



WWII Veterans Honor Glenn Miller on Anniversary of Famous Bandleader's Disappearance

Musical Legend and WWII Hero honored with wreath laying ceremony, Iowa Governor's message

(Clarinda, IA Sunday, December 14, 2014) World War II veterans today visited the hometown of legendary bandleader Glenn Miller to pay tribute to the memory of one of America's greatest musicians on the 70th anniversary of his disappearance over the English Channel on December 15, 1944.

Miller, a big band composer and arranger, was the best-selling recording artist in America from 1939 to 1943. Miller's plane disappeared over the English Channel on December 15, 1944, while traveling to France to entertain American troops.

"Glenn Miller was the most popular musician of his era," said Jerry Yellin, 90, a WWII veteran who grew up listening to famous hits by the Glenn Miller Orchestra like "In the Mood," "Moonlight Serenade," "Tuxedo Junction," and "Chattanooga Choo Choo."

"At age 38, he was too old to be drafted and was making \$15,000 to \$20,000 a week as an entertainer," said Yellin. "Instead, he persuaded the Army to let him enlist so he could help raise the spirits of our men in uniform."

Yellin grew up in New Jersey where the Glenn Miller Orchestra played its final concert on September 27, 1942. He joined the Army Air Corps at age 18 and has the distinction of having flown the final combat mission of WWII as a fighter pilot on August 14, 1945. He now lives in Fairfield, IA and is participating in the preparations for a nationwide commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII that will be taking place next year.

One of the highlights of the commemorative year will be an around the world wreath laying ceremony honoring America's 'greatest generation' that will take place in communities across the country on August 16, 2015.



Major Glenn Miller
March 1, 1904 – December 15, 1944

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"Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" is a national grassroots collaborative that is helping to facilitate events and activities commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in 2015.

“The state of Iowa has a rich WWII heritage,” said Michael Potter, who is helping to organize commemorative events and activities in Iowa next year. “It is important that communities across our state take this opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women, like Major Glenn Miller, whose service and sacrifice preserved freedom and democracy in the world.”

“Major Glenn Miller will long be remembered for his musical style and showmanship, his hard work and perseverance, and for his patriotism to his country,” said Iowa Governor Terry Branstad in a prepared statement that was read during the ceremony. “The men and women who served us so well during WWII are examples of courage, self-sacrifice, and a can-do spirit. They are an inspiration to us today and for future generations of Iowans and Americans.”

For more information about the events and activities planned for the 70th WWII Anniversary Commemoration, visit www.Spiritof45.org

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