



Millville Army Air Field Museum

'America's First Defense Airport'

December 2025

MAAFM Celebrates the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II *...with a presentation from veteran Tuskegee Airman Dr. Eugene Richardson*

Our museum was honored to present a celebration of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II on September 27, with featured speaker WWII Veteran Tuskegee Airman Dr. Eugene Richardson of Philadelphia.

100-year-old Dr. Richardson completed 40 weeks of training at the Tuskegee Army Air Field and graduated as fighter pilot on March 11, 1945. He flew both P-40 Warhawk and P-47 Thunderbolts.

Dr. Richardson spoke about the famous Tuskegee Airmen of the U.S. Army Air Forces, also known as the "Red Tails", who were a group of primarily African-American military pilots and airmen who fought in World War II.

Flying P-47 Thunderbolts and, later, P-51 Mustangs, the Tuskegee Airmen formed the 332nd Fighter Group which was part of the 15th Air Force. They successfully

protected American Bombers from German fighter planes during missions over Italy.



Nearly 100 guests attended Dr. Richardson's presentation which was held in the museum's Wyble Library.

"The Millville Army Air Field Museum was thrilled to host a Dr. Richardson to honor his service and that of all Tuskegee Airmen," said Bob Trivellini, MAAFM vice president. "He has visited our museum several times in the past and we thank him not only for his service to our country but for sharing his knowledge with so many others through his friendship to our museum."



Mel Payne, president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., shared the history of the Tuskegee Airmen and introduced Dr. Eugene Richardson.



MAAFM's 24th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day honored all veterans for their service



Maddie Manno, Rowan University student, sang the National Anthem as the Semper Marine Detachment #205 from Vineland, New Jersey, presented the colors.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum paid tribute to our nation's veterans on Saturday, November 1 — with a moving ceremony and noon luncheon — at its 24th annual Veterans Appreciation Day. More than 200 veterans, family members and guests attended the event that recognized all veterans.

Guest speaker for the event was Millville, New Jersey, native Donna Pio whose father, Staff Sergeant Robert (Bob) D. Goldstine, was a U.S. Army Air Corps World War II veteran who served at the Millville Army Air Field as a P-47 Thunderbolt mechanic. Donna described her

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JERRY CAREY

President's Message

This will be a milestone year for our country and for the Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM). One month after the July 4 celebration of America's

America's "First" Air Defense Airport. And, since 1988, we have educated visitors about that history and honored the memory of the more than 10,000 men and women who served here.

One way that we honor their memory is by making sure our museum is free to all who visit. Since the first brooms and shovels began clearing an abandoned WWII building that became the MAAFM, the support of members like you has allowed us to offer free admission to the four, fully restored historic buildings that house our rare collections.

In recognition of the 85th anniversary of the dedication of the Millville Army Air Field, we are offering an historic opportunity to join the MAAFM's 1941 Society. You can read more about the 1941 Society in the pages of this newsletter.

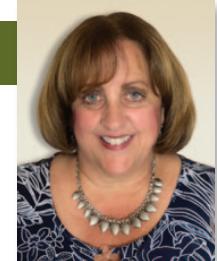
Your support, regardless of the amount, helps to preserve the Millville Army Air Field's simple but inspiring mission to **Preserve** Millville's unique WWII history, to **Honor** all veterans, and to **Educate** future generations of the sacrifices of those who helped protect the freedoms that the founding fathers first bestowed on our nation 250 years ago.

Executive Director's Report

As our museum proudly celebrates its 38th year and marks the 85th anniversary of the Millville Army Air Field, we reflect on another remarkable year of growth and community engagement.

Our visitors continue to share how much they enjoy returning to see the exciting changes and enhancements we've made. Our tours and outreach programs have been incredibly active, helping us reach new audiences and inspiring more people to visit. We take great pride in offering a first-class experience — beginning with an engaging tour of our museum's exhibits and concluding with impressive displays in our courtyard.

Our volunteers — especially our veterans — remain at the heart of our organization. Their passion, commitment, and talent are vital to the success of our many projects, including the restoration of our historic military vehicles.



LISA JESTER

Looking ahead, our 2026 calendar is filled with exciting events and opportunities to connect with our community. I am deeply grateful to be part of such an inspiring team and look forward with great enthusiasm to the museum's bright and promising future.



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



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



Thunderbolt Newsletter

Donna Vertolli, Editor

Contributors:

Jerry Carey, Lisa Jester, Bob Trivellini

Photographic contributors:

Rachel Corma, Steve Graham, Lisa Jester, Scott Sheppard, Bob Trivellini, CJ Wettstein



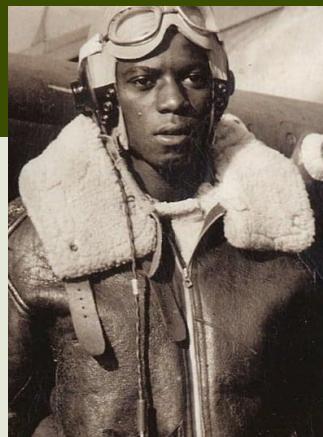
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Thank You...WWII Veteran Tuskegee Airman Dr. Eugene Richardson



Dr. Eugene Richardson pictured top left with the Tuskegee Airmen Class 45A. (Black Archives of Mid-America)

Above left: Airman Eugene Richardson during WWII.
Right: Richardson, proudly wearing his Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to the Tuskegee Airmen by President George W. Bush at the White House in 2006.



After his special presentation, visitors to the Museum lined up to shake Dr. Eugene Richardson's hand, thank him for his service, and in some cases ask for an autograph.

Come visit with WWII Veteran Tim Kiniry

People from far and wide come to the museum to spend time with 104-year-old WWII Veteran Tim Kiniry! Tim has been visiting the museum monthly for informal presentations since spring of 2025.

Tim Kiniry, from Minotola, NJ, served in the US Army from 1942 to 1945. He was a medic at the Battle of the Bulge and at other European Theatre battles where his group treated thousands of prisoners in field hospitals located just behind battle lines. Tim treated prisoners at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp shortly after it was liberated.

Fascinating information! Thank you, Tim!



Call the museum for the next date to see Tim.

(856) 327-2347



Special Presentation from WWII Veteran Alan Shapiro educates and entertains guests at the Museum



Alan Shapiro, 18, at flight training in Georgia, 1943

U.S. Army Air Corps veteran Alan Shapiro, 100 years old, from Blue Bell, PA, spoke at a special event held at the Museum's Wyble Library on April 12, 2025.

He told about his experiences as a C-47 "Skytrain" pilot, flying missions against the Nazis, dropping paratroopers into Germany and supplying ammunition and fuel to allied tank units in Normandy.

Alan Shapiro was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Allied Airborne, 316th Trooper Carrier Squadron. His amazing recollection of his experiences mixed with his tidbits of humor made this program truly educational and entertaining.

During the 80th Anniversary of D-day celebrations at Normandy in 2024, Alan had the opportunity to fly the Tunison Foundation's 1943 Douglas C-47 "Placid Lassie" over the skies of Europe. He was invited to fly a C-47 again at Normandy in 2025.



At the end of the presentation Alan was recognized by Sean Lockheed, Director of Veterans Affairs and Diana Breen, from the All Airborne Battalion, with honorary "jump wings" for his many contributions and support of paratroopers during WWII.

Thank you Alan Shapiro for your military service and for your friendship to our museum!



Sean Lockheed from All Airborne Battalion with Alan Shapiro



MAAFM Vice President Bob Trivellini thanks Alan Shapiro on behalf of the museum.



Diana Breen from All Airborne Battalion enjoys a light moment with Alan Shapiro



Alan Shapiro at the Museum in 2024



Alan Shapiro took a seat in the cockpit of the Museum's C-47 Skytrain Nose that honors the memory of WWII 2nd LT Anze Dalessandro, from Woodbury, NJ, who was a C-47 pilot. Alan is shown here with Anze's son Bob Dalessandro (center photo).



2025 1941 Society Members

Avfuel Corporation
B&B Poultry
Craig Becker
Carol Bradford
Jerry Carey
Christy Funeral Home
Robert Conner
Dr. Brian Davis
Russell O. Davis
Delaware River & Bay Authority
The Espoma Company
Bob and Elaine Frantz
Zachary King
Vivian Kontes
Bill Lacyk
Jim & Jill Marsteller
Dave McCarthy
NJ Motorsports Park
Elizabeth Pagano
Kenneth Peterson
Peggy and Ralph Thomas
Beth & Doug Smithson
Bob Millard
Donna & Jim Vertolli
Nicole and CJ Wettstein
Chuck Wyble

As of 12/10/25

Welcome to the 1941 SOCIETY



Founding members of the **1941 Society** who were recognized and thanked at the MAAFM Veterans Appreciation Day 2025, left to right: Donna Vertolli, CJ Wettstein, Carol Bradford, Zachary King, Peggy Thomas, Ralph Thomas, Russell Davis, Beth Smithson, Chuck Wyble, Kenneth Peterson, and Bob Millard.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is honored and excited to promote its **1941 Society**, celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the Dedication of **America's First Defense Airport**, and the **250th Birthday of the United States**, both in 2026.

Created to commemorate the year of the Millville Army Air Field's dedication on August 2, 1941 and the 250th birthday of the United States, both in 2026, **The 1941 Society** pays tribute to all of our donors who give \$1941 or more in any calendar year (January 1st to December 31st).

In addition, anyone who gives a new or increased gift, including that of \$1941 or more, between now and August 2, 2026 will have their gift matched 1:1 via "The Director's Challenge," established by Beth and Doug Smithson in honor of the Museum's executive director Lisa Jester.

Thank you to all of our 1941 Society Members who signed up in 2025!



MAAFM Executive Director Lisa Jester was recognized by Jack Smithson and the Smithson Family for her 20 years of outstanding leadership as executive director of the Museum. The Smithson Family announced a matching gift of up to \$100,000 for donations pledged by August 2, 2026.

Special thanks to MAAFM 2025 Endowment Fund Contributors Jane and Peter Galletto; and Russell Davis and Dr. Jill Mortensen in memory of Susan Davis.

Become a member of the
1941 Society and be part of
the museum's mission of
**Preservation
Education & Honor**
Please contact the museum
at (856) 327-2347

DONATE ONLINE





Movie Night Stars 2025



Marston "Butch" Mischlich, PhD

March 11

The author of **Southern New Jersey — Pulling Together During World War II**, Marston (Butch) Mischlich shared the story of Twin Lakes, the secret bomb manufacturing plant outside of Mays Landing. They developed and manufactured the M69 incendiary bomb there for the military.

The movie that followed his presentation, **Ballfield to Battlefield and Back** told the story of the 5000 professional baseball players who served in the armed forces during World War II. It is narrated by George Case, a famous major leaguer from South Jersey. The movie includes extensive home movies by Case of his fellow ballplayers.

*Below left: Marston (Butch) Mischlich with samples of two types of bombs; center, Russell Davis and Bob Trivellini with Mischlich; and right, Jim Vankoski from the Delaware County Sports Museum in Radnor, PA, co-producer of the **Ballfield to Battlefield and Back** video.*



Guest Speaker Bob Dalessandro describes the important role of the C-47 Skytrain transport plane during WWII.

Bob Dalessandro

September 9

A U.S. Army veteran himself, Bob Dalessandro spoke about the World War II service of his father, 2nd Lt. Anze (Andy) Dalessandro. Anze was a C-47 troop transport pilot and participated in three of the largest airborne operations of the War — Operation Market Garden, Bastogne (Battle of the Bulge), and Operation Varsity.

In lieu of a movie, Bob lead visitors to see the our C-47 nose, which is located in the Museum's historic courtyard. He also told about his own service with connection to the Museum's M60 Tank.



Bob Dalessandro with a C-47 model; with students Frank Ciabattoni, Dax Lashley and Madison Wydra in front of the C-47 nose and with Carol Bradford, Museum member, and Ben Barnes, Museum volunteer at the M60 Tank.

Artist Diane Rogers creates six WWII-style posters promoting the Millville Army Air Field Museum

Artist Diane Rogers, executive director of the Millville Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts, recently completed six unique posters promoting the important World War II history of the Millville Army Air Field, America's First Defense Airport.

The project, formally entitled *WWII Posters — Building Connections to Millville Army Air Field History through Art*, promotes the Air Field's history to the public through visual art.

The six art posters were created in graphite and color pencil by Rogers in the eye-catching style of WWII posters, but representing various themes associated with the Millville Army Air Field.

The important P-47 Thunderbolt fighter aircraft and its heroic pilots is highlighted along with additional themes including Women with Wings, the Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers, the Link Flight Simulator Trainer, and others important to the Millville Air Field's WWII history.

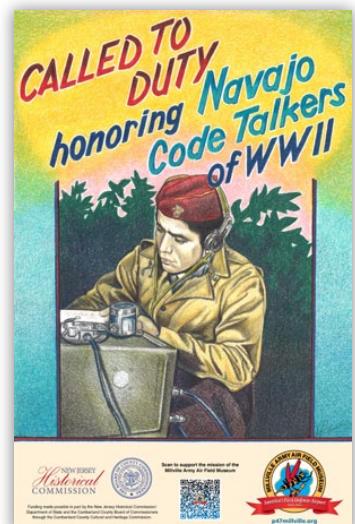
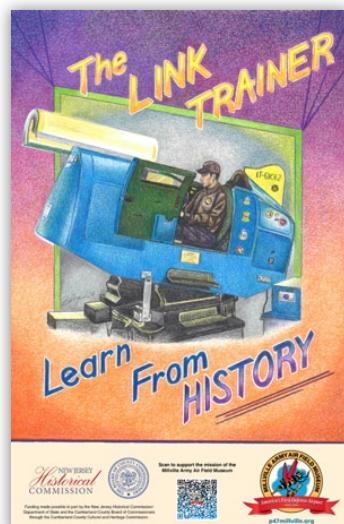
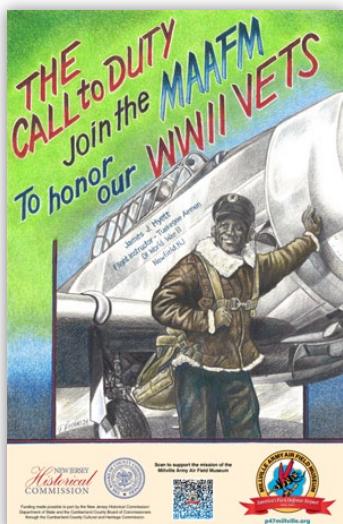
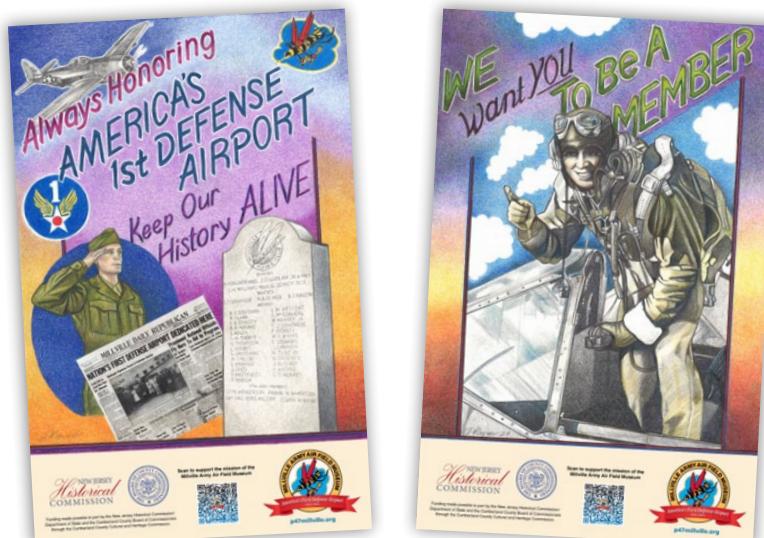
The Museum collaborated with Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts, a local partner in Cumberland County, to exhibit the posters. After an exhibit opening at the center, the posters were displayed publically for a month.

Three high schools in Cumberland County — Millville, Vineland, and Bridgeton — received copies of each poster and its description for use in their history classes. Digital versions of the posters with descriptions on how posters were used to recruit, raise war bond funds, and keep secrets, have been added to the Museum's website.

Funding for the poster project was made possible in part by the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State and the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners through the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission.



Lisa Jester, executive director of the Millville Army Air Field Museum, (left) and Bob Trivellini, Museum vice president (right) recognize and thank artist Diane Rogers, for her work on the *Art of WWII* Poster Project that recognizes the history of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.



MAAFM's 24th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

Continued from page 1

father's service and also life on the base at Millville, where 10,000 servicemen received training in preparation for participation overseas. She noted how the entire greater Cumberland County community embraced the young servicemen who came from all over the country to train here, noting that support from the home front was truly admirable.

"We were very honored to have Donna Pio

speak and tell us about her father's experiences in the military here at Millville," said Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director, "and to help us honor all American veterans for their many contributions and sacrifices for the freedoms we enjoy today."

Part of the Millville Army Air Field Museum's Veterans Appreciation Day 2025 was recognizing founding members of the

"1941 Society," that honors of the 85th Anniversary of the dedication of *America's First Defense Airport* at Millville on August 2, 1941, and the 250th Birthday of the United States, both in 2026.

Present and welcomed into the 1941 Society were: Carol Bradford, Jerry Carey, Russell Davis, Zachary King, Bob Millard, Kenneth Peterson, Beth Smithson, Peggy and Ralph Thomas, Donna and Jim Vertelli, CJ Wettstein, and Chuck Wyble.



Millville Army Air Field Museum President Jerry Carey welcomed veterans and visitors



Keynote Speaker Donna Pio



WWII Veteran Tim Kiniry waves to the crowd.



Semper Marine Detachment #205 from Vineland, New Jersey, presented the colors.



Left to right: Maddie Manno, Rowan University student, sang the National Anthem; Vineland ROTC member Tiffany Villatoro, read the names of the 14 pilots who died while training at the Millville Army Air Field during WWII; Cumberland Civil Air Patrol Airman 1st Class Liam Gardocki recited the Pledge of Allegiance.



L-R: WWII Veterans Tim Kiniry, Minotola NJ, accompanied by his niece Rachel Corma; Alan Shapiro Philadelphia, PA; and Mike Jordan, Vineland, NJ.



Raymond Bates of Buena, NJ, played taps.

MAAFM's 24th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day

There was a surprise presentation by Jack Smithson who recognized and thanked Lisa Jester, for 20 years of outstanding dedication and leadership as executive director of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.

Keeping with past traditions, Veterans Appreciation Day 2025 included students assisting from the Vineland High School U.S. Air Force ROTC cadets and youth members of the Cumberland Civil Air

Patrol, and Cumberland County Sheriff's Office Explorers —welcoming veterans and assisting with activities.

The day's activities featured its signature free 'Canteen' lunch for all visitors, sponsored by Verna's Flight Line Restaurant and Catering, that donated and prepared the food.

A very special thank you goes to the event's presenting sponsor, the Delaware River & Bay Authority. Thanks also extended to Wawa, Bottino's ShopRite, Angelic Healthcare, SupplyItAll, English Sewage and Disposal, and Fairfield by Marriott, for their donations that helped make this event a success.



Michael Porch, deputy director of NJ Business Development and Community Relations for the Delaware River and Bay Authority (event sponsor), thanked veterans.



*"Donut Dolly" Deena Margolin
VHS USAF ROTC Cadet*



Members of the Vineland High School U.S. Air Force ROTC presented WWII veteran Tim Kiniy with a cake to celebrate his 104th birthday!



Dick Goldstine and Donna (Goldstine) Pio carried the commemorative wreath forward, assisted by members of the Cumberland Civil Air Patrol.



Bagpiper Jim Rembisz



*Veteran Greeter Mariah Rios
VHS USAF ROTC Cadet*



MAAFM's 24th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day



Members of the Vineland High School ROTC and Cumberland Civil Air Patrol with Congressman Jeff VanDrew (center).



L-R: WWII veteran Alan Shapiro, Rich Walzak, son of a B-17 ball turret gunner, and Bill Schantz, whose father was a B-25 pilot.



MAAFM Executive Director Lisa Jester was recognized by Jack Smithson for her 20 years of outstanding leadership of the Museum.



Omarey Williams, Cumberland County shared services director.



Chris and Nicole Hannah with Cole the Deaf Dog, mascot of the Vineland Veterans Home, and CiCi.



L-R: Jack Smithson, Lisa Jester, Doug Smithson and Chuck Wyble.



Donna Pio points to a Museum display with her father Bob Goldstine's uniform and her mother's wedding dress.



Representatives of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.



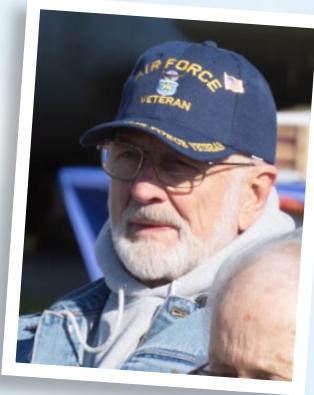
Bill Veach from Delmont, NJ, with his 1948 Ford 2-Door Super Deluxe



Phil Randazzo from Bridgeton, NJ, with his 1954 M38A1 Military Jeep

The Faces of Our Visiting Veterans...

at the MAAFM's 24th Annual Veterans Appreciation Day



Thank you for your service!

Veteran Interview Project captures important veteran histories

The MAAFM Veteran Interview Project — a partnership between the Millville Army Air Field Museum and the Millville Public Schools — continues to preserve the important histories of veterans.

The program, which began in 2001, allows high school students the opportunity to interview and videotape veterans about their service history. Incredibly valuable first-person military histories have been documented.

To date more than 175 interviews have been recorded, given to veterans and their families, archived in the Museum's Wyble Library, with some submitted to the National Library of Congress.

Recently interviewed was 103-year-old **World War II veteran John Hymer** who served in the U.S. Army from October 14, 1942 to December 26, 1945, in the historic 34th Infantry Division, the Red Bull Division, first in North Africa and then Italy. He fought in the brutal campaigns to

liberate the Italian peninsula from the Nazis, including Salerno, Anzio, and the Gustav Line. Battles included Monte Cassino, Pisa, Florence, and Bologna.

A highly decorated Private First Class, John Hymer received two Bronze Stars, two Distinguished Service Medals, and a Purple Heart. He also received three medals for being an expert marksman.

Originally from Stow Creek, NJ, Hymer is a resident of the Vineland Veterans Home.



High school student Mason Cain had the opportunity to interview John Hymer while cameras were rolling — first hand accounts for use in the Veteran Interview Project.

As part of the Veteran Interview Project supported by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, **Dr. William Carrigan, Rowan University History Professor**, spoke to Millville High School AP History students about the importance of oral histories and provided interviewing techniques and tips.

Dr. Carrigan was also interviewed by Millville High School senior Jenna Dacy and provided historical background for a detailed video she created about the famous 442nd Combat Battalion composed of Japanese-Americans during WWII. Dacy had earlier attended the Museum's **Celebration of the 442nd** event. She interviewed attendees who had connections to soldiers in the 442nd and used those clips within her video.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum thanks Dr. Carrigan for sharing his knowledge and expertise.



Above top: Millville High School senior Jenna Dacy, participated in several interviews with veterans and created quality videos for the Veteran Interview Project. Many thanks to Jenna for sharing her interest and talent.

Above bottom: Students had the opportunity to interview WWII Veteran John Quinesso from Vineland, NJ.

Connections made to the Red Bull Division through the Veteran Interview Project



Grace Ucciferri, from Vineland, NJ, is shown here with John Hymer. Her late father was in the 34th Infantry Red Bull Division as was John, so she was thrilled to attend. Grace donated several items from her father's service during WWII, including a stoneware pitcher and glasses set. Her father commissioned a small shop in Italy to make them for him with the Red Bull insignia on it. The pitcher is seen in front of Hymer during the interview.

Above: Millville High School senior Jenna Dacy interviewed Grace Ucciferri about her father's service in the Red Bull Division, 34th Infantry, to include in the video she created for the John Hymer interview.

2025 Summer Program teaches students both aviation and history

The Museum held its annual high school summer camp, sponsored this year by the New Jersey Council for Humanities.

Students were immersed in World War II history, learning through artifacts, veteran interviews, original letters, and rare books. The sessions took great advantage of the Wyble Research Library and Educational Center and the print and electronic resources available there.

Students received guided tours and descriptions of exhibits in the Museum where they learned about various aspects from the different theaters of World War II. Most importantly, they had the incredible opportunity to meet and interview three veterans from the War.

Students also learned about aviation and related careers. They viewed aircraft and talked to pilots. In one session, they were taught the fundamentals of flight, built balsa wood planes, and then flew them on the grounds of the airport. A special trip was taken to the grounds of the New Jersey Motorsports Park where the students saw the original boresight range built in World War II for pilot training at the Millville Army Air Field. There, they viewed the large mural dedicated to the range. They also studied the detailed murals on different buildings located back at the Museum campus. These were all completed by renowned mural artist Sam Donovan, who passed away earlier in 2025.

The Summer Program, which took place from July 1 to 31, was hosted by the Millville Board of Education and the Millville Army Air Field Museum.



Above: High school students learn the fundamentals of aviation and World War II history as they participated in the 2025 Summer Program.

Tribute to Hugh McElroy

Hugh E. McElroy

Died February 2, 2025

The Millville Army Air Field Museum lost a very special friend with the passing of former chairman of the board Hugh McElroy, who never stopped serving the aviation community and fully supported the mission of our Museum.

Hugh McElroy served as the Museum's chairman of the board from 2003 to 2005. At that time Hugh was vice president and general manager of Dallas Airmotive, Inc., an aviation service company that employed 300 people at Millville Airport. He had served on the MAAFM board of directors since 1999.

"We were so fortunate to have Hugh McElroy take the lead in moving the Millville Army Air Field Museum into the future," said Russell Davis, MAAFM president at the time. "Prior to joining the MAAFM board of directors, Hugh offered continued support in preserving the history of Millville Airport. For many years Hugh offered his assistance in making Museum projects successful. His extensive aviation background and visionary ideas were a tremendous asset to the Museum."

In addition to his position on the board of directors at the Millville Army Air Field Museum, McElroy was chairman of the New Jersey

Aviation Association (NJAA), representing airports, aircraft operating companies, manufacturers, aviation vendors, service companies, and pilots involved in the billion dollar aviation industry in New Jersey.

His career began in the late 1970s, when he was an engineer with Avco Lycoming

in Stratford Connecticut. He left Avco Lycoming in 1980, relocating to Millville, NJ to serve as a quality engineer and eventually manager, general manager, and vice president for Airwork Corporation. During this period, which included GE's purchase of Airwork, he became an FAA Consulting DER and a Consulting DAR. He remained at this location until its closure in 2004, seeing another sale to Dallas Airmotive in 1998.

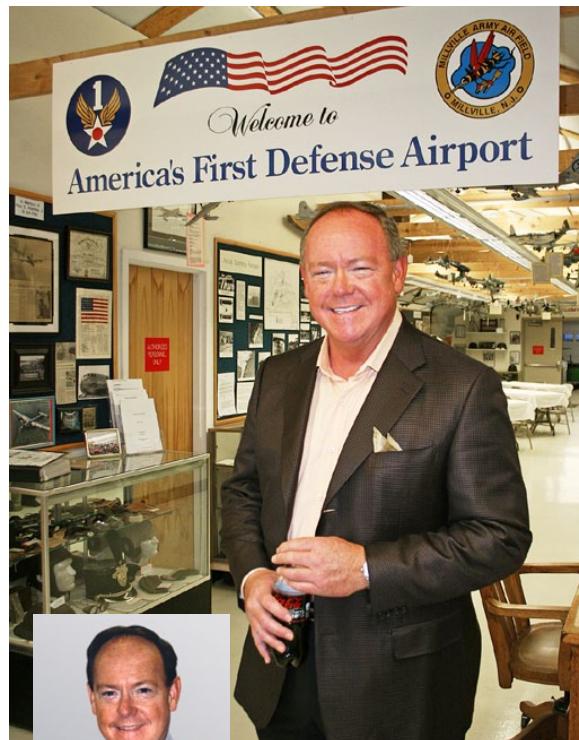
He then moved to Dallas to become president of Dallas Airmotive. He quickly became part of the Dallas business community including several years as aboard member of the Dallas Frontiers of Flight Museum.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum recognized Hugh in 2012 when a wing of the Museum was named in his honor.

"Hugh was my mentor for many years," said Lisa Jester, MAAFM executive director. "I will always be thankful for his guidance, friendship, support and integrity. He will truly be missed by all of his associates from Airwork/Dallas Airmotive and we will always honor his memory here at the Museum."

Hugh is survived by his wife Judy. He is remembered fondly by his friends at the Museum and for his many contributions.

Hugh McElroy ...thank you for your vision, leadership, guidance, professionalism and your heart!



*Hugh E. McElroy
Chairman Emeritus
Millville Army Air Field Museum*



As chairman of the board of directors, Hugh McElroy brought vision and advancement to the Millville Army Air Field Museum — recognizing the important aviation history that took place at Millville Airport.

In Memoriam



Rocky Gannon during WWII and at Millville Airshow 2015

Rocky Gannon

Died June 4, 2024, at age 99

As a student at Ocean City High School, R.J. "Rocky" Gannon was inspired by the P-47 pilots from Millville Army Air Field as they flew their planes over the school while training over the Atlantic Ocean. He enlisted and was accepted into pilot training just before the end of his junior year. While still just a teenager, he was a B-17 pilot during World War II.

"Rocky" Gannon had a long and distinguished career in the United States Air Force. He was a B-17 pilot with the 8th Air Force during WWII, flew for 18 months in Korea, and had an astounding 387 missions during the Vietnam War. In his extraordinary career, Rocky flew more than 6000 hours in 34 different types of aircraft. He received numerous awards including the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star.

After 37 years of service, Rocky retired as Lt. Colonel from the Air Force and became an international aviation consultant specializing in airports and air traffic control.

Rocky visited the Museum many times providing valued information and guidance based on his experience. We were honored to know him and will continue to keep his legacy alive.

Charles "Sandy" E. Wentzell

Died September 4, 2025, at age 102

Tech Sergeant Charles "Sandy" Wentzell flew 30 combat missions with the U.S. 8th Air Force during World War II, including the first mission to Berlin March 6, 1944. He also served in the Korean War as a radio operator in a Tactical Air Control Party, calling in airstrikes and artillery fire against the enemy. During one frontline combat operation, he was captured. Held prisoner in a small prison yard, he managed to escape. After eleven days on the run, he made his way to American lines. For his heroism, the South Korean government honored him. "Sandy" resided in Salem, NJ.

Selwyn Lurie

Died July 17, 2025, at age 102

A South African native, Selwyn volunteered to serve as a pilot in World War II. He first flew Hurricanes with the Royal Air Force in North Africa before conducting the majority of his missions in P-47 Thunderbolt Fighters against the Japanese in the China-Burma-India Theater.

Selwyn Lurie, from San Diego, CA, flew in two theatres of the war. He was with the 135th Squadron of the RAF, which was located in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Among other operations, he was involved in the mission to capture the air field and deep sea port on Akyab Island and flew long-range missions against the Japanese in Rangoon in 1944. He survived five crashes caused by weather or mechanical malfunctions.

Selwyn was a great friend to the Museum, sharing his unique knowledge about the P-47 and its capabilities in different theaters of the War.



Selwyn Lurie during WWII, and at the Museum in 2008

Remembering Museum Friends

Bill Conway

Longtime Member & MAAFM Supporter

Joan Harper

MAAFM Member & Volunteer

Caroline Owens

MAAFM Supporter & Wife of B-17 Pilot and Museum Advisory Board Member Jim Owens

Carmen Poloff

U.S. Army WWII Veteran



The Millville Army Air Field Museum Honors the Memory of Mural Artist Sam Donovan

On behalf of the Millville Army Air Field Museum, it is our privilege to recognize, remember and honor our very special friend Sam Donovan, who passed on April 22, 2025.

Sam Donovan was an extraordinarily talented mural artist from Woodstown, New Jersey, who created vivid visuals of the important World War II history that took place at the Millville Army Air Field — *America's First Defense Airport*. Sam's murals truly define Millville Airport's military and aviation history.

The Museum's relationship with Sam Donovan began in 1998 when he was commissioned by local community leader and veteran B-24 gunner George Curio — to create a mural honoring Millville's World War II history and honor all those who served. The result — **Millville's World War II "Wall of Remembrance" Mural** stands majestically 3-stories high on the north wall of Millville's City Hall at High and Main Streets.

The **Wall of Remembrance Mural** that Donovan created put Millville's World War II history on the map and continues to do so more than 25 years later. Thanks to him, The **Wall of Remembrance** captures the essence of Millville's contributions to America's WWII history while honoring all of our veteran heroes.

Throughout the years, Donovan created five other historically informative murals for the Museum —

The 55-foot World War II History Mural located on the hangar on Leddon Street was dedicated in 2011. The mural features images of World War II pilots

William Rich and Bernie Borelli, who served at the Millville Army Air Field during World War II as combat flight instructors. Each flew numerous missions in P-47 Thunderbolt fighter planes from bases in England during the war. The two pilots, who lived locally until their passing, also served as chairmen of the Millville Army Air Field Museum.

The next stunning mural is located at New Jersey Motorsports Park. The **Historic World War II Boresight Range Mural** is one of the last existing examples of what was once an integral part of airbase operations for air-to-ground and air-to-air gunnery training during World War II.

The final three murals created and painted by Donovan are located in the Museum's Historic Courtyard. They are: the **Link Trainer Flight Simulator Mural**, dedicated in 2017; the **Commemorative World War II Fire Department Mural**, dedicated in 2019; and the **Air-to-Air Gunnery Training Mural**, dedicated in 2020. Each of these murals has an interpretive display that explains the history they represent.

The Millville Army Air Field Museum is honored to remember and commemorate mural artist Sam Donovan, for his insight in designing and producing our beautiful murals. We thank Sam for his awesome work and a lifetime of dedication to the Museum's mission.

The Museum also salutes Sam Donovan as a U.S. Air Force Veteran and we honor his service.

God bless you Sam and thank you!





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Museum Welcomes MHS German Exchange Students



Our Museum was honored to welcome German exchange students and Millville High School students to tour the Museum in June 2025. The German students attended Millville High for two weeks and stayed with local families.

Celebrating another successful Golf Outing Fundraiser

Our MAAFM Golf Tournament tradition continued in 2025 with the 14th annual Seb Arrigo Invitational, held on Friday, September 5, at White Oaks Country Club in Newfield. The event was a fundraising success along with lots of fun!

Special thanks go to sponsors: Delaware River and Bay Authority, Christy Funeral Home, Big Sky Aviation, Millville Savings Bank, and the John F. Scarpa Foundation.



Above: Seb Arrigo, tournament director, welcomes and thanks participants; and the Big Sky team: Fred Cristelli, Doug Smithson and Jack Smithson.

Left: l. to r., Eric Schultz, senior VP of Sales, Quikcrete; and family; the DRBA Team; and MAAFM member and volunteer George Stuart with Lisa Jester, Museum executive director and Seb Arrigo.



Left: Proud to see Anthony DiStefano, MAAFM Volunteer Researcher, left, at Honor Flight in Washington, DC, in April 2025



The ever-gracious Patty Oliver, MAAFM receptionist, left, with WWII Vet Tim Kiniry and Russell Davis.



America's First Defense Airport

MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD MUSEUM

MEMBERS & FRIENDS



Veterans Day with WWII Navy Veteran John Quinesso (Johnny Q), seated center. Left to right: Bob Trivellini, Museum vice president; Navy veteran Dave McCarthy, advisory board member; Lisa Jester, executive director; Museum volunteers —Ed Cox, Navy veteran, Willard Graham, Air Force veteran, Ben Barnes, Air Force veteran and Jack Willard from the Battleship New Jersey. Pictured right is Museum board member Joe Derella with Johnny Q.

A rare coincidence in October ...
MAAFM Advisory Board Member
Zachary King, right, ran into WWII
veteran John Quinesso from Vineland,
NJ, in Washington, DC. in October.



Jeffrey Smith, a painter for EEC Static Display Aircraft Painting of Center Valley, PA, painted our M60 Battle Tank in June. Funding was provided by the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission.



Museum President Jerry Carey volunteered to paint the future home of Thunderbolt Pizza, located in Historic Building 20. He is assisted by Ed Cox, museum member and volunteer. Special thanks to Home Depot for donating Glidden paint for the job.



Vineland High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (AFJROTC) Spring 2025 toured the Museum with leader JoDenise Muller, left, and World War II veteran John Quinesso, center. Cadets range from 9th to 12th grade. Also pictured are senior cadets and MSgt James Eubanks.

A Special Thank You ... goes out to Albert "AJ" DeNovellis, a student from Cumberland County Technical Education Center, who volunteered on Sundays for months and learned all about the museum. He welcomed visitors and gave tours. AJ graduated and headed off to Franklin and Marshall College in September. Hope you'll stop by to visit!



MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD MUSEUM

Preserving History ★ Honoring Veterans ★ Educating Future Generations

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2025

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Donors at these levels will receive special recognition in our museum newsletter, and VIP tickets to special events, discounts at our museum store, in addition to other benefits.



Millville Army Air Field Museum

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