. Navy WWII veteran John Quinesso, from Vineland, NJ



MAAFM Vice President Bob Trivellini, introduces the seven World War II veterans in attendance who were honored.



Members of the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office Explorers Post 1.



MAAFM's 22nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Day



Museum board member Joe Derella introduced county and city officials, and took time to thank all veterans for their contributions and sacrifices that allow Americans to enjoy the freedom we have today.



Lisa Jester, museum executive director, welcomes visitors and veterans.



John Knoop, MAAFM board member, accepted a plaque for Lorie and John Ruga, owners of Northeast Precast, honoring them for their outstanding contributions to the acquisition of the M60A3 Tank and for their generous support of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.



WWII Veteran Tim Kiniry, age 101, from Minotola was the guest speaker for the day! Tim Kiniry served in the US Army from 1942 to 1945 with the 45th Evacuation Hospital attached to the First Army and then the Third Army at the end of the war. He was a medic at the Battle of the Bulge and other European Theater battles. Tim treated prisoners at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp after it was liberated.



A special birthday surprise for guest speaker, WWII veteran Tim Kiniry who turned 102 the week after Veterans Appreciation Day is presented with a cake by Jamie Currey of Cumberland Civil Air Patrol.



Veteran Appreciation Day 2023 included a dedication of the M60A3 Tank, located in the historic courtyard.



L-R: Joe Bush, Lou Durham and Dave McCarthy. Lou Durham, is a veteran of the US Air Force, 1961-1964.



Mural artist Sam Donovan from Alloway, NJ, made some notes to begin painting the M60A3 Tank to its specified camouflage.



Raymond Bates from Buena, NJ, played taps.



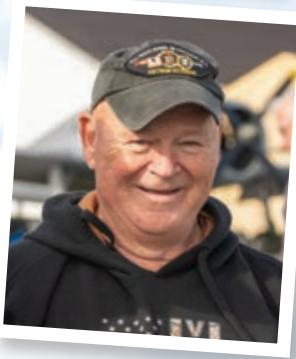
Lt. Col. (Retired) Daniel Ricketts, NJ Army National Guard, from Vineland, NJ, sang the National Anthem.



MHS student Cheyenne Snyder and museum member Katie Petronio from Pittsgrove welcomed veterans.

The Faces of Our Visiting Veterans...

at the MAAFM's 22nd Annual Veterans Appreciation Day



**Thank you
for your service!**

Golf Tournament Fundraiser Super Successful

Our MAAFM golf tournament tradition continued in 2023 with the 12th annual Seb Arrigo Invitational, held on Friday, September 8, at White Oaks Country Club in Newfield. The event was a fundraising success along with lots of fun! Special thanks go to Don Daigle of Charles Schwab, and John Scarpa, Scarpa Foundation, for being gold sponsors of this event and to Big Sky Aviation as the beverage sponsor.



Winning team members from the Comcast Business Advisor Program — Steve Galletta (left) and Connor Cook, right, with golf tournament director Seb Arrigo. Congratulations!



Millville Mayor Lisa Orndorf with MAAFM board member Steve Graham



The museum was proud to have Millville Mayor Lisa Orndorf participate in our golf tournament.



Generous tournament participants sign up for raffle items and 50-50 tickets. Thank you all.

Please support our new fundraiser...



to benefit the Millville Army Air Field Museum

Save the Date!
Friday, February 23, 2024

Millville Elks Lodge #580
1815 E. Broad Street • Millville, NJ
Doors Open: 5:30pm • Bingo Begins: 7pm

Raffles! 50/50! Door Prizes!
Space is limited.
Only 300 advance tickets will be sold!
No one under 18 years of age permitted. State Law.
No Alcohol.

\$30 for 10 games
You Receive:
• One pack of Bingo Boards (4 boards for each game)
• One Door Prize Ticket
Additional bingo sheets for \$5 each
Bring your own snacks and beverages

Special Game!
after 10 games
Designer Bag with accessories \$5
Over 60 items for Basket Auction including one overnight getaway prize!

For more information or reservations call Lisa Jester (856) 327-2347 or e-mail ljester@p47millville.org

Reservations are final!
Ticket purchases are non-refundable.
All seats must be paid at time of reservation.



Thanks for your support!

2024 MAAFM Calendar of Events

January 20 (Saturday)

WWII Lecture, Presented by Ralph H. Thomas

Topic "Products Created for the War Effort"
Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Free: Limited Seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

February 3 (Saturday)

WWII Lecture, Presented by Ralph H. Thomas

Topic "Science & Technology Innovations that Invaded Post War America", Part 1
Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Free: Limited Seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

February 17 (Saturday)

WWII Lecture, Presented by Ralph H. Thomas

Topic "Science & Technology Innovations that Invaded Post War America", Part 2
Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Free: Limited Seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

February 23 (Friday)

1st Designer Bag & Auction Bingo

Where: Millville Elks Lodge
Time: 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm (Doors open 5:30 pm)
Tickets: \$30 each & only 300 tickets sold

March 2 (Saturday)

WWII Lecture, Presented by Ralph H. Thomas

Topic "The Consumer in Post War America"
Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Free: Limited Seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

March 12 (Tuesday)

Movie Night featuring a special veteran speaker

Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Free: Limited seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

Continued Page 17

2024 MAAFM Calendar of Events

March 16 (Saturday)

Presentation by Fred Barnum

Topic: Radio Corporation of America's (RCA) Early History & Contributions During WWII
Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Free: Limited Seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

March 21 (Thursday)

Museum Open House to NON-MEMBERS!

Where: Millville Army Air Field Museum Conf Room
Time: 5 to 7 pm (come anytime)
Free: Snacks, Information, & Fun
Event is open to the public and we would love for members to bring a non-member!

June 11 (Tuesday)

Movie Night featuring a special veteran speaker

Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Free: Limited seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

July 20 & 21 (Saturday & Sunday)

Wheels & Wings Air Show featuring USAF F-22

Raptor & US Army Golden Knights

Where: Millville Executive Airport
Time: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Tickets: \$30 Adults \$15 Child (12 & under)
*Buy Advance Tickets Save \$5 per ticket
"FREE PARKING"
VIP Tickets - \$150 Adults, \$50 Children (12 & under)
Visit www.millvilleairshow.com to purchase tickets, information about show, sponsorships, vendors, etc.

August 13 (Tuesday)

Movie Night featuring Shades of Our Past

Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Free: Limited seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

September 6 (Friday)

13th Annual Golf Tournament "Seb Arrigo Invitational"

Where: White Oaks Country Club – Newfield
Time: Check-in at noon, 1:00 pm shotgun start
\$125 includes green fees, carts, dinner, & raffle

September 10 (Tuesday)

Movie Night featuring a special veteran speaker

Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Free: Limited seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

November 2 (Saturday)

23rd Annual Veteran's Appreciation Day Event

Where: Millville Army Air Field Museum
Time: 10:00 am (11 am ceremony)
Free: All veterans and general public invited

December 4 (Wednesday)

50-50 Cash Raffle (only 500 tickets available)

Where: Millville Army Air Field Museum
1st 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 10 (Tuesday)

Movie Night featuring a special veteran speaker

Where: Henry E. Wyble Library, next to Museum
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Free: Limited seating of 50 (Call to reserve your seat)

December 13 (Friday)

Annual Museum Membership/Volunteer Christmas Party

Where: MAAFM Conference Room
Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm (covered dish)
*Special thanks for everything you do!



*Honor Someone in a Place Where
American Heroes Once Stood!*



**Buy a brick paver and leave your legacy to forever honor someone
deserving in a tranquil, historic setting called the "Path of Patriotism."**

Path of Patriotism brick pavers are permanently displayed in front of the **Millville Army Air Field Museum** (the original base headquarters building) at **America's First Defense Airport** on a commemorative, historic walkway surrounding the original WWII flagpole and air base monument. Our mission is to see this walkway be as far reaching as possible to always honor America's freedom!

**Recognize an individual, family or business! Or surprise someone with an impressive and
memorable gift that lasts a lifetime and beyond.**

Commemorative laser-engraved bricks cost just \$100.



Contact the museum at (856) 327-2347 or e-mail ljester@p47millville.org for assistance.



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.

We will never forget our fallen pilots.

Our museum will always honor the memories of the 14 pilots who died while in P-47 Thunderbolts while training at Millville.

Second Lieutenant Morgan Jack Barton

2nd Lt. Barton, serial number O-728545, was born Dec. 6, 1917, in Greybull, Wyoming, and was a resident of Sheridan, Wyoming, for most of his life. He graduated from Sheridan High School in 1936. Attending Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, he studied music, won multiple medals for track, taking 1st place in the mile and two-mile races. Jack was also a member of Delta Phi Sigma fraternity and the H-Club. At Hastings he had a reputation for being a prankster, a great friend, and his love for academics, but most importantly he had a wonderful moral foundation. Four years after entering Hastings College he graduated.



A week after the attack on Pearl Harbor he entered the Army Air Corps on December 13, 1941. He received his training as a fighter pilot at Luke Field, Arizona, where he received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on August 27, 1942. He received other training in California, New Hampshire, and New Jersey. He married Miriam Lola Samelson on 30 December 1942 in Sheridan, Wyoming.

At Millville, New Jersey, he was assigned to the 352nd Fighter Squadron of the 353rd Fighter Group for the final phase of pilot gunnery training. At 9 a.m. on April 17, 1943, piloting a P-47D Thunderbolt (serial number 42-22340) on an instrument training mission, he went into an uncontrollable spin when at about 3000 feet his aircraft went into a steep dive into Barnegat Bay, near Sea Bay, New Jersey, crashing into only four feet of water about 300 yards from shore.

The first fatal P-47 pilot accident from the Millville Army Air Field, 2nd Lt. Jack Barton was twenty-five years old. Miriam, his 19 years old wife who was living in Millville, found out she was pregnant that same day. Devastated, the trajectory of their family lives was completely altered. Their daughter born nine months later grew up never knowing her father.

The "Apple of his Mother's eye," Jack's family described him as the most lively, fun-loving, well-liked fellow who would light up a room and had a great sense of humor. He expressed to his family that he wanted to be a minister after he returned from military duty.

Miriam eventually remarried. Interestingly, her mother-in-law who owned a house at Tom's River witnessed the crash that killed Lt. Barton. The irony of Lt. Morgan Jack Barton's daughter's step-grandmother seeing the tragic crash has not been lost on the family.

Second Lieutenant William Engle Canniff, Jr.

2nd Lt. Canniff, serial number O-835959, was from Englewood, New Jersey. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 22, 1920. As a boy, Bill dreamed of becoming a pilot and had pinned pictures of pilots on his bedroom walls. After graduating from Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey, he attended Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he ran cross country. William graduated Dartmouth Class of 1941. When he went to enlist in the Army Air Corps he initially did not pass the dexterity test due to a finger deformity. With great determination, he practiced picking up straight pins for hours each day for several months. He passed the test and his lifelong dream was fulfilled when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in early 1944.



He received his primary training at Jackson, Mississippi. In March he went to Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, for basic training. In May of 1944 he received his advanced training at Napier Field, Alabama, where he received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on August 4, 1944.

Second Lieutenant Canniff had been assigned to the 135th Fighter Squadron for pilot advanced gunnery training at Millville Army Air Field, New Jersey. On the afternoon of May 14, 1945, he was

piloting a P-47D-23 Thunderbolt (serial number 42-27826) on a chemical smoke training mission over the Delaware Bay. The flight leader changed the formation while Second Lt. Canniff was positioned last of the four P-47 aircraft in the formation. As a result of the formation change at a low altitude, his Thunderbolt struck the water, broke up, and submerged immediately into the Delaware Bay. No one witnessed the crash that happened approximately 2½ miles southwest of the mouth of the Cohansey Creek. The other pilots only observed a circle of smoke and his aircraft upside down before it disappeared below the surface. Another P-47 remained on the scene until relieved by a Navy PBY aircraft. Boats were dispatched to the scene, but his body was never found and his aircraft never recovered.

His younger sister Suzanna answered the knock at the door when the Army came to tell the family of the accident. Second Lieutenant William Engle Canniff, Jr., was just a week away from his 25th birthday.

Captain Harold Hedley "Red" Crossley

Captain Crossley, O-789304, was born in East Templeton, Massachusetts, on May 6, 1917. Growing up in Gardner, Massachusetts, he was the youngest boy in a family of eight. At Gardner High School he was named "The Best Athlete" in 1935. College prep was at Cushing Academy in Ashburnham where he was a three-letter athlete and a high-scoring quarterback. After graduating Cushing Academy, he entered the University of Vermont majoring in Electrical Engineering where he played football, basketball, baseball, and inter-fraternity athletics. Harold Crossley was also a member of the Gold Key National Honor Society for his Junior and Senior Years at the university. He left the university in his senior year to enlist in the Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet on September 4, 1941, from Boston, Massachusetts.



Continued

Captain Harold Hedley "Red" Crossley

Continued

Harold Crossley received his Primary Training at Dorr Field, Arcadia, Florida, from October-December 1941. He arrived at Shaw Field, Sumter, South Carolina, on December 12, 1941, for Basic Training. After completing Basic, he then transferred to Spence Field, Moultrie, Georgia, on February 19, 1942 for Advanced Training where he received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on April 29, 1942. Following graduation, he joined the 65th Pursuit Squadron in Boston, Massachusetts, transitioning to P-40 Warhawks.

Between assignments he married Christina Howcroft in September 1942.

Promoted to First Lieutenant January 1943, he then shipped out to North Africa arriving in January 1943. Piloting the P-40F Warhawk in combat over North Africa and the Southern Europe-Tunisia-Sicilian area, Captain Crossley shot down two ME-109 Messerschmitts with one more probable and damaging three. He is also credited with destroying two more on the ground.

On September 7, 1943, flying a fighter sweep on his last mission, his group was heading back to home base when they came across four barges and a sea-going tug. Not wanting to miss an opportunity, Captain Crossley led his group in an astern attack on the vessels. What he didn't realize was that the Germans had set up the four barges for their target practice. As the Warhawks were attacking the vessels, the Germans opened up on the fighter group. All vessels were sunk without a single loss to the group. When they landed at base, his P-40 was so shot up it had to be scrapped.

After completing 60 combat missions, and attaining the rank of Captain in June 1943, he was sent back to the States. After he transitioned to the P-47 Thunderbolt, Captain Crossley arrived at Millville Army Air Field in February 1944 as an Advanced Gunnery Instructor.

On April 2, 1944, shortly before noon, Captain Crossley was leading a flight of four on an advanced gunnery mission. Piloting a P-47D-2 (serial number 42-22553) when his Thunderbolt suddenly caught fire and crashed in the Atlantic Ocean 10 miles off the coast of Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Captain Harold Hedley "Red" Crossley, his father's "Pride and Joy" was just age 26 at the time of his fatal accident, had been a flight instructor for two months and was a seasoned veteran. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with twelve oak leaf clusters, Air Force Citation of Honor, and the Europe-Africa-Middle East (EAME) Campaign Ribbon with three battle stars.

Second Lieutenant Robert George Derwent, Jr.

2nd Lt. Derwent, serial number O-816063, was born December 18, 1922, in New York City, New York, and was living in White Horse, Trenton, New Jersey, when he entered the United States Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet on February 8, 1943. He attended Central High School and graduated from Trenton Catholic Boys School. After graduation from high school, he then attended Bordentown Military Institute (BMI), Bordentown, New Jersey, where his course of study was College Preparatory. Known as "Red" at BMI, he played varsity football and was an All-State point guard. He was also known for his corny jokes and great smile. Robert was a graduate of BMI, Class of 1942, with a rank of Private First Class. After BMI he worked at John Roebling & Sons in Trenton, New Jersey.



Second Lieutenant Robert George Derwent, Jr. received his silver pilot's wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on November 3, 1943, at Spence Field, Georgia.

Stationed at the Millville Army Air Field, in November 1943, he was assigned to the 536th Fighter Squadron, 87th Fighter Group for pilot advanced gunnery training. On February 8, 1944, while on an aerial gunnery mission, 2nd Lt. Derwent was number three aircraft of four. His takeoff was normal until about 300 feet when his P-47D Thunderbolt (serial number 42-22264) made a flat turn to the left, spun in, crashed and burned a quarter mile off the runway behind Reich Farm on Cedarville Road. An inspection of the wreckage revealed the propeller governor linkage had malfunctioned, causing a sudden change in propeller pitch that caused the fatal crash.

He was the youngest of the fourteen P-47 pilots killed at the Millville Army Air Field. His fatal accident happened exactly one year from his enlistment. Second Lieutenant Robert George Derwent, Jr., had only recently celebrated his 21st birthday prior to his fatal accident. He was the only child of Robert Derwent and Nora McCarthy; however, he did have two step-brothers through his mother.

Flight Officer John Francis Driskill, Jr.

F.O. Driskill, T-124801, was born June 24, 1922, in Van Horn, Iowa, and moved to Lone Rock, Wisconsin, as a child. John graduated from Richland Center High School in 1940 then went to work at the Forest City Knitting Company before enlisting in the Army on November 12, 1942.



He went to basic training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, and was later accepted as an aviation cadet. He received basic, primary, and advanced flight training at fields located in Oklahoma and Texas. On February 8, 1944, F.O. Driskill received his silver wings and was sworn in as a Flight Officer at Aloe Field, Texas. He was then sent to Camp Springs, Maryland, for P-47 transition training and on to Millville Army Air Field, for P-47 pilot advanced gunnery training with the 537th Fighter Squadron.

On July 26, 1944, on what was to be his last training flight before graduation the next day, F.O. Driskill took off in his P-47D-2 (serial number 42-8220) a little past 8 p.m. The training mission was for a night four-ship formation and navigational training. Climbing to 8,000 feet they flew over Philadelphia and then Trenton. Shortly after 9 p.m. F.O. Driskill's P-47 dropped down and away from the formation. He then started back into position. The number three position aircraft asked him if he was having any problems and to go on instruments if he lost sight of the formation or horizon. There was no acknowledgement from F.O. Driskill. Witnesses on the ground heard his engine develop trouble. His Thunderbolt rolled then went into a steep dive, impacted the ground and exploded on Pete May's farm located on the White Horse and Hamilton Roads, about 5 miles Southeast of Trenton, New Jersey. The fatal crash left a 20-foot diameter and 11-foot-deep hole in the ground.

Flight Officer John Francis Driskill, Jr., had just turned 22 years old when he died. Forty years after his death, the city of Millville and the Millville Executive Airport named Driskill Street to honor his memory.

Flightline 1944



Second Lieutenant Andrew Jackson "AJ" Easterwood, Jr.

2nd Lt. Easterwood, O-823046, was born April 4, 1923, in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, and was three years old when his family moved to Dadeville, Alabama. After graduating from Tallapoosa County High School May 1941, he entered Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University, in the fall to pursue a career in Aeronautical Engineering. During the summer of 1942, AJ worked for E.I. Du Pont Nemours & Co. in their production department.



On October 19, 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and reported for active duty on February 1, 1943. He attended training at Technical School Special Training Unit in Miami Beach, Florida, and Tennessee Polytechnic Institute Training Center in Cookville, Tennessee, where he was classified for pilot training.

His cadet training was in the Army Air Corps Southeast Training Command; preflight was at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama. He soloed in primary training at Decatur, Alabama. Basic training was at Courtland Army Airfield in Courtland, Alabama, where he was introduced to formation and night flying. Advanced training took place at Craig Field in Selma, Alabama. He graduated in Class 44-A on February 8, 1944, receiving his silver wings and commission as a Second Lieutenant at the age of 20. Following graduation, he traveled home for his first leave.

Despite recommendations for combat training, 2nd Lt. Easterwood was selected as an instructor pilot and transferred to the Central Instructors School at Randolph Field, Texas. Completing Instructor School, he returned to Courtland as an instructor before being accepted for combat training. Training in P-40s took him back to Craig Field, and gunnery at Eglin Field, Florida. He was then assigned to the Pilot Replacement Pool at Richmond Army Air Base, Virginia. Then he was transferred to Camp Springs Army Air Base in Washington, D.C., to fly the A-24 Dive Bomber and the P-47 Thunderbolt. From Camp Springs he reported to the Millville Army Air Field, to the 536th Fighter Squadron in early September 1944 for Advanced Gunnery Training in the P-47.

2nd Lt. Easterwood's dream to become a fighter pilot was snuffed out just before noon of September 23, 1944, only two weeks after reporting and on his eighth flight at Millville. He took off as the number three in a flight of four on an aerial gunnery mission. While firing on a tow target off the coast of Townsend's Inlet, his P47C (serial number 41-6498) apparently struck the tow target cable separating it from the tow craft. No one witnessed his aircraft hitting the tow target and only a Naval

pilot stationed at Wildwood saw his aircraft strike the water but did not see a parachute nor pilot. Crashing into the Atlantic Ocean seven miles from shore off the Cape May Naval Station in Cape May, New Jersey, neither he nor his P-47 were recovered.

AJ was remembered by his family and friends for his excellent scholastic work, how positive he was about life when just talking to him, and what a good influence he had on others. A close friend said AJ would make the best of any situation and would always come up with a grin. Forty years after his death, he was still missed by his family who continued to maintain a vacant chair in his memory. A memory of how much he loved his family, home and country.

He was known as an exceptional pilot, capable officer, and a perfect gentleman by his Squadron mates, officers, and men.

The City of Millville named Easterwood Street at the Millville Executive Airport in his memory.

Second Lieutenant Earle Hepburn, Jr.

2nd Lt. Hepburn, O-715538, was born in Marion Station, Pennsylvania, on April 25, 1919. He was a track and basketball star at Episcopal Academy and the University of Pennsylvania. Earle had his pilot's license before the age of 20. A University of Pennsylvania graduate class of 1941 he studied law and was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.



Passing the Army's mental test, he was notified he would be called only for a non-combat role because of complications he had from an old operation so he was rejected for the Army Air Corps. Desperately wanting to fight for his country as a U.S. Army Air Force pilot, he decided to undergo a dangerous surgery despite the advice of two surgeons who said the surgery could be fatal. Undeterred, he underwent the surgery in September 1942. He survived the surgery and enlisted in the Army Air Corps on February 1, 1943. On March 12, 1944, he earned his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant at Foster Field, Texas. At Millville Army Air Field for advanced pilot gunnery training, Earle had a short break in his training with the 537th squadron that enabled him to get married to the woman he had serenaded while in college. Loisjeanne Axelson and 2nd Lt. Earle Hepburn, Jr., were wed on May 12, 1944, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Tragedy struck on July 12, 1944, as Lt. Hepburn's P-47D (serial number 42-75500) Thunderbolt crashed short of the runway. Approaching the

runway with the tow-target still attached, the engine cut out and backfired as the P-47 rolled over on its back and dove into the ground from about 400 feet. His wife and in-laws watched the fatal accident from the Millville Air Field Officer's Club.

Second Lt. Hepburn was 25 years old and had been married exactly two months to the day when he died. When his mother was told her son had been killed, she was grief stricken as any mother would be but she was proud of her son, too. Mrs. Hepburn said his father, an Army Colonel, was on active duty serving overseas at the time and would be just as proud.

First Lieutenant William Sterling Malone

1st Lt. Malone, serial number O-664630, was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin, on October 27, 1921. Growing up, Bill loved photography as a hobby and made several cameras that took very good pictures. After high school he studied first at Marquette University and then attended the University of Wisconsin where he majored in physics. While there he was a member of Psi Upsilon fraternity. He left the University of Wisconsin in his junior year joining the Army Air Corps. Suffering from asthma, he didn't tell the Army when he enlisted and it never bothered him when flying.



Air Cadet Malone arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for Primary Training on February 27, 1942. The 30th of April 1942 he reported to Enid, Oklahoma, for Basic Training. After two months of Basic he was sent to Foster Field, Victoria, Texas, for Advanced Training. Completing Advanced Training he received his silver pilot wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on September 6, 1942. He was then ordered to Hillgrove, Rhode Island, for additional advanced training. Second Lieutenant Malone spent the next three years at bases in the United States flying larger planes and was also an Instructor during this period. It was during this time he also put in a transfer request to fighters. He was promoted to First Lieutenant on October 25, 1943.

His transfer finally granted in June 1945 he was stationed at Millville Army Air Field, for Advanced Gunnery Training as a P-47 fighter pilot with the 135th Fighter Squadron. At 5'4" and of slight build, Lt. Malone like many other pilots flew with a pillow under his parachute pack and the rudder pedals adjusted fully forward in order to have proper vision, not an uncommon practice for those of short stature. The war now ended with Japan's surrender he was eligible to be released out of the Army Air Force. His family was happy and relaxed now that they didn't need

Continued

First Lieutenant William Sterling Malone

Continued

to worry about him anymore being sent overseas. Though he was offered, 1st Lt. Malone chose to stay because of the rumors that there may soon be fighting with Russia.

On September 24, 1945, flying a P-47D-30 Thunderbolt (serial number 44-32738) on a ground gunnery training run on a range near Shaw's Mill Pond, he crashed. He was the #5 aircraft of a six-ship formation. He was unable to pull his Thunderbolt out of a dive on his third attack run on the target and was killed instantly when his airplane hit the ground behind the target.

His family noted Bill was a remarkable young man of wit, intelligence, integrity, and with a great sense of humor. His younger sister Mary Alice "Worshipped him and thought of him as a hero from the time I was old enough to think." To her, he will always be remembered as young.

His family was devastated; it made his father an "old man" overnight of which he never recovered and his mother never ceased to grieve.

Twenty-three at the time of his death, First Lieutenant William Sterling Malone had been engaged to a young woman from Millville. He would be the last P-47 Thunderbolt pilot killed at the Millville Army Air Field, and the only one during peace time.

Malone Street at the Millville Executive Airport was named in honor of him by the City of Millville in 1984.

Flight Officer Ceylon Richard Morrison

F.O. Morrison, serial number T-192074, was born in Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, on January 22, 1921. As a young boy, Richard's hobby was building model airplanes. Being very athletic, he also enjoyed playing all sports extensively. He attended Trott Vocational School and graduated in 1939 where he majored in Chemistry and was the Senior Class President. After graduation he worked as a refinisher; later he was employed by the Hooker Electrochemical Company as a chemical operator until September 22, 1941, when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) at Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, for the duration of the war.

His RCAF serial number was AF#R133143. He earned his RCAF Pilot Flying Badge on August 14, 1942, piloting transport planes. A week later on the 22nd, he married Ruth Anita Depew in



Niagara Falls, New York. Officially discharged from the RCAF on June 1, 1944, with the rank of sergeant, he was evaluated as a superior pilot and had received the C.V.S.M.

In late 1943 he had transferred to the United States Army Air Corps, First Air Force, Mitchell Field on Long Island, New York. He was rated a pilot on June 2, 1944, with the U.S. Army Air Force. Then the fall of 1944 found him assigned to the 135th Fighter Squadron at Millville Army Air Field for advanced gunnery training. On the afternoon of December 22, 1944, F.O. Morrison took off for a high altitude aerial gunnery mission in a P-47D-6 Thunderbolt (serial number 42-74849). Shortly after becoming airborne, his engine began trailing a little black smoke. At an altitude of approximately 300 feet, FO Morrison's P47 started to turn right instead of left as usual. At that point smoke began pouring from the cowling and his engine cut out. Attempting to turn his aircraft around and head back to the airfield two miles away he crashed into Union Lake when his aircraft struck the water, submerged and then exploded. Tragically the crash was fatal to F.O. Ceylon Morrison.

Flight Officer Ceylon Richard Morrison was one month away from turning 24, leaving behind a wife and infant son, Richard J.

Second Lieutenant Lee "Sonny" Lon Pryor, Jr.

2nd Lt. Pryor, O-836019, was born in Calhoun City, Mississippi, on Mar 24, 1921. He attended Columbia Military Academy in Columbia, Tennessee, Mississippi State University, and Delta State University before entering the College of Mortuary Sciences in St. Louis, Missouri, graduating in 1941. Sonny had married Mary Fox in early 1941. In January 1942, after passing the state board he received his embalmer's license. He then worked in the family business at Pryor Funeral home in Calhoun City.



Entering the Army Air Corps on January 30, 1943, at Keesler Field, Biloxi, Mississippi, 2nd Lt. Pryor then received additional flight training in Nashville, Maxwell Field, and Camp Springs. He received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on August 4, 1944, at Napier Field, Alabama. He was assigned to Millville Army Air Field, for advanced gunnery training with the 135th Fighter Squadron in March 1945.

On May 2, 1945, while on a skip bombing training mission — his final training mission — Lt. Pryor's P47G-15 (serial number 42-25185) Thunderbolt collided in mid-air with another P-47 piloted by 2nd Lt. William Slater. At approximately 2000 feet in a trail formation with good spacing between the Thunderbolts,

they were on the turn into the base leg when Lt. Slater's P-47 collided into Lt. "Sonny" Pryor's fighter. No parachutes were deployed and both pilots were killed.

Lt. Pryor's P-47 crashed just east of the Lummis Lakes dam off of Lummistown Road seven miles southwest of Millville. The crashes started a forest fire that took the New Jersey Forest Fire Service almost two hours to extinguished.

2nd Lt. Lee Lon Pryor, Jr., was the only child of Lee and Bessie Pryor. He left a widow Mary and a daughter Frances. Forty years after his death, the city of Millville honored his memory naming Pryor Street at the Millville Executive Airport.

Second Lieutenant John Dunlevy Rumbaugh

2nd Lt. Rumbaugh, O-806734, was born August 30, 1917, in Millersburg, Ohio. He was the son of a doctor. In 1935 he graduated from Millersburg High School, where he played basketball, was a manager on the football team, sang in the Glee Club and was active in the Chess Club. After graduating from Ohio State University, he was employed by the Lima G-Cord Sole and Heel Company as a chemist. An avid outdoorsman he loved hunting and fishing, and raised carrier pigeons for many years.



He entered the Army Air Corps in 1942. After basic training he was ordered to Spence Field, Georgia, for advanced training where he received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on June 30, 1943. He served briefly with the 325th Fighter Squadron at Richmond Army Air Field, Virginia. Lt. Rumbaugh was then assigned on August 9th to the 388th Fighter Squadron, 365th Fighter Group, Millville, New Jersey, for advanced gunnery training in the fall of 1943.

Piloting a P-47D-6 Thunderbolt (serial number 42-74763) on October 18, 1943, 2nd Lt. Rumbaugh was towing the target for an aerial gunnery mission off Atlantic City. He radioed the flight leader saying he had to make an emergency landing and asked for the nearest field. He was directed to Bader Field west of Atlantic City. The flight leader radioed several times to tell him to release the tow-target but communication was lost between the two aircraft. Lt. Rumbaugh lined up his Thunderbolt and leveled off for the landing but the tow-target failed to release and caught on the playground equipment located across the stream of water from the runway. The tow-target tore loose, causing his airplane to pull up sharply; then impact the ground and explode.

Second Lieutenant John Dunlevy Rumbaugh was 26 years old at the time of his fatal accident.

Second Lieutenant William Dennis Slater

2nd Lt. Slater, O-835928, was born June 21, 1917, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Having graduated from Rindge Technical High School, he took night courses at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, concentrating on mechanical engineering.

He was a skilled auto mechanic and automobile race driver before enlisting in the Army Air Force on October 23, 1942. He was first employed at Jordon Marsh Company, and then at the Pratt and Whitney plant in Hartford, Connecticut, when he enlisted into the U.S. Army Air Corps from Boston, Massachusetts.

His primary training was in Americus, Georgia, from January to March 1944. He was then ordered to Greenwood, Mississippi, for Basic training until May of 1944. After graduating from Basic training it was on to Craig Field in Alabama. He received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on August 4, 1944, at Craig Field, Alabama. Later in April 1945 he was sent to Millville, New Jersey, for advanced pilot gunnery training with the 135th Fighter Squadron.

Just after 5 p.m. on May 2, 1945, flying a P-47G-5 (serial number 42-25129), on the second pass of the skip bombing mission he was in a trail formation with good spacing behind 2nd Lt. Pryor. Approaching the base leg, Lt. Slater's P-47 collided with Lt. "Sonny" Pryor's P-47 on the turn into the base leg. The two Thunderbolts collided in mid-air at approximately 2000 feet. No parachutes were used and the crash was fatal to both pilots. The collision happened over Cedarville, seven miles south of the Millville Army Air Field. Lt. Slater crashed in Lummistown Pond, near Lummistown. A forest fire started as a result of the two planes crashing that took the New Jersey Forest Fire Service almost two hours to put out.

2nd Lieutenant William Dennis Slater was 27 years old and the oldest of the fourteen P-47 Thunderbolt pilots who perished during training at the Millville Army Air Field.

Base tower 1945



Second Lieutenant James Franklin "Tommy" Thompson

2nd Lt. Thompson, O-804072, was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, January 24, 1920. He graduated from Churchland High School in Portsmouth, Virginia. After high school James worked as a clerk for the U.S. Government at the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia. He had earned his pilot license and had been a flight instructor at the Portsmouth Airport before entering the Army Air Force as an aviation cadet in July 1942.

He attended Basic training in Nashville, Tennessee, and then Primary training at Shaw Field in Sumter, South Carolina. In March 1943 James was in advanced training at Spence Field, Moultrie, Georgia. While training at Spence Field, Aviation Cadet James Thompson wrote home telling his parents that the Army had washed out his best friends and of the 18 cadets he spoke of, only six were left. On May 28, 1943, James F. Thompson received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

In the summer of 1943 he was assigned to the 387th Fighter Squadron, 365th Fighter Group for advanced gunnery training in Millville, New Jersey. Advanced gunnery training was three months long and entailed almost 300 flying hours to become thoroughly familiar with their aircraft. Tommy was a small pilot of about 5'6" -5'7" and of slight build. So, he and other like pilots flew with a pillow under their parachute pack and the rudder pedals adjusted fully forward in order to have proper vision, not an uncommon practice for those of short stature.

Shortly after 10 a.m. on October 23, 1943, 2nd Lt. James "Tommy" Thompson was killed when his P-47D-6 Thunderbolt (serial number 42-74798) crashed while making a strafing run on ground gunnery target #2. After completion of his firing run, as he pulled up from the target at full throttle, his aircraft snapped-rolled over on its back to an inverted position and dove into the ground behind the target, exploding on impact. It was suspected that the prop-wash from the previous plane caused his crash. Although there were many theories on what caused Lt. Thompson to crash, the actual reason will never be known.

Second Lieutenant Charles Melchoir Weber, Jr.

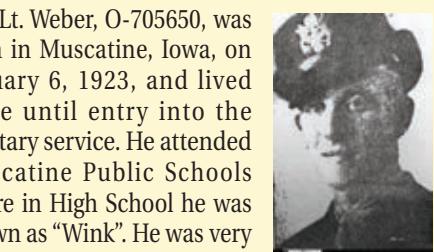
2nd Lt. Weber, O-705650, was born in Muscatine, Iowa, on January 6, 1923, and lived there until entry into the military service. He attended Muscatine Public Schools where in High School he was known as "Wink". He was very active in high school where he was on the basketball and tennis teams, Chemistry Club, Lettermen's Club, and the Junior Ad Club. His hobbies were hunting and fishing. After graduating high school, he went on to Muscatine Junior College. He worked in the family's Weber Cigar Store before enlisting in the Army Air Corps in July 1942 and was called to duty in February 1943.

He received his silver wings and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on January 7, 1944, at Aloe Field, Victoria, Texas. In the spring of 1944, 2nd Lt. Weber was sent for P-47 pilot advanced gunnery training at Millville, New Jersey, with the 536th Fighter Training Squadron.

Piloting a P-47D-2 Thunderbolt (serial number 42-8275) late in the afternoon of May 23, 1944, Lt. Weber took off for a ground gunnery training mission at the Millville gunnery and bombing range (B) near Laurel Lake. He had made four dry passes at the ground target pulling out each time at an altitude of approximately 100 feet. On the fifth pass at the target, Lt. Weber did not fire and proceeded almost straight forward at the target. His P-47 knocked down the target striking the ground in a semi-flat attitude exploding upon impact. A crash truck and ambulance were dispatched to the crash site almost immediately.

The crash was fatal to 21-year-old Second Lieutenant Charles Melchoir Weber, Jr. He was the only child of Charles and Sarah Weber.

**Special thanks to Anthony DiStefano,
MAAFM volunteer, for his valuable and
informative research of our fallen pilots**





America's First Defense Airport

MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD MUSEUM

MEMBERS & FRIENDS

MAAFM Benefits from NJMP Last Lap Event



The MAAFM was very excited to be chosen to receive the proceeds of a New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) event called the Thunderbolt Last Lap, held on October 5, 2023. The event allowed vehicles — street cars, trucks, motorcycles and other motorized vehicles, to take part in charity pace laps on the Thunderbolt Raceway for a \$10 donation, before NJMP began a major repaving project of the race track. The museum received a \$1,170 donation that was collected at this historic event. Many thanks to NJMP for choosing our non-profit museum as its beneficiary. Pictured left to right: JD King with the South Jersey Region, SCCA; Joseph Derella, Inspira Health's assistant vice president of ambulatory operations and MAAFM board member; Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director; NJMP President and COO, Brad Scott; and Rosemarie Grawl, NJMP CFO.



Millville High School History Teacher Mike Jones was honored to meet WWII veteran Richard (Dick) Young at the museum in August 2023. Dick 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.



Willard Graham, was a sergeant in the US Air Force, from 1965 to 1969. Willard, from Millville, is the MAAFM's Saturday volunteer and is a wealth of knowledge.

Thank you
for your
support!

Vern Patterson Visits Museum's Link Trainer



Our museum was honored to have a visit from Vern Patterson, from the National Museum of WWII Aviation in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He is their Project Manager for the Link Trainer. They recently restored a C-3 Trainer. Vern was on the east coast and came to see if he could help us with our C-8 Trainer where the locking bars on the sides would not release. We thank Vern for his time and expertise offering numerous suggestions that have helped us resolve the problems which turned out to be a vacuum leak/ disconnect. L-R: museum volunteer Ed Cox with Vern Patterson.



Members and friends of the museum were excited to celebrate the 90th birthday of Flo Garrison, on January 25, 2023. Flo is a longtime museum volunteer and widow of WWII veteran Owen Garrison.



L-R: Patty Oliver, Flo Garrison and Susan Davis



Dorothea Duncan, widow of Bill Duncan who is featured on page 11, visited the museum in January 2023 and shared stories with WWII veteran Tim Kiniry.



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