THE MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD

# Thunderbolt

Vol. II | MILLVILLE, N. J., SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1945 | No. XII

## COMMENCEMENT DAY AT MAAF

**Grouped in front of the little white Base Chapel after graduation exercises last week, are members of the latest class of student gunnery pilots. Having attained the highest cumulative bombing and gunnery score in the annals of the Base, the pilots were warmly congratulated by Base officials. Individually honored by Lt. Col. Louis T. Houck for scoring the highest overall score is Lt. James J. Izard, of Roanoke, Virginia.**

# Sharp-Shooting Hot Rocks Climb On Tokio Bandwagon

A bronzed, thoroughly trained class of 55 P-47 Thunderbolt student pilots graduated last week at the Base Chapel after having attained the highest aerial gunnery average in the history of Millville Air Field. Lt. Col. Louis T. Houck, Supervisor of Flying Training, hailed the achievement of the group, and presented them the First Fighter Command Gunnery diplomas.

Col. Houck briefly reviewed for the graduates the accomplishments of previous classes, and urged them to remember the lessons learned here while blasting ground and aerial targets. "Yours has been the most successful class ever to leave this Base," the Colonel declared, "and we wish you straight shooting and happy landings wherever you may be sent. I hope with all my heart," he continued, "that you will all return soon to this Base, and help us train other fledgling pilots in the art of 'Thunderbolting'."

**Virginia Triggerman**

Leading his class in individual scoring was 23-year-old Lt. James J. Izard, of Roanoke, Virginia. A graduate of Princeton University, the gunner claims that he did plenty of shooting back home, and drawing a bead on elusive aerial towed targets came naturally. The Virginian also shot expert with the pistol,

Following the address by the Supervisor of Flying Training, the airmen were congratulated by Captain Charles P. McCabe, Commandant of Student Pilots. Captain McCabe asserted that the trainees demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and learn, which was evidenced in every phase of their schooling.

The invocation and benediction for the fliers was delivered by Chaplain Horace M. King. An organ postlude, a medley of tunes including the "Army Air Corps" song, and "Into the Air, Army Air Corps," was played by Pt. Norman W. Townsend. "Lord, Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly," was rendered by Cpl. Marlin G. Bunfill.

## BIG WHEELS TO SPIN ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT

If members of the First Three Graders Cluh wore vests, their popped buttons would he strewn from here to Millville, TO furnishing necessary T, of course.

The reason fo rsuch pride is the announcement of the Wheel Club's new show to be held Wednesday night, June 27.

Gerry Lilly's band (plus his "Girl Friday") will furnish his usually scintillating musical treats, and a troupe of eight—yes, we said eight—actors and actresses will present a revival of the old-time cabaret show, reminiscent, some say, of the long-gone Minsky revues.

## GI TREASURY BULGES AS PX PROFITS SOAR

Millville Air Field's Central Trust Fund is $1,298.81 richer this month, thanks to the Post Exchange (which in turn, thanks its customers). The Fund is the "bank" used to further morale facilities on the field.

Last month the PX poured into its coffers an amount which tripled that of the same period last year, $34,000. The unprecedented business boom is having a direct affect upon the expansion and improvement of the GI general store, and renovations and improvements have already been undertaken.

Lt. Melvin J. Triester, PX chieftain, announced that heading the list of additions to the emporium is the Open-Air Refreshment Center, a screened in garden where personnel will he able to imbibe and eat in an atmosphere similar to the Rue De La Paix of Paris.

## New Service Group Here For Training

A large contingent of leather-faced GIs and officers arrived here last week from Oklahoma for further training, and eventual overseas assignment, Base officials announced today.

Attached to the Post for rations and services only, the group will maintain their own administrative control. Organized as a unit to perform heavy Air Corps echelon duties, they will undergo a rigid curriculum here, prior to shipment.

# Thunderbolters Place Third In Interbase Gunnery Rodeo

Millville Air Base, one-time winner of the I Fighter Command Bombing and Gunnery Meet, plunged to third place in the latest inter-base rodeo, held last week at Oscoda, Michigan. Tallying a collective score of 33.3, Selfridge Army Air Base's crack gunners stole the show, and the Michigan field was crowned new Champion of all First Air Force Thunderbolt Bases.

Captain Lawrence J. Ritter and Lt. R. H. Mushlit, veteran Millville ground and aerial marksmen, were nosed out by Dover Airbase for second billing. The Delaware fliers worked their deep-bellied Thunderbolts expertly, and accounted for 23.9 percent to the local clan's 21.3 average.

Captain Howard S. Askelson, battle-wise Selfridge Thunderbolter, took top honors in the individual jousts by crackling out a score of 35.7. He was followed closely by Lt. J. Blood of Dover with 30.8, and close on his heels was Capt. Larry Ritter with 30.4 percent.

**Lively Tourney**

Lt. Col. F. L. Grable, Gunnery Meet Operations Officer, reported that the latest Meet was marked by the keenest rivalry, and most spirited shooting in the records of the I Fighter Command gunnery classics. Held periodically at various First Air Force P-47 installations, the rodeo is designed to teach oldtimers new tricks, which they, as instructors, pass on to fledgling Thunderbolt triggermen.

Last September Captain Robert H. Beggs took second prize in the first Meet. A few months later he copped the championship at Suffolk. Millville's Lt. John W. Hyson returned from the third affair with the coveted Thunderbolt Gunnery Trophy in December. Norfolk Airbase scratched out Millville and Dover in a lively contest last February. Five Bases entered the Meet last week for a two-day tournament.

## *Fortress Engineer Tells of Avenging Kin in Nazi Skies*

Back from the blood-stained skies of Europe, where he completed a mission of personal vengeance, to Millville Airfield, came T/Sgt. Jessie Birnbaum, a 21-year-old Flying Fortress Engineer from Passaic, New Jersey. His medal-studded chest revealed only his official feats for the Army Air Forces, but failed to divulge a grim story of Nazi bestiality, and the crusade of a bitter gunner.

Rankling in the breast of the red-headed Passaic youth was an implacable urge to heap the same kind of destruction and dread upon the Germans as they unleashed upon his grandparents who had fallen victim to Hitler's racial fury.

**Impressions Fauned**

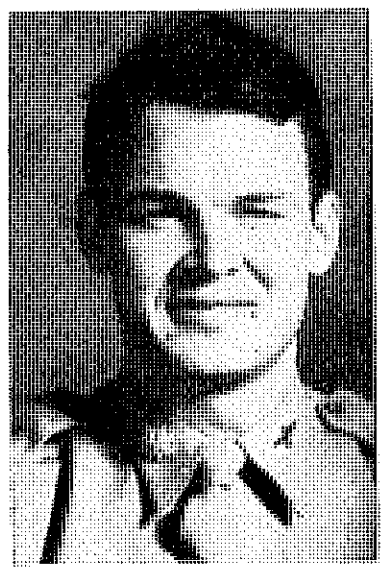
T/Sgt. Birnbaum was young when he heard of this tragedy. As he grew older world events fanned the fire of his hatred, and when America went to war with Germany, he rushed to join the Air Forces as a gunner.

As a crew member of the "Birn Bomber," which the boys affectionately dubbed his multi-engined ship, Sgt. Birnhaum was forced to sublimate his combat aggressiveness for coordinated team work. The eggs of the "Birn Bomber" plastered German cities, industries, and the war potential of the Third Reich—but the personal thirst of rendering "an eye for an eye" remained unquenched.

**Sweet Revenge**

On his last mission over Berlin, the itch of revenge reached a fever pitch. His plane winged its way over the target, dropped its bomb load and then ran smack into an inpenetrable hail of ack-ack. The bomber shook as though it had convulsions, and rocked crazily as its pilot turned homeward. Suddenly from behind a formation of clouds two ME-109s zoomed in for the kill. As the Luftwaffle pilots turned their guns toward the stricken ship Birnbaum drew a bead on the Nazi closest to him. He aimed hard and fired straight. There was a burst of flame, and the enemy plane plunged wildly to the ground. The other pursuit plane vanished from sight. The "Birn Bomber" returned home like a singed chicken, but every member of the crew was elated that their "wild-eyed" gunner had his day of reckoning.

## NEW UNIT EXECUTIVE



**Assignment of Major James F. Kirkendall, 25-year-old former P-47 fighter pilot, as Unit Executive Officer, was announced last week by Lt. Col. T. H. Watkins, Base Commander.**

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MILLVILLE ARMY AIR FIELD
Millville, New Jersey (Phone 1100, Ext. 71)

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LT. COL. T. H. WATKINS, Commanding Officer

LT. SYDNEY R. NEMAROW ——— Editor

(All Photos by Base Photo Laboratory Personnel)

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## Mauldin Said a Mouthful!

When S/Sgt. Bill Mauldin, Pulitzer Prize cartoon winner, was asked recently to discuss some of his thoughts about GI attitudes he contended that "a soldier's mind is his own property and the one thing that should be left comparatively free in his newspaper." He had raised this point, he said, during a talk with General George S. Patton, Jr., when the general took issue with his hobo-like figures and gibes in The Stars and Stripes.

Censorship of any kind has always been odious to the American people, and Joe Yank has carried this antipathy with him from his home to his barrack. Therefore, any camp publication, no matter how small the installation, assumes an important role in the life of the soldier. The post paper is the sceptor of GI Joe's sovereignty as a human being. It is his assurance that he is not a mere serial number in a personnel file, but a God-made creature with blood, flesh, feelings, and—ideas. Suppress his newspaper, and the soldier is through as a vibrant, thinking warrior. Instead he becomes a khaki-clad robot, blindly following orders, and a certainty to crack up when faced with adversity.

This does not necessarily imply that a soldier's organ should defy constituted authority and abandon the fundamental precepts of discipline and good conduct. It does mean that news stories, editorials, and reader's opinions should be published without fear of arbitrary blue penciling by some self-appointed solon. If a story states the facts, if the editorial reflects an honest desire to improve the post, and the reader submits an opinion which will benefit the majority, then by all means it should be free from censorship.

We firmly believe that an Army newspaper should reflect both the voice of command, and the voice of those subject to that command. It should function as the clearing house for ideas, act as the forum of free, democratic discussion, and serve every member of the Base with a passionate devotion. Once the base journal fails to perform these duties, the need for its existence is over, and it should be discontinued.

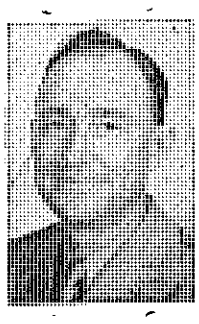
It is also imperative that camp newspapers be sent home. Unless our folks read for themselves what other GIs think, the powerful pressure of public opinion will have no effect upon the lawmakers.

The soldier's press is his sacred property—let it remain free!

## FROM THE PULPIT

By Chaplain Horace M. King

### "Good ole Summertime"



When the winds were biting and the temperature was dropping we wanted the "good old summer-time." It is here now in due vehemence, and we are sweating it out.

Summer-time means vacation time to many a person, but it will not mean vacation to many of us. A majority vote easily would be cast in favor of war termination rather than a brief vacation for a few or all of us.

But even though we do not go on vacations we sometimes send our religious habits and moral standards off for a vacation period of brief or long duration.

### The Result

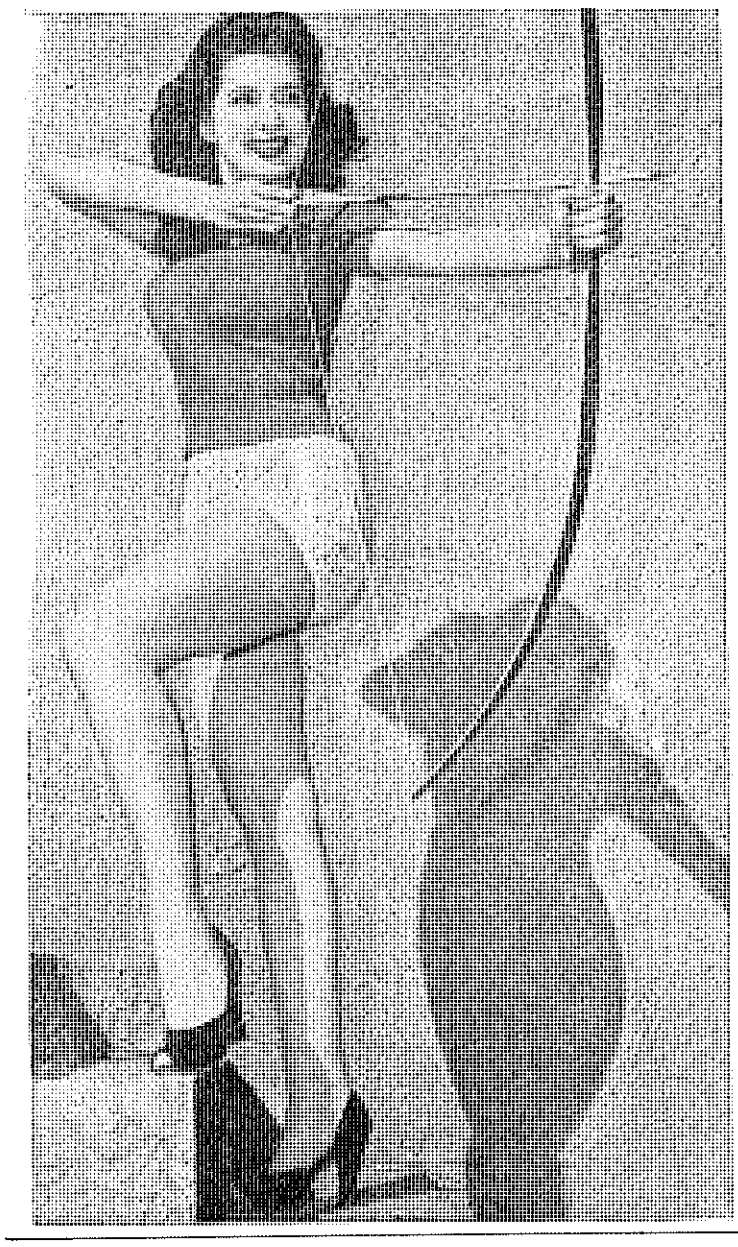
Then things begin to happen. Then the values of wholesome habits and high standards become evident. Then we wonder how we dared to think that religion could be set aside or sent off for a while. "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones." Sunshine-members and good-weather-converts need more than parasols to keep off consequences when their religion goes on a vacation.

Prevent that summer slump in morals and chapel attendance. Let us all make good in the "good old summer-time."

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**Catholic Mass, Sunday ....0800**
**Confessions, Sunday .....0745**
**Protestant Service, Sunday .1000**
**Jewish Services, Friday Evening in Millville. Transportation leaves the Chaplain's Office at 1900.**

## DRAWING A BEAD ON A GI BEAUX?



Dear Editor:

Last year Thunderbolt helped secure rooms for GIs at Atlantic City over week-ends. Is there any possibility of you doing a repeat performance this season? All reports indicate that the resort is going to be twice as crowded this summer.

Signed,
Sgt. A. G.

* * *

Dear Editor:

I was looking through some old pictures, and came across a few of the GI Beer Bust we had at Range A Lake last July The few of us who are still around to remember it, still think of it as the best time we had in the Army. I believe it was the officers who threw the shindig for us. Maybe the brass hats are broke this year, but do you think you could swing a little publicity along those lines, so that we could have another one of those affairs. Frankly, I don't care who pays for it.

Signed,
Rocky.

* * *

Dear Editor:

Several of us heard the first broadcast of "Thunderbolt Newsreel," and we thought you had a mighty fine program. The boys discussed the new radio show, and thought it would probably be a good idea were you to spot some local talent in between the stories. We are sure that there are many boys who can sing, whistle, or fill in somehow, so that the production would have more life to it.

Signed,
Cpl. R. B.

## OFFICERS PLAN FETE AT SUMMER 'RIVIERA' TOMORROW AFTERNOON

With all the fanfare and color of a New Orleans Mardi Gras, the Officer's Cabana will officially open their summer social season tomorrow by tendering a mammoth barbecue and water carnival at "Range A Lake."

Major Jerome C. Simpson, known for his mastery of understatement, abandoned all caution today, and predicted that tomorrow's affair will be the most dazzling event in the brilliant annals of the brass hatters.

To prove his point, the Major announced that Lt. Herbert D. Tope has been ordered to corral and tether five Arabian stallions for airbase jockeys, and that nine hole golf course will be ready for the guests. Epicures are assured of sizzling ham and beef which will wind its way on a fiery spit. Athletes will engage in an intramural softball contest, and a full program of water sports will complete a field day of unprecedented frolic and fun.

## PERSONAL AFFAIRS

### GRATUITY PAY

One question frequently arising in the completion of a Personal Affairs Statement is that of Gratuity Pay. When we ask who has been designated as beneficiary for this Gratuity Pay, the answer often is, "What in the heck is that?"

And it's no wonder. Most of us came in the Army so fast that we don't know what they explained to us and what we signed anyway. As a matter of fact, they probably skipped an explanation of Gratuity Pay so as to get on with the sales talk for life insurance. You can guess why—the Gratuity Pay is free, but life insurance costs money.

**A Present**

The "Gratuity" is a gift from the Government. O.K. you say, but how much is in it for me? Well, the amount is equal to six times the monthly pay the soldier is receiving at the time he kicks off. (Of course, if he is in a non-pay status for any reason at the time of his death the amount would be nothing. For example, if he was AWOL six times zero equals nothing). Sure, the Gratuity Pay includes fogies, flying pay and overseas pay as well as the base pay, but death must not be due to a man's own misconduct. This last goes for both G.I.'s and Officers. That's the only catch to the whole deal.

The best way to make sure that the money is paid promptly is to be sure your records are up to date. If there have been changes at home, stop in and give us the right dope as to who is entitled to the dough and where it should be sent. If you are married (happily or otherwise) your wife comes first, followed by your children if you have any. Single men may name their parents, sisters, brothers, and in some cases their more distant relatives. Stay alive, and save us work!

## Pooch Bites Pilot

In spite of the journalistic axiom that if a dog bits a man it isn't news, we report that Lt. Joseph Dunfee, veteran heavy bomber pilot, and presently a tow targeteer, was bitten on his wrist by a pure bred dogface.

To complicate the incident, the pooch is owned by a Vineland cop, whose sworn duty it is to prevent such occurences. Nevertheless, Lt. Dunfee is still on duty, and will not dog it until the rabies report is returned from the State Department of Health.

"He asked me what I had that his wife didn't—
So I showed him!"