

THE MAINE TROOP GREETERS

SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Vol. 2 Issue 3
Jul - Sep 2013

WELCOME NEW TROOP GREETERS

Joseph Delfin 4/2013
Todd Lee 4/2013
Meagan Scott 4/2013
Dennis Wagner 4/2013
Bonni Wood 4/2013
Cindy Woodard 4/2013
Bronsen Hartley 5/2013
Ernie Von Tobel 5/2013
Regina Brook 6/2013
Richard Del Rossi 6/2013
Joey Kelley 6/2013
Chris Marley 6/2013
Rena Marley 6/2013
Leone Sullivan 6/2013

New Contributing
Member
Bruce Macmillan

New Therapy Dog
Spirit 5/2013

Junior Members
Ryder Croft 4/2013
Megan Morin 4/2013
Anna Wagner 4/2013
Joshua Wagner 4/2013
Joy Wagner 4/2013
Titus Wagner 4/2013
Abby Boucher 6/2013
Derek Courtney 6/2013
Shawn Wagner 4/2013

Welcome to the summer issue of our Maine Troop Greeters Newsletter. Flight activity continues to be very light, but try and set aside time to meet those flights that do arrive. As always, we look forward to your comments and suggestions as to what you would like to see in our newsletter.

OUR MISSION

The mission of The Maine Troop Greeters is to express the Nation's gratitude and appreciation to those Troops going overseas for a safe return and for those returning, for a joyful homecoming and to make their (hopefully brief) stay in Bangor as comfortable and pleasant as possible.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Memorial weekend The Bangor International Airport commemorated deceased Greeters Paul Tantarski and Lucy Reynolds by placing bricks on the walkway to the pavilion. Gordon Reynolds, husband of Lucy and Paulette Buongirno, daughter of Paul Tantarski, attended the ceremony. The additional names bring the total of those honored to 28. They also placed a beautiful new sign next to the walkway that tells the story of how and when the pavilion was dedicated to the Greeters. At our open house they gave us a plaque thanking us for the 10 years of service. We are fortunate to have such marvelous support.

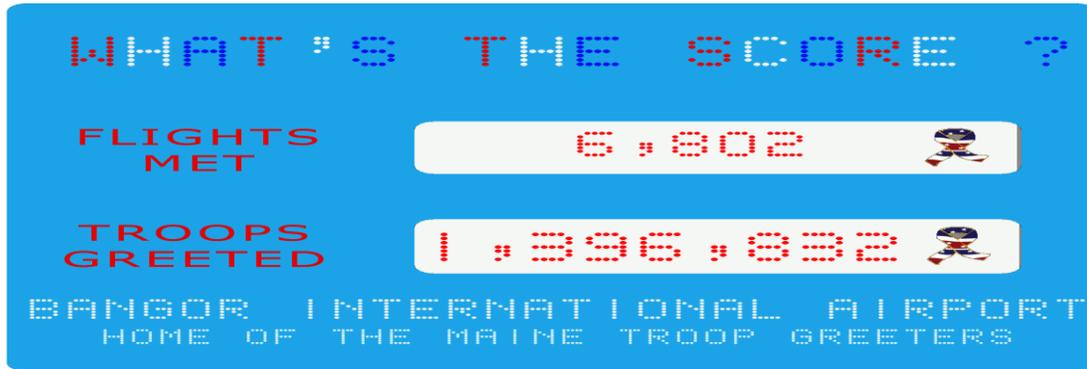
The city of Bangor presented us a wonderful plaque for your consistent and generous 10 years of service to the troops. You earned it! See it in the Troop room.

Years ago we received a \$10,000 check and just lately a \$7,500 check from Verizon. In May we set this money aside as an endowment. We need to ensure we properly maintain and safeguard the many items with which we have been entrusted.

If you missed the open house and Armed Forces event in May, don't miss Armed Forces Day 2014. The Community Relation Committee organized and ran a great event!

Chuck Knowlen

AS OF JUNE 30 2013



GREETERS PROFILE



Leon (Lee) Higgins left the University of Maine during his freshman year in 1943 to enlist in the Army Air Force. He wanted to fly, and since the Air Force was taking pilot candidates from the ranks, he took a chance that this would be his pathway to becoming a pilot. He applied, and was accepted, and was enrolled in a three month crash course in math and physics that was the equivalent of a year of college study. Open cockpit flying school in Tucson followed, and then it was on to Ontario Ca. for closed cockpit training. He wanted to be a fighter pilot, but his first assignment after getting his wings was to be an instructor. While this was a compliment to his skills, he asked his commanding officer what he had to do to become a fighter pilot and the suggestion was that he, join the Air Transport Command. It was felt that after he logged in enough time with Air Transport, he would have a chance to apply for fighter pilot training.

At that time, the Air Transport Command had evolved into a military airline service, transporting equipment and personnel. Civilian aircraft were modified to meet military requirements, and Lee eventually started flying a C-46 transport. Nicknamed "The Whale", this plane could fly higher and carry more cargo than any other plane at that time. One of the routes that Lee flew frequently was from Cairo, onto Baghdad, into Iran and often onto Karachi. The separate legs of the flights were twelve to fourteen hundred miles each, basically draining the fuel tanks. His cargo loads consisted of equipment and supplies, as well as Congressman, Generals, gold, and high value prisoners. Special trips took him to Copenhagen and Istanbul.

No, he never did make it to fighter pilot school, but he did plenty of flying, and when he was discharged in 1946 he was only twenty one years old. Going back to the U. of Maine, he completed his requirements for a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He remained in the Air Force Reserves until his retirement in 1967 with the rank of Major.

Lee joined the hundreds of Bangor area residents in welcoming the troops back from Desert Storm, and became active in Maine Troop Greeters when the organization came back to life in 2003. He and his wife Audrey remain faithful greeters, meeting as many flights as possible. The Higgins family legacy of flying is being carried on by Lee's grandson Travis Barry. Travis is a 2nd Lieutenant with the Maine Air Guard and is currently in flight school. He will be receiving his wings in December, and with additional training, will one day be flying K-135 tankers out of Bangor.

Much of the above material was obtained from the book Quiet Courage by Don Colson,

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

-Fourth of July Parade – By the time this newsletter is issued, the 4th of July will have passed. Thanks to those Troop Greeters who marched in the parade.

-Quarterly Troop Greeters Meeting. Saturday, September 14, 10 a.m. - 12 noon at Bangor Parks and Recreation Bldg. More details to follow. Please plan on attending..

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

I would like to send a personal thank you to those people involved with greeting our troops. Earlier this week, my husband had a layover in Bangor on his way to the Middle East. In our 15 years in Marine Corps life he has never been honored or cared for in that way. THANK YOU!!!! What you are doing is amazing and much appreciated!

-Anonymous

Going the Extra Mile; How about 618 miles and eleven hours of travel time. That is what it takes Joan and Hank McManus to do a round trip from their home in western Massachusetts to Bangor, and they have been doing this for five and a half years. It all started in 2007 when their son Tim passed thru Bangor on his way to Iraq and telephoned his parents. Determined to be at the airport for his return they contacted passenger services and Heidi put them in contact with Bill Knight. According to Joan and Hank, “they were taken under Bill’s wing”, and were at the airport for their son’s return. Impressed by what they saw – both from the recognition given to the troops by the Greeters, and by the sincere appreciation from the troops, they decided to return on a regular basis. Hank a Marine Veteran from the Vietnam era could relate to what he saw in Bangor to the reception given returning troops from his time.

Having a flexible schedule, Hank is retired from Law Enforcement and Joan is semi-retired from the education field allows them to frequently spend a couple of days greeting flights. Of course, as we all know, flight activity has been way down recently and we haven’t seen as much of Joan and Hank as we have in the past, but the next time you do see them a hug and handshake would be in order.



ROXANNE LEE: On March 4, 2013 one of our Troop Greeters, Roxanne Lee was presented with the Deans Service and Engagement Award by the U. of Maine. Her excellent example of putting others first and her commitment to service made her the clear recipient of this year’s award. Comments follow.

- “It takes a special individual to be able to put other’s needs above their own. Roxanne Lee is this person. She doesn’t think twice about engaging in service to the U of Maine community, as well as the greater Orono, Old Town and Bangor area.”
- “Roxanne finds great joy in giving back to her U of Maine community, through her work with the College of Education and Human Development, as well as her work with the Employee Assistance Program. Her positive attitude is contagious and makes it so easy to jump in and support

her with her service endeavors. Roxanne also finds time to provide support to those who serve and protect our country. Her service as part of the Maine Troop Greeters truly reaches a national and international level.”

- “Every year just before Christmas Roxanne engages the entire College in helping support a local family that needs assistance so that they can provide presents to their children and have food on the table.” Congratulations Roxanne!!



The Bangor Roller Derby held their Memorial Mayhem Derby Saturday 1 June and presented us with a check for \$701.00. Attend a Bangor Roller Derby event!

SICK CALL: **Bill Knight** is a resident at the Maine Veterans Home, 44 Hogan Rd., Bangor, Me 04401 and **Dana Chase** is a resident at Winterberry Heights, 932 Ohio St., Bangor, Me 04401.

IN SYMPATHY: Condolences to the Norm Rossignol family on the passing of Norm’s wife Connie on April 30. Condolences to Maxine Doucette on the passing of her son Louis on June 10th.

A WELCOME BACK to Bob Bailey and wife Faith. It was great to see Bob and Faith at the flight arrival on June 2nd. Bob is recovering from a stroke suffered last year.

NEW THERAPY DOG: A warm welcome to Spirit, a Goldendoodle hybrid cross and her owner Ernie Von Tobel. Spirit is four years old and has been a trained therapy dog for the last two years, with that time spent at St. Mary’s hospital in Lewiston, Me. As part of an on-going training program, Ernie exercises Spirit daily and last year logged in 2007 miles. Spirit and Ernie look forward to being part of Maine Troop Greeters for years to come.

DONATION: Cheryl Lare reports that Bangor Best Buy has donated a \$500 Power Point Projector to her Community Relations Committee. This piece of equipment will allow Cheryl and her team to up-grade the presentations they make throughout the state. Way to go Best Buy.

MILESTONE: On June 8th, we received Challenge Coin number **5000** to add to the collection. I am sure no one in 2003 ever thought we would reach this level.

NEW PINS: We now have new **Troop Greeters Pins**. For those who are interested in getting one, please see an individual authorized to sell coins or pins.