

The Avenger

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8-2022

## The Avenger - August 2022

Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Museum

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NASFL MUSEUM  
4000 W. Perimeter Rd.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315

Media Mail



Historical Association- National Register of Historical Places- A Florida Heritage Site

PRESERVING- EDUCATING- HONORING HEROES

Newsletter of the NAS Fort Lauderdale Museum March 2023

Website: [nasflmuseum.com](http://nasflmuseum.com) E-Mail: [nasflmuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:nasflmuseum@yahoo.com)  
(954) 359- 4400 Editors: Deborah Hamilton and Isabella Ramirez

WE'RE OPEN! Come and visit us on Saturdays & Sundays from 11:30- 3:00

Welcome New Members

**Individual Members:**

**Family:** Rebecca Parido

**Life Member:** Lawrence Denmark

## A Note From the Editor

Dear Members, Volunteers and Guests,  
Visit the website's blog: [blog.nasflmuseum.com](http://blog.nasflmuseum.com). We encourage you to check our website and blog and take a look at our online exhibits. We appreciate your continued support for the museum, our volunteers, and our veterans.

## Projects and Upcoming Events

## Benefactors and Donations

Thank you to William and Diane Zuentdt, Jerry and Lisa Shapiro, Philip J. D'Auria and Sarah Zinkievich, Pat and Roger Graham, Patricia and Louis Riggio, Burton and Steffi Schiffer, Beverly Babcock, Tim and Beth Sheehan, Murphy's Bed, Landmark Funeral Homes and Happy Pappy's for their donations to our museum.

## Luncheons



## Volunteers



Thank you to our wonderful docents Gary Adams, Tom Sheridan, George Counts, John Bloom, Bob Alden, Gail Davie, Jerry Shapiro, John Worth, and Conner Harrington. We appreciate all of your hard work!

Thank you to all of our volunteers, including Beth Sheehan, Angela Piriano, Diane and Isabella Ramirez, Deborah “Debbie” McElhiney- Hamilton, Kitty Weidman, Ron Brandenburg, G.L. Franklin, and many more. We appreciate everything you do for the museum!

There are so many “facets” that come into play to keep this museum alive and running, that we could not do it without all of their help...Administrative duties, Planning events , giving weekly Tours, selling memorabilia, maintaining Historic documents, maintaining original artifacts, maintaining both indoor and outdoor grounds, Newsletters and blogs, Memberships etc.... The list goes on and on in order to preserve this beautiful and historic Museum, of which, we are very proud of and wish to continue the legacy which started with our founding fathers: Alan McElhiney, Ben Langley, Bob Rauls and Steve Sedillo.

We will always be grateful to these dedicated Men of Honor that began and preserved a piece of history for many generations to come.

## The Wrecking Crew and Garden Crew

Thanks to Brendan Doyle, Rolf Ekelund, John Bowman, Don Rieth, Larry Rivera, Janice Malkoff, Taddeus Hamilton, and Diane Gray for coming to the museum to keep the post in prime condition. It takes a lot of time and hard work.

## Flight 19

Flight 19: Was the Designation of a group of 5 Avenger Torpedo Bombers that disappeared over the Bermuda Triangle on December 5, 1945 after losing contact during a United States Navy overwater Navigation training flight from Navel Air Station, Ft. Lauderdale, FL One of the most perplexing mysteries of Aviation History.  
Come and Visit our museum to see an actual Flight Link Trainer from their time.

Our 75th Flight 19 Ceremony was hosted on December 5th, 2021. Frank Loconto, the host of Countyline T.V. and Korean War veteran, began our program singing our national anthem and God Bless America. Dr. Anthony Attwood of the Miami Military Museum and Vice Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, Ben Sorensen, were our guest speakers. The story of Flight 19 was told by Sarah Israel, who explained what the aviation jargon meant and what their flight path probably looked like. Larry Rivera, son of Ray Rivera, rang the bell in honor of the 14 airmen who lost their lives and the 13 Martin PBM Mariner crew members who disappeared during the search and rescue.



Dr. Anthony Attwood Sarah Israel Ben Sorensen John Bloom & Frank Loconto

## In Memoriam



Bobbie Killbride  
June 2021

Bobbie Killbride, the wife of the late Gary Killbride, was a member and volunteer here at the museum. Her assistance during Flight 19 was greatly appreciated, and she will be missed dearly.

## In Memoriam (Continued)



Anthony Ferrelli

April 2021

Anthony Ferrelli was a long-time member and assisted Allan McElhiney with his wife Ellen in getting the museum up and running. He was in the Army Reserves for five and a half years.



Dorothy Riser

October 2021

Dorothy Riser was a long-time volunteer and treasurer at NASFL. She was friends with Allan McElhiney and had a successful interior designer career. She also made many improvements to the design of the museum.



Veronika Thorne

July 2021

Veronika and her late husband George were active at NASFL for many years. They were big supporters of NASFL. They attended our luncheons and Flight-19 ceremonies. She will be missed dearly. George was a British aviator during WWII. Veronika was also an active U.S. Navy League Fort Lauderdale member and a supporter of its Spruance Sea Cadet Program.

## In Memoriam (Continued)



Nunzio Galli

December 2021

Nunzio was a Korean- era veteran and the museum’s master carpenter. He joined the museum in 2015 and spent almost every week helping out and spending time with his friends Brendan Doyle, Phil Jordan, and Rolf Ekelund.



Ron Brandenburg

March 2022

Ron Brandenburg Served in the Navy from 1953 – 1955 as a Radioman aboard the destroyer USS Isherwood DD-520 and then the cruiser Baltimore CA-68. He came in on Saturdays, brought snacks, and shared stories of his time in the Navy. He also came to all of the museum’s luncheons and ceremonies. He will be missed dearly and is survived by his wife, Miriam.



Charles McGee

January 16

Charles McGee was a Tuskegee Airman who flew 409 fighter combat missions over three wars and later helped to bring attention to the Black pilots who had battled racism at home to fight for freedom abroad. McGee was 102 and died peacefully in his sleep.



In 2018, Captain Sarah Israel (AKA Genie Merrell) retired from AirTran airline and began volunteering as a docent here at NASFL. She grew up in Rocky River, Ohio, and enjoyed reminiscing about her time there and recognizing early songs. She settled here in Fort Lauderdale, where she married Peter, a lawyer, a minister, and the love of her life. When Peter became disabled, she cared for him for four and a half years until his passing. After his death, Sarah and her sister-in-law Mary shared a home in Plantation. Sarah graduated from Broward College's Aviation Program and flew for several airlines before joining AirTran. Sarah enjoyed telling stories of her time in the air, and says the worst problem she experienced was a severe smoking engine while awaiting take-off.

She flew all types of planes, including biplanes, before graduating to a 737. She will be remembered by most for her ability, level-headedness, and fantastic sense of humor. Sarah loved Amelia Earhart and enjoyed our biography about her, including Earhart in her many tours. She started "Sarah's Team," an organization dedicated to promoting airline pilot opportunities for women. Sarah dedicated countless hours to the museum, always lending a helping hand, a kind heart, and an incredible sense of humor. She occasionally shared a bible verse to get her point across, and her faith was unwavering. Sarah was a trail-blazer for women in aviation and changed the industry for future generations. Thank you, Sarah, for all your time, your incredible stories, and for helping everyone who wanted to follow in your path with a rocket-assisted take-off.

Thank you to George Counts for taking the time to gather information from all our volunteers so they may be remembered.

## REMINDER!

**A reminder that dues are due in January of each year.**



**Scan this QR code on your phone , visit our website, or go to <https://nasflmuseum.com>**