

# DeLand, Florida—USA



## DNAS Museum News - MARCH, 2020

### DeLand NAS WWII Veteran Remembered With Honor

#### Lt. Commander William Laughlin "Bill" Connell



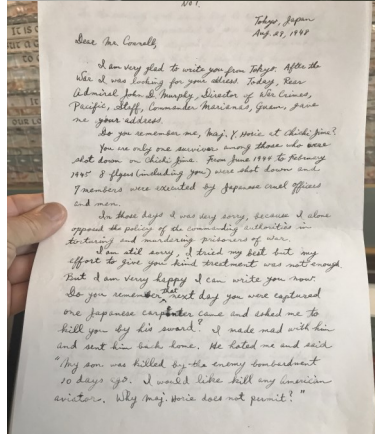
The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum was recently notified of the passing of one of our WWII Veterans who trained as a fighter pilot in DeLand, Florida during WWII. Bill graduated in December 1943 becoming an Ensign and Naval Aviator. He was one of our "90 Day Wonders" as he spent three months in a Douglas SBD Dauntless (divebomber) training before his WWII service assignments. His family and friends have shared his life experiences and journey after he left DeLand.



William Laughlin "Bill" Connell, 95, is remembered by his family and friends for how he endured tragedies – both in World War II and years later in his personal life. His granddaughter, Laura Schue, remembers him with a smile. "They are just made of something different than the rest of us," Connell was eulogized as a man of deep character, faith and endurance. "A survivor, truly a survivor to the core," Schue said. "He never would surrender." Lieutenant commander Connell easily could have.

On July 4, 1944, he was shot down over the Pacific island of Chichijima during a bombing run off the carrier USS Hornet. Connell was captured by Japanese forces and endured the next 15 months of torture inside a prisoner of war camp. It was there he would later learn of another famous prisoner later known for the horrific treatment endured at the hands of a prison camp commander, known as "The Bird." This guard had it out for him in the worst way. Come to find out decades later, it was Louis Zamperini, whose story was later featured in the novel, *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillebrand.





Connell's story was also featured by James Bradley, author of *Flags of our Fathers and Fly Boys*.

Years later, Connell's own prison guard wrote him a letter begging for forgiveness. In that letter, Bill would learn that of the eight Navy pilots captured at Chichijima, he was the only one not executed. The guard protected him from being killed and in turn, Connell helped him to learn to speak English.

The trials of being a POW helped him survive tragedies later in life. Connell was preceded in death by two wives and all four of his adult children. "I think it was his time in camp," said Schue. "The one thing that would resound in his character was he never would give up."

In 2002 Connell returned to Chichijima and Japan with former President George H.W. Bush. Two months after Bill was shot down and imprisoned, Bush's plane was also downed— but the young pilot was rescued by American forces. They boarded a Japanese helicopter and retraced the route of their missions and crash sites in the ocean, dropping weaths of flowers into the water below. The visit was not only a very personal, emotional visit of remembrance, but it was about forgetting the brutal past.

Laura Schue remembers her Grandfather telling many stories about his service. One that stands out in her mind about DeLand, Florida is when he advised he was practicing night time bombing strikes and the squad missed their original

target. They ended up taking out someone's yacht instead of the dummy target that was set up! Our thanks to Granddaughter Laura Schue and friend Rob Harry for sharing this valuable story of one of our DNAS Veterans. Lt. Commander Connell was able to visit the DNAS Museum several years ago and we are proud to honor him and his legacy. A video interview is also available at <https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.85950/>.

Lt. Commander Connell was laid to rest at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A proud and enduring Navy aviator is once again destined for heavenly flight. We thank his family for sharing his story, photographs and flight logs that will become a part of the museum collection. Future generations will remember and honor him and "In Memory of All Who Served".



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## DeBary Hall Living History Day 2020

**Living History Day**

**At DeBary Hall Historic Site!**  
**10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**February 15, 2020**


History will come to life at DeBary Hall Historic Site during Living History Day. Visitors can walk the grounds and interact with Civil War re-enactors and historical characters, including legendary steamboat captain Jacob Brock.

**Historical presenters include:**

- The 51st Alabama Regiment Company II, a Civil War re-enactment group
- Jim Sangrass, a member of the Mosquito Creek Indian Tribe
- Stanton O'Neal, a historian and musician, who will perform songs from WWI through the 1960s
- Bill and Cara Elder as George and Martha Washington

There is no charge for this exciting outdoor event. Tours of the site's 1871 mansion will be available at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for a small fee (\$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$2 for children ages 3 to 12, and free for children 2 and younger).

For more information, call Tracy Mestre at 386-668-3840.

198 Sunrise Blvd., DeBary  debaryhall.com

Sponsored by the Friends of DeBary Hall

**DNASM Volunteers participated in 3rd Annual Living History Day at DeBary Hall in DeBary to promote DNAS Museum. Our thanks to our Community Partner Tracy Mestre, DeBary Hall Manager for coordinating the organizations participating. Plan a visit to Historic DeBary Hall soon.**



**Visitors Viewed Museum History Video by Dr. Harry Price**



**We met so many great people who will visit the DNAS Museum in the future. Our patriotic hats and lighted umbrellas were also a big hit with all proceeds benefitting the museum. Great t-shirts, hats and other items are available at the museum and make great gifts. Coming soon are hats and visors being designed and painted by several of our student members.**



### DeLand Naval Air Station Museum

#### SHIRTS/HATS AVAILABLE

#### Great Gifts & Support The Museum

**WWII SBD Dauntless T-Shirt**  
 M-L-XL-XXL  
 \$20.00

**NAVY F-14 T-Shirt**  
 L-XL  
 \$20.00

**WWII TBF Avenger T-Shirt**  
 M-L-XL-XXL  
 \$20

**Military Cap Variety - \$20**

**Lighted Umbrella - \$20**

**Patriotic Bling Cap - \$20**

**Red, Blue, Black or Camo**

**USA CAP \$20**

**Visor \$15**

Call Barbara  
 (386) 717-1492  
 FOR MORE INFO

Or EMAIL:  
 dnas.museum.org@gmail.com

WWW.DELANDNAVALAIRSTATIONMUSEUM.ORG



**DNAS Museum Student Members led by Cheyenne Kleinke of Deltona High School work on visors that will be sold in the museum gift shop in the future. We are so proud of our students and appreciate their assistance.**



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## DeLand Sea Cadet Unit Growing



**Seeking Students Age 10-  
High School To Join New Unit**

visit [www.seacadets.org](http://www.seacadets.org)

or

[Dennisdickerson2@msn.com](mailto:Dennisdickerson2@msn.com)

DeLand Naval Air Station Museum members and the DeLand Naval Sea Cadets would like to thank the Volusia Sheriff's Office Drug Detection Canine Unit for the great onsite training opportunity. Also meet "Mira" an Eight year old female German Shepherd, a valued member of the Canine Detection Unit.



Volusia County Sheriff Canine Unit  
Training Demonstration



Mira

## Embry Riddle Aeronautical University 'RIDDLE REDEEMERS' Student Volunteers Assist DNAS Museum



DeLand Naval Air Station Museum members send a special thanks to the student volunteers from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University "Riddle Redeemers Club" for their ongoing assistance with various restoration and building projects. These students who are seeking future careers in aviation have a unique opportunity to work with experienced Veterans and Volunteers who share their skills and mentor the students. We are so proud of all of them.



Greg, Lee & Gene  
Mentor Students





# Educational Tours for Adults & Youth

## St. Barnabas 4th Grade Visits DNASM



The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Volunteers hosted 40 students in two groups from St. Barnabas Episcopal School for an educational tour. The students asked great questions and we enjoyed their visit.





# Educational Tours for Adults & Youth

## Another Busy Month For Public Tours Local, State, National & International Visitors

The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Volunteers continue to donate their time to lead tours of the museum complex for youth and adults. Tour Guides are needed Wednesday through Saturday from Noon—4pm and Sunday 1pm-4pm. Individuals and couples are encouraged to apply and a tour script is available.



Vermont Visitor From  
Harold's Hometown



Bend, Oregon Visitors



Tobago Island Visitors



Vermont Visitors

Jay & Susan from Longwood, Florida donated several still in the original box "Aircraft Banks" and a 1910 Edition "How To Build A Model" hard back book that Susan's late father, Bennie Duel a WWII 8th Air Force Veteran, had collected over the years. We thank Jay & Susan for thinking of the DNASM for their wonderful donation.



Harold Bradeen  
Leads Student Tours

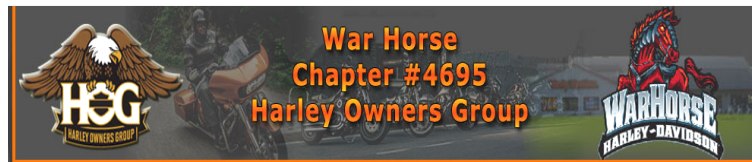


# Lexington Replica Donor Visits Museum



Mike (L) stopped by the museum with a friend to visit his large home built "Lexington Aircraft Carrier". The carrier is lake ready and is powered by a lawn mower size battery attached to two propellers. Mike donated this and other lake ready models a few years back and stops in once in a while to visit this popular display.

## Ocala, FL Harley Club Visits DNASM "Leap Day Ride"



The DNASM Volunteers welcomed the Ocala, FL War Horse Chapter #4695 Harley Owners Group for a "Leap Day Ride" tour of the museum. The group of over 20 Harleys and 26 riders thundered in and we had a great time meeting such nice people. After the tour, the group thundered out and headed for lunch at a local restaurant before heading back to Ocala. We hope to see them again soon.



## Annex Building Progress



DNASM Members would like to thank Ron Herman of All Quality Products & Millshop, DeLand for his generous donation of steel siding that will be installed to cover the inside walls of our new building. Museum member and Navy Seabee, Don Rowley (r) helps with the unloading. Thank you Ron for your ongoing support and to all of our Volunteers, Community Sponsors and individual donors for all your efforts and hard work to complete this building. Our progress continues forward. [www.allqualityproducts.com](http://www.allqualityproducts.com)



# ANNEX BUILDING PROJECT

DeLand Naval Air Station Museum

## ANNEX BUILDING PROJECT

26'x60' RECYCLED METAL BUILDING WILL BE BUILT BY VOLUNTEERS WITH DONATED MATERIALS AND IN-KIND SERVICES FROM THE COMMUNITY



## DONATION FORM

With the support of Volunteers, donations and in-kind services from our Community Partners, our new building ANNEX will enable us to further preserve our history. Campaign Coordinator Scott Storz, (386) 822-2809.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ I/WE WISH TO SUPPORT THE DNAS MUSEUM

BUILDING CAMPAIGN WITH A GIFT/PLEDGE OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_ OR

IN-KIND SERVICE OF: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

DONATE ON-LINE WITH PAYPAL/CREDIT CARD [www.delandnavalairmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairmuseum.org)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Name as you wish to be acknowledged in print: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **I Want To Honor the following Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, New Building Campaign, 910 Biscayne Boulevard, DeLand, Florida 32724. The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization. Federal Tax ID: # 59-3227793. Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

**We hope to complete our new building in 2020. Cash and in-kind donations of services and supplies are needed to finalize the project. A special need for labor to install tile flooring is needed in this phase. Consider donations in honor or memory of a Veteran or special family member. Thank you for your ongoing support of our efforts to preserve our history and honor our Veterans.**





# **FUNDRAISER 2020**

## **DELAND NAVAL AIR STATION MUSEUM**



**SUPPORT  
LOCAL  
VETERANS  
MUSEUM**

# **YARD SALE**

## **FRI APRIL 3 & SAT APRIL 4, 2020**

**8:00 AM - 12 NOON**

### **Time For Spring Cleaning**

# **SALE ITEMS NEEDED**

***DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Pavilion***

**910 Biscayne Boulevard, DeLand, Florida—Airport**

**[www.delandnavalairmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairmuseum.org)—[dnas.museum.org@gmail.com](mailto:dnas.museum@gmail.com)**

**Call Scott (386) 822-2809 or Leave Message (386) 738-4149**

**All Volunteer Museum. Proceeds benefit DNASM Educational Programs & Restoration Projects**

**Please donate sale items, including cars or boats**  
**Please, No Large Furniture, Mattresses, Clothing or Books**



# THANK YOU SPONSORS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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IN MEMORY OF WWII COMMANDER HARRY K. STUBBS

DOUG & SARAH LANTIER, MARTY TORBETT FAMILY & FRIENDS  
IN MEMORY OF KENNETH S. TORBETT, WWII DNAS LINE CHIEF

**SANDRA TITCOMB & FAMILY** IN MEMORY OF  
ELLWOOD TITCOMB, 1ST DNAS MUSEUM PRESIDENT



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HONORING WWII COMMANDER  
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**Sun Viking Lodge Daytona Beach**



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**Winn/Dixie**



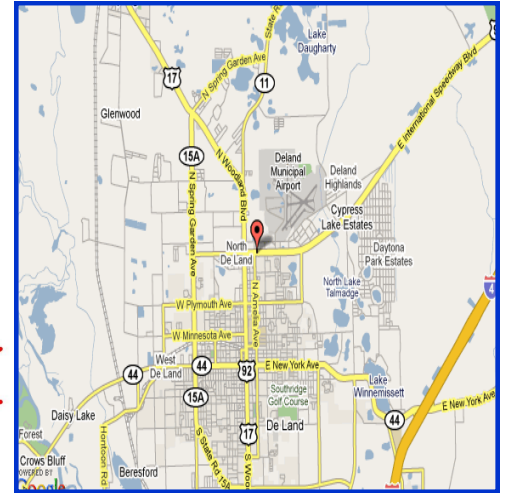
African American Museum of the Arts  
Athens Theatre - athensdeland.com  
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Barberville Pioneer Settlement  
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Butterfly World butterflyworld.com  
Busch Gardens Tampa  
Central Florida Metal Detecting Club  
Columbia Restaurant St. Augustine  
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Cracker Barrel Old County Store  
Crankin A's Model A Club  
Daytona Beach Area Visitors Bureau  
Daytona Beach Navy League  
DeLeon Springs State Park  
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**National & Local Register  
of Historic Places**

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**Serving DeLand, Volusia County and the State of Florida**

**Preserving Military & Local History  
In Memory of ALL Who Served**



DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, Inc.  
910 Biscayne Boulevard  
DeLand, FL 32724  
Phone: 386-738-4149

[www.delandnavalairmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairmuseum.org)  
JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!!

**Hours of Operation: 12 Noon-4pm  
Wednesday through Saturday,  
Sunday 1pm-4pm (If Volunteers  
Are Available)**

**Call to Schedule Group Tours for  
Adults & Youth Groups**

**JOIN TODAY OR DONATE  
(DONATE WITH CREDIT CARD ON WEBSITE)**

**Thank You Museum Volunteers !!**

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