



**THE ATLANTA WORLD WAR II ROUND TABLE  
PRESERVING HISTORY**

**INTERNET:** <http://www.atlantawwiiroundtable.org>

VOL. 31 No. 7      307<sup>th</sup> MEETING

**Editor:** John E. Kovach

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**Contributor(s) To This**

**Newsletter**

\* William (Billy) McDonald

\* Gary Weller

\* Pete Mecca / Jay Lenny

\* Brent Bracewell / Marc Feit

\* Emily Carley / Martin Madert

**Commander** – Pete Mecca

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**Finance Officer**- Jay Lenny

**Sr. Sgt.-at-Arms** – Ralph Lehr

**Sr. Chaplain** – Elaine Rivers

**Appointments 2016-2017**

*Asst. to Commander* - Hank Frampton

*Aide-to-Commander(s)* – Joe Jordan

*Finance Assistant* – Guy Condra

*Asst. Sgt.-at-Arms* – Bob Rivers

*Asst. Sgt.-at-Arms* – Mike Koesters

*Asst. Chaplain & Sec.* Joyce Mecca

*Public Relations Director* – Jill Berry

*Media Librarian* – Ginny Koesters

*Website Monitor* – Greg McClelland

**Date:** MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (THURSDAY) >>>> *Next Meeting April 20<sup>th</sup>*

**Time:** Social Half-Hour: **10:45 AM – 11:15 AM** > **BUFFET LINE OPENS AT 11:15 AM – MEETING START TIME 11:45 AM – 12:00 NOON**

\*\* **DUNWOODY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (DUMC)**

**1548 Mount Vernon Rd, Dunwoody, GA 30338**

**Website:** [www.dunwoodyumc.org](http://www.dunwoodyumc.org) - Church Phone: 770-394-0675

**Meal Price:** \$ 20.00 (Individual) / \$ 35.00 (Couples) *Courtesy Reservation Requested*

**Speaker(s):** William (Billy) McDonald

**Subject:** - ‘Flying Tigers – The Wingman for Chennault’

**Mission Statement**

**We, who by our own actions, and by our heritage, know that liberty has not, is not, nor ever will be free, do in association with our friends and comrades, who believe as we do, pledge that we will meet at the call of our Commander no less than ten times a year:**

**\* To hear of the war experiences of our members and invited guests**

**\* To encourage and demonstrate pride in our country and its armed forces**

**\* To pass on to posterity our knowledge of World War II, and of the price –**

**Human and material - that was paid by our nation for the preservation of liberty in the United States and the world**

(( Meeting Attendance For The February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Meeting: ± 125 ))

**Speaker for March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – William (Billy) McDonald (To Be Introduced By Commander Mecca)**

The MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (THURSDAY) Meeting of the Atlanta WW II Round Table will feature William (Billy) McDonald as our speaker.

Billy McDonald grew up hearing stories about flying and about his father’s experiences in China, and as an adult, he was stunned to discover front-page stories about his father’s career. After five years of research and another year working with his co-author to create the final book, author McDonald has immersed himself in the history of aviation in Alabama and in China during the 1930s and 40s, as well as the experience of Americans in China during that era.

Since completing *The Shadow Tiger*, McDonald has presented his father’s story to dozens of organizations including **[Southern Museum of Flight and the CNAC Association in San Francisco]**. In 2016, he also spent three weeks in China meeting with multiple Museums and Associations that showcase the history of American flyers with the *Flying Tigers* and the *China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC)*. McDonald currently serves on the board of *CNAC Heritage Fund* and *The Southern Museum of Flight*.

Please welcome Billy McDonald as our MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) speaker (307<sup>th</sup> Meeting.)

**Speaker Review for February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017– - Gary Weller ( Introduced By Commander Mecca )**

The February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (Thursday) Meeting/Banquet of the Atlanta WW II Round Table featured as our speaker Gary Weller. Weller served with the 307th Engineers, 82nd Airborne Division, 1956 thru 1959 as a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), Demolition Expert. On leaving the service, he became a life member of the 82nd Airborne Association and was instrumental in establishing the only Association Museum, housed in the facilities of the Association chapter, located in Buffalo, New York.

After moving to Georgia, he and two others formed the *North Georgia Airborne Association*, centralized in the Gainesville area. He is presently Chair of the organization. The group, made up of ex-paratroopers, is very active and recently has agreed to begin sponsoring service dogs for veterans in need.

Gary’s presentation covered the formation of the U.S. Army Test Platoon at Fort Benning, the 555<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalion ( Triple Nickels, Smoke Jumpers), the history of Camp Toccoa, and the famous 115 mile forced march to Ft. Benning in which the 502<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment was ordered to march from Camp Toccoa to Ft. Benning in December 1942.

He continued (almost completely from memory with few notes) with details on the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne’s first Army combat jump into North Africa against the French Vichy and ended his presentation with a briefing on WW II Operations Husky, Overlord and Market Garden.

Thank-You Gary for keeping history alive with us on February 16<sup>th</sup> and for a job well done.

**I am pleased to announce that we have two (2) New Members who have joined us since our February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Meeting:**

**William C. McDonald** – Billy McDonald is our March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Speaker. His interest(s) and focus is on the China, Burma, India (CBI) Theater of Operations. He is retired and an author.

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**Steve Henke** – Steve is retired and interested in WW II history.

*Please welcome Billy and Steve as our newest members at the March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting.*

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**SPECIAL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS / OF SPECIAL INTEREST & UPCOMING EVENTS**

>>> **WW II BOMBER JACKETS – April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017** - Join the *Gone with the Wind Chapter of Women in Aviation International* as we welcome a presentation by Atlanta Aviation Photographer John Slemp. He'll discuss his work on a book project about WW II Bomber Jackets and the men and women who wore them.

This event is **FREE** to the public. **Location:** *Delta Air Lines General Office, 1030 Delta Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30354-1989.*

**Date / Time:** *April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, 7:30 PM / Program Begins / Networking Social Begins At 6 PM*

>>> **WWII HERITAGE DAYS SALUTES DOOLITTLE RAID, BATTLE OF MIDWAY-April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

The mission of the *Commemorative Air Force* is preservation and education. Their goal is to preserve World War II aircraft and the stories of the men and women who built, maintained and flew them. *WWII Heritage Days* is a living history classroom. Suggested donations for *WWII Heritage Days* are: Adults 18 and Older, \$10; Ages 11-17 \$5. Children 10 and under and World War II veterans are admitted free. WWII Heritage Days will take place rain or shine. Please no pets. Tickets for "Keepem Flying" are \$55 before April 17th, \$65 at the door. Reserved tables and group discounts available. All ticket sales final. For more information, please visit [www.wwiideays.org](http://www.wwiideays.org) or call [678-364-1110](tel:678-364-1110).

The *Commemorative Air Force* is a non-profit organization dedicated to flying and restoring World War II aircraft. Based in Dallas, Texas, the organization has more than 13,000 members and operates a fleet of more than 166 aircraft. These aircraft compose the world's largest flying museum, and are operated for the education of present and future generations. Visit their Website at [www.commemorativeairforce.org](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org).

>>> **82<sup>nd</sup> AIRBORNE AWARDS FESTIVAL – April 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017** – Plan to attend the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Airborne Festival hosted by the Donald D. Lassen Atlanta All-Airborne Chapter. Experience the history, entertainment and brotherhood over several days plus: April 27<sup>th</sup>-Memorial Luncheon & Guest Speaker & VA Health-Screening Services provided by the staff of Atlanta VA Hospital; April 28<sup>th</sup> – Bus trip to Ft. Benning – They will have an Airborne jump if weather is OK – Lunch at the Mess Hall & more; April 29<sup>th</sup> – Airborne briefings – 5PM Cocktail Hour followed by the Airborne Banquet & Airborne Awards Presentations-followed by entertainment. All friends of the military are invited to attend. Everyone must register to attend the event. Please contact Jim Jenkins – Treasurer – Atlanta Airborne Chapter at 770-564-3546 or via email at [jimjenkins@pace-asp.com](mailto:jimjenkins@pace-asp.com) for additional information or visit their Website at [www.82nd-atlanta.com](http://www.82nd-atlanta.com)

>>> **(UPDATED) AIR FORCE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION - Georgia Chapter - MEETING REMINDER** The Georgia Chapter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Association is meets monthly at Clairmont Place, 2100 Clairmont Lake Decatur, GA, 30033 (Across the street from the VA hospital on Clairmont Road). This Association meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. Please call Brent Bracewell for additional information at 678-416-5749 or email him at [brent.bracewell@yahoo.com](mailto:brent.bracewell@yahoo.com) or email the Organizations Secretary Marc Feit at [marcfeit@bellsouth.net](mailto:marcfeit@bellsouth.net) to confirm the time and date of their next scheduled meeting. Their featured speaker for their March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting is Roger MacKenzie of the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

>>> **(REMINDER) IMMEDIATE - WITNESS-TO-WAR ORGANIZATION AND ATLANTA WW II ROUND TABLE** The Witness to War Foundation, which works on a volunteer basis to videotape all Roundtable meetings, is a local non-profit that conducts video interviews with combat veterans of all wars. Veterans from all services and all conflicts are asked to sign-up for an interview with Martin Madert and provide them with their oral histories. Sign-up sheets are available at all meetings or you can contact Martin via email at [martin@witnessstowar.org](mailto:martin@witnessstowar.org) or by phone at 770-628-0024. If you have general questions around Witness to War, you may contact Director, Emily Carley, at [emily@witnessstowar.org](mailto:emily@witnessstowar.org) or 770-481-3018. Additional information on the Foundation can be found at [www.WitnessToWar.org](http://www.WitnessToWar.org).

>>> **(UPDATED) UPCOMING SPEAKERS for – February 2017 – June 2017** – Commander & Program Chairman Pete Mecca, with the assistance of the Program Committee, have lined-up some impressive speakers for us for our 2017-2018 campaign: **March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) – William 'Billy' McDonald - *Flying Tigers - The Wingman for Chennault*; April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) – George Wilkerson – 20<sup>th</sup> Armored Division; May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 ( 3<sup>rd</sup> TUESDAY) – General Turner – U.S. Army; June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (5<sup>th</sup> THURSDAY) – John McLaughlin. Please note that the speaker's engagements are subject to change. Thank-You Pete for taking on this very difficult endeavor and for your continuing efforts to seek-out and engage excellent speakers for our meetings. Should any member have a suggestion or lead for Pete relative to a qualified Speaker, please contact Commander Mecca at 770-354-9697 or via email at [petemecca@gmail.com](mailto:petemecca@gmail.com)**

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Monthly Quotes:

When a sickly, half-deaf, forty-seven-year-old retired U.S. Army Air Corps Captain went to China in 1937 to survey Chiang Kai-shek's *Chinese Air Force*, little did the world know this would be the man to stem the Japanese tide in the Far East. Almost every military expert predicted his handful of pilots of the *American Volunteer Group* (A.V.G.) would not last three weeks. Yet in seven months in 1942, the AVG - fighting a rear-guard action over Burma, China, Thailand, and French Indonesia-destroyed a confirmed 199 planes, with another 153 "probables" as well. They did this losing only four pilots and twelve P-40s in air combat and sixty-one on the ground.

Unlike Eisenhower and MacArthur, Chennault was no saintly military leader. He was a chain-smoking, bourbon-drinking, womanizing man. He was the kind of leader his men knew could and did fly better than they - in any kind of plane. But first and last, he was a fighter - a tough, single-minded warrior who was never confused about who the enemy was in Asia, regardless of what the State Department thought.

To Chennault, it was clear that paid soldiers could play a vital role in aerial combat. General Claire Chennault's favorite poem about mercenaries like the A.V.G. was *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries* by A.E. Housman, it reads as follows:

*These, in the day when heaven was falling,  
The hour when earth's foundations fled,  
Followed their mercenary calling  
And took their wages and are dead.  
Their shoulders held the sky suspended;  
They stood, and earth's foundations stay;  
What God abandoned, these defended,  
And saved the sum of things for pay.*

Alfred Edward (A.E.) Housman (26 March 1859 – 30 April 1936)