

Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In addition to AZ Congresswoman Martha McSally, 2015 honorees include a husband/wife team of Navy Chiefs; a fighter pilot from the First World War; a general aviation pilot with more than 40,000 flight hours; and the man responsible for Coventry High School's Air Force JROTC program.

November 21st awardees have North Kingstown, Portsmouth, Coventry, Warwick, East Greenwich, and Woonsocket connections, and include attendees at Westerly and Woonsocket High Schools, St. Mary's Academy-Bay View, Providence College and Brown University

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame will induct two new members, present a seldom-given President's Award and recognize the service of five others (all deceased) at a ceremony and dinner to be held at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in Cranston on Saturday evening, November 21st.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. A limited number of tickets are still available; they cost only \$55 each (\$100 per couple) and can be obtained by emailing riahof@aol.com, or logging in to our website at www.riahof.org. For further information, please call 401-398-1000 or 401-831-8696.

Our guest of honor this year is Warwick's Martha McSally, an Air Force Academy graduate who became the first American woman pilot to fly combat missions. Retired Colonel McSally is also the first woman given command of a fighter squadron. Last November she was elected to the US House of Representatives from Arizona's 2nd District.

The highlights of her career were described in detail in a separate release, which is appended below.

Our second inductee is:

John A. Rutledge Jr. (1943-2012)

Born in Westerly and raised beneath the traffic pattern of Westerly Airport, John began flying as a teen and ultimately logged more than 40,000 flight hours, flying more than 30 different types of airplanes. He spent nearly 4.5 years of his life aloft, earning an Air Transport Rating, multi engine commercial privileges and type ratings in a myriad of aircraft along the way. By the time he graduated from high school he had earned his commercial ticket and started making a living as a charter pilot, making countless runs between Westerly and Block Island as well as a host of other northeast destinations. He joined commuter airline pioneer Joe Fugere in 1961 as one of the first pilots for Pilgrim Airlines, flying a Piper Comanche out of Waterford Airport. John stayed with Pilgrim in numerous capacities, rising to chief pilot before striking off on his own in 1979 to form Action Air, a charter outfit he operated until his death.

For 23 years he was a Designated Pilot Examiner and an FAA Accident Prevention Counselor. When the FAA Safety Team program was introduced John became an enthusiastic team member. In 2009, John was honored by the Federal Aviation Administration with the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for maintaining safe operations for 50 years of incident-free flying.

The deceased recipients of our Special Recognition awards are:

Jean Teresino Yarnall (1923-2013)

In September 1943, Jean Teresino was living in Hartford, CT and working for an insurance company. She decided to join the new Navy unit called "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service", or WAVES. She was sworn in on January 12, 1944 and attended a ten week boot camp at Hunter College. She then volunteered for Link Instrument Training Instructor School (L.I.T.I.S.) in Atlanta, having chosen to train pilots in cockpit instrumentation and blind flying. After a year at NAS Atlanta, she transferred back to the northeast, first to Quonset Point and then to the auxiliary field in Groton, CT, where she served until the war ended. She decided to stay in the Navy and returned to Quonset in 1946, where she attained the rank of Chief in March of 1947. She met her future husband, Robert Yarnall, an aircraft mechanic and career Navy man, while he was playing baseball for the Quonset team. They married in November of 1948, and she continued on active duty until her pregnancy forced her honorable discharge on Feb 2, 1950. The Yarnalls lived in North Kingstown until 1955, when they moved to the Potowomut section of Warwick/East Greenwich, where they lived until she died in 2013.

Robert J. Yarnall, Sr. USN Ret (1924-2015)

Bob was born on February 11, 1924 in Seattle, Washington. He left high school after two years and decided to join the Navy. He graduated from boot camp at Norfolk Naval Station in 1941 and was assigned to VP-91, a patrol squadron based at Quonset Point. When World War II broke out, he trained in aerial gunnery in California and was sent to Kaneohe Bay near Honolulu. On September 5, 1942, he flew his first combat patrol. On October 27, 1942, he received a commendation for participating in a dive bombing attack at the Battle of Santa Cruz. After the war ended, he returned to Quonset as an aviation machinist and, in March 1947, played in the All Navy Basketball Tournament at Chicago. He also joined the Quonset Flyers baseball team. In the spring of 1947, Bob met his future wife, the late Jean Marjorie Teresino, a WAVE flight instrument trainer at Quonset. They eloped and married in Baltimore on November 23, 1948. In February 1949, Bob joined VC-12 and deployed on aircraft carriers, serving in the Mediterranean aboard U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt and aboard U.S.S. Midway in the South China Sea. He next joined VX-6, the Antarctica Development Squadron, reaching the South Pole during Operation Deep Freeze in 1959. Back at Quonset, Bob joined VAW-12, participating in Mediterranean cruises until the spring of 1961. He worked as Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate for the Naval Aircraft Torpedo Unit (NATU) before his last sea duty in 1967 took him to seven European ports with VS-22 on the U.S.S. Essex. He retired with the rank of Chief in 1968.

Charles Gordon Greenhalgh 1895—1977

Born into a Pawtucket manufacturing family, Charles Greenhalgh lived on Walcott Street and attended Pawtucket public schools before graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire in 1914. He attended Yale University for three years. In 1916 the Yale Aeronautical Club was formed, and while there is no evidence young Charles ever joined it, he was doubtlessly influenced by it. The New York press dubbed them the "Millionaires' Unit." Early in 1917 Greenhalgh and a number of Yale classmates left school to fight with the Allies, prior to US involvement. He sailed for France after joining the American Field Service, which supplied drivers for the American ambulances used to carry the wounded French soldiers back from the front. The enlistment period was for six months and the drivers were part of the French Foreign Legion.

After completing that tour, he joined the US Army in Paris in October, 1917, and signed up for aviation training. He went up for his flight the next day. After about five hours of dual controls, he flew solo for 25 hours, earning his French Brevet (license). After completing advanced and gunnery training, he was sent in August, 1918 to the 28th Pursuit Squadron assembling at St. Mihiel. The nucleus of this group was the old Lafayette Escadrille which had been taken over from the French by the American forces. Their first missions were to try and slow the German retreat from the St, Mihiel salient. The 28th went on to the Argonne sector "which was very active, with probably the best German squadrons on the other side of the line and our losses became high." He was still in this area when the war ended. Greenhalgh returned to the family mill business and was active in local politics during the FDR administration. He served as a Director of RI Hospital Trust Co. for many years. When the mills were sold in 1960 he managed investments and became known as a major philanthropist, supporting hundreds of charities.

Lt. Colonel Daniel R. Fierro, USAF, (Ret) (1931 – 2007)

A long-time resident of North Kingstown, Colonel Fierro served in the Strategic Air Command (SAC), first flying B47s and then B52s. His USAF duty included several tours supporting the Vietnam engagement, including tours in Guam and Thailand. In 1968, Dan was promoted to Director of Academic Training, Castle Air Force Base, Merced CA, where he developed his interest in teaching the art of flying and the importance of military service. Dan held this position until his retirement in 1973. Still wanting to stay involved in the Air Force, and pursuing his interest in educating young people, Dan, along with Master Sergeant Robert Kreyssig, USAF, (Ret) accepted the challenge of creating and directing the Coventry High School Air Force Jr. ROTC program, which they ran for more than 10 years. Another highlight of his educational career was Dan's selection as an alternate for the Space Shuttle 'Teacher in Space Project'. During his time in Rhode Island, Dan satisfied his own passion for flying in a Cessna 150, and then a Piper 140. After earning his pilot instructor rating, Dan established and operated Astoria Aviation at Quonset Point, focused on private pilot lessons. During his 22 retirement years, Dan passed on both his knowledge of and passion for flying to dozens of aircraft and pilot enthusiasts. Dan was a long-time RI resident, an active leader and participant in aviation throughout his career, and an avid support of RI-based aviation and military organizations.

Bertrand "Bert" T. Cournoyer (1919-1967)

Bert Cournoyer was born and raised in Manville, RI. He graduated from Woonsocket High School in 1937. He was President of the Senior High School Band and received numerous music awards, including All New England clarinetist. He was awarded a scholarship to The New England Conservatory of Music. After one year, Bert decided not to make music his career and transferred to Providence College, continuing to play in dance bands as clarinetist, saxophonist and vocalist to support himself while in college. Music remained an important facet of Bert's life, even throughout military service. In 1940, Bert enlisted in the RI Army National Guard Band and was given the rank of Sergeant. In January, 1941, he was promoted to Technical Sergeant, serving in the 243rd Coast Guard Artillery Band at Fort Wetherill, RI. In February, 1941, Bert entered Cadet Flying School at Turner Field, Georgia, where he earned his wings in October. He was first sent to Puerto Rico, where he served as a member of a pursuit squadron for the next several months. In September of 1942, Bert was sent overseas and assigned to the 23rd Fighter Group, 74th Fighter Squadron in Kunming, China. His primary was flying fighter escort for bombers, including many missions over the over the Hump. During this period, Bert served as a French interpreter for General Claire Lee Chennault. He accompanied the General to the home of Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek. In late December, 1942, Bert was reassigned to Lahore, India, to conduct flight training for Nationalist Chinese pilots. As a check pilot, he screened the trainees to determine their fitness for further training in the US. Bert organized another band to entertain the troops and was promoted to Captain. He returned stateside in July, 1944 and served as part of a readiness team at Pinellas Air Force Base in St. Petersburg, Florida until August, 1945. He was promoted to Major and was discharged at Fort Devens, MA in October, 1945. He graduated from Brown University in 1948. The Cournoyer family remained in Rhode Island until 1958 when Bert, now in the insurance business, was offered a promotion in Rochester, NY. His immediate family, widow Doris and daughters Doreen and Micki continue to reside in the Rochester area. Bert's last flight as a pilot took place at a small general aviation airport in Primrose, RI. Aboard this flight were his grandmother, his mother, his wife, and (unbeknownst to all), his first daughter.

The President's Award goes to:

Captain William McBryer Calhoun, USN (Ret.) 1948-2015

A long-time RI resident, CAPT Calhoun graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1967. One highlight of his Naval Aviation career was a 1969-70 tour as a LTJG with the highly decorated Helicopter Attack Squadron (Light) 3), nicknamed the "Seawolves", an all-volunteer squadron formed in support of Naval Special Warfare operations and Mobile Riverine Forces. Missions included Search and Destroy patrols, reconnaissance, MEDEVAC, and SEAL Team insertion and extraction. He later commanded Helicopter Combat Support Squadron ONE, also known as the "Pacific Fleet Angels", and served as Air Boss of the USS Peleliu. His awards include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, three single action and 21 Strike/Flight Awards, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" and Gold Star, and the Combat Action Ribbon. During his Vietnam tour he was exposed to Agent Orange. While on Disability Leave from the Navy, he attended the University of Georgia Law School and became a member of the Georgia Bar. This later contributed to his selection as Dean of Academics at the Naval War College. He

retired from Navy active duty service in 1994 as a member of the War College faculty and was pivotal in transitioning the Deanship from an active duty Naval Officer billet to a Civilian position. He also represented the Naval War College at the Mediterranean and Black Seas Symposium in Venice, Italy. Greatly respected by both students and faculty alike, he continued to teach until a month before he succumbed to cancer.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame announces 2015 induction; Congresswoman Martha McSally (R-AZ), Warwick native and first American female pilot to fly in combat, will be honored at November 21 dinner

PROVIDENCE— Arizona Congresswoman Martha McSally, a Warwick native and a retired Air Force Colonel will be Guest of Honor for this year's ceremony. McSally, a Distinguished Graduate of the US Air Force Academy, became the first US female fighter pilot to fly combat missions, and the first woman to command an American fighter squadron. In 2001-2002, McSally earned national recognition for filing a lawsuit and successfully overturning a military policy requiring all U.S. servicewomen to wear a Muslim abaya (a long cloak-like garment) and headscarf when off base in Saudi Arabia.

Martha McSally graduated from St. Mary's Academy - Bay View in 1984 as valedictorian of her class. Following her graduation from the Air Force Academy, she earned a Master's degree from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government before proceeding to flight school.

She was later assigned to a squadron flying the A-10 Thunderbolt and was deployed to Kuwait. In January 1995, she became the first woman in U.S. history to fly a combat aircraft into enemy territory when she flew her first sortie into Iraq in support of the United Nations no-fly zone enforcement.

She later graduated from the Air War College, first in her class of 261 future senior military leaders. Martha's last assignment was as a Division Chief at United States Africa Command, responsible for oversight of all U.S. military operations and activities on the continent of Africa, including counter-terrorism and counter-piracy operations. She retired from the Air Force in 2010 after 26 years in uniform as a command pilot with more than 2600 flight hours, including more than 325 combat hours.

After retiring from the Air Force in 2010, McSally served as a Professor of National Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany. She resigned her professorship in 2012 to run for Congress from Arizona, losing by less than 1% after an 11-day “long count” of provisional and absentee ballots. It was one of the tightest elections in the country.

She ran for Congress again in 2014, and once again had to endure a lengthy recount. “This time, however, the results went her way,” said Hall of Fame Founder and President Frank Lennon. “As a result, we are honored to be inducting not only a modern aviation trailblazer, but also a sitting Member of Congress.”

Names of the other 2015 honorees will be released at the end of October. "Based on the publicity from our previous inductions, we have received many nominations from the general public," said Lennon. "We now have a pool of well over 100 people under consideration for recognition."

Honorees are selected by an ad hoc committee representing a number of aviation groups. The committee includes previous inductees such as Robert Crandall, former chairman of American Airlines; Jennifer Murray, the first woman to fly a helicopter around the world; and Apollo 8 Astronaut Bill Anders.

“Thanks to the enthusiastic support of Rhode Island's aviation community, all twelve of our previous inductions were oversubscribed,” said Lennon. “We expect this event will be another sellout.

Tickets to the event cost \$55 per person (\$100 per couple); reservations can be made by calling 401-398-1000 or by emailing riahof@aol.com. Details can be found at this website: www.riahof.org