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# Clark Patriot

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## Township pays tribute to adopted 'Tiger'

By R. R. Fawcett  
A squadron of World War II fighters, flown by members of the Warbirds of America, Dec. 9 performed a flyover and "missing man formation" over Clark to salute Maj. John Petach, New Jersey's only Flying Tiger pilot.

The organizer of the tribute, Richard Schrader, thanked Clark Mayor Bernard G. Yarusavage and the Clark Veterans of Foreign Wars for paying tribute to Maj. Petach, a native of Perth Amboy.

Coinciding with the aerial performance was a ground ceremony at the Clark Veterans of Foreign Wars post, where Mayor Yarusavage presented honorary Clark citizenship to Maj. Petach's family and the major was posthumously given the title of honorary mayor.

The fighter pilots, who took off from Linden Airport, were led by Capt. William Dodds.

Born on July 15, 1918, Maj. John E. Petach, Jr. was graduated as an honor student from Perth Amboy High School at 16 years of age and from New York University with a degree in chemical engineering.

After his graduation from college he enlisted in the Navy and was awarded his wings in May, 1940 after being graduated from Navy

flight training in Pensacola, Fla.

Ensign Petach was assigned to the aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Ranger, as a divebomber pilot.

At this time, at the request of Chiang Kai Shek, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sanctioned the formation of a secret group of combat fliers to go to China to protect the Burma Rd. from the invading Japanese.

Politics required the volunteers from the Army, Navy and Marines to resign their commissions.

However, there was the understanding the men could return to their units after the tour, reports Mr. Schrader.

This secret group was officially called the American Volunteer Group or AVG, and as one of the volunteers Johnnie Petach sailed with others to Rangoon, Burma in the summer of 1941.

Led by Gen. Claire Chennault, the AVG pilots, who became better known as the Flying Tigers, won incredible victories against the Japanese, such as on Dec. 25, 1941, when 12 Americans took off to intercept over 100 Japanese planes. In the ensuing dogfight 33 Japanese planes were shot down and every American returned home.

The exploits of the Flying Tigers and the victory after victory they won filled the

pages of newspapers in America during the early part of World War II.

The pilots painted shark teeth and eyes on the cowling of their P-40 fighters and tigers on the fuselage sides.

While in China Mr. Petach married one of the AVG nurses, the former Miss Emma Jane Foster from State College, Pa. After Mr. Petach died in the war Mrs. Petach later remarried. She is now Mrs. Emma Jane Hanks and she resides with her husband in Oxford, Md.

The Petach marriage was celebrated by the Flying Tigers in grand fashion, and although they were not permitted on the flight line Gen. Chennault used to allow Mrs. Petach to greet her husband when he came back from a mission, according to Mr. Schrader.

On July 4, 1942, when the Flying Tigers were disbanded by act of Congress, their job was officially taken over by the 23rd Fighter Group of the Army Air Force.

Maj. Petach stayed in China to fly with the Army Air Force and on July 10, 1942 when he led an offensive divebomber mission he hit his target, a Japanese gunboat, but his P-40 was hit by enemy groundfire and burst into flames. He

died crashing into a rice paddy next to a Buddhist temple in Linchou, China. His body was never recovered, noted Mr. Schrader.

Mr. Schrader in 1972 visited the mayor of Perth Amboy and asked if a monument could be built for Mr. Petach and all veterans.

However, he said, the mayor replied, "What Petach did happened years ago," and nothing was done.

In 1975 the Clarkite sponsored a dinner memorial for Mr. Petach at the Ramada Inn in Clark which had many surviving Flying Tigers in attendance.

Mr. Schrader recalled this year and last year he had several meetings with Perth Amboy city officials and representatives from the city's veterans groups.

He said people were opposed to honoring Mr. Petach and the American-Ukrainians Veterans Group of Perth Amboy boycotted the last meeting.

According to the Clarkite those who opposed Mr. Petach didn't want to honor him because he was a mercenary, to which Mr. Schrader replied Maj. Petach stayed in China with the Army Air Force even after he had every right to take his wife home to his loved ones.

Only one veteran from Perth Amboy, Peter Book, stood up for Maj. Petach, and, according to Mr. Schrader, after he did so Mr. Book was fired from his job.

After Mr. Schrader overheard Mayor Yarusavage talking about World War II fighters the mayor is a Marine veteran

of World War II and Korea he told the mayor what happened in Perth Amboy and on Veterans Day this year Mayor Yarusavage and members of the Clark Veterans of Foreign Wars honored the major in a special ceremony.

As a result of that ceremony a fighter pilot arranged the flyover of Dec. 9.

## State library group honors Franks

Assemblyman Bob Franks, who represents Clark, received a special award from the New Jersey Library Assn. for his legislative initiative which raised state aid to libraries in 1983 by \$2,300,000.

Assemblyman Franks spoke at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick on Dec. 3 before the annual joint fall conference of the association and the Educational Media Assn. of New Jersey.

In accepting the award the assemblyman expressed his satisfaction at having been able to give public libraries a "badly-needed proverbial shot in the arm."

"We tend to take libraries for granted," he said, "and forget the unique role they play in providing life-long educational opportunities for all our citizens."

The legislator praised Gov. Thomas H. Kean for his support of libraries and other educational and cultural activities. He also

credited the Democratic leadership in the Legislature for supporting increases in state aid to libraries.

Noting New Jersey is becoming a leading state in the high-technology area, the lawmaker pointed out libraries are moving forward rapidly to keep abreast of technological changes through computerization to speed up information retrieval and networks which bring libraries of all types school, public, academic and those serving business and industry into regional groupings which maximize library opportunities for all New Jersey citizens.

"These improvements cost money," Assemblyman Franks said, "but if our highly-industrialized state is to sustain its rightful place in a fiercely-competitive society, our libraries must be maintained at an effective operational level."

## Hehnlly 'puppeteers' re-create history

Famous people were recently recreated as puppets by fifth graders at the Frank K. Hehnlly School in Clark.

The children read a variety of biographies including those of such great personalities as Eleanor Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Wolfgang Mozart, Harriet Beecher

Stowe, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln.

Each child produced a script and directed and performed his presentation for fellow classmates. The experience was shared with classes in other grade levels.

John E. Conlin, the principal of the Hehnlly School, commended the children on their "creative talents."

## Compactor to close on Dec. 29

It was announced today by Clark Mayor Bernard G. Yarusavage the township compactor will be closed on Saturday, Dec. 29, and will return to the regular Saturday schedule, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Jan. 5, 1985.

The mayor and members of the Municipal Council wish the township residents and their families a happy and healthy holiday season. Mayor Yarusavage added, "Most of all, let's all make it a safe New Year."



CITIZEN OF YEAR...Dr. Joseph P. Cillo, center, receives Clark Unico's Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award from Henry R. Varriano, president, as Mrs. Cillo looks on. Dr. Cillo is the first Italian-American to rise to brigadier general in the Army Reserve Medical Brigade. He was first in the Army Reserve to receive the Distinguished Service Medal. He was also a founder of the Gran Centurions Club of Clark. Dr. Cillo is currently a surgeon. He is also the senior attending physician at Rahway Hospital.

## Rinaldo praises bogus goods law

Republican Rep. Matthew J. Rinaldo, whose district includes Clark, today said tough new laws passed by Congress to crack down on counterfeit products could save the country thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Rep. Rinaldo noted the new law makes it a criminal offense for the first time to engage in trademark counterfeiting. This means unscrupulous operations will be no longer able to copy famous-name brands right down to the serial numbers without running the risk of a jail sentence and a hefty fine.

Under the new law an individual may be imprisoned for up to five years and fined up to \$250,000 for dealing in counterfeit products

or services. The penalty is even stiffer for repeat offenders, and corporations engaging in trademark infringement are subject to a fine of up to \$1 million, he added.

Additionally trademark owners will be able to get a court order to seize bogus products and collect treble damages or profits and attorneys' fees in civil cases where a trademark is intentionally misused, the legislator pointed out.

"The cost of these practical activities to the United States economy has been enormous," the lawmaker said. "The United States International Trade Commission estimated bogus products steal about \$8 billion a year from United States sales and put 131,000 Americans out of work. In addition, inferior

counterfeit products can be hazardous to consumers."

The representative said a study of the problem by the Energy and Commerce Committee's subcommittee on oversight and investigations found commercial counterfeiting has spread to an amazingly wide range of products including drugs, automobile and aircraft parts, clothing, medical devices, chemicals, computers and personal care items.

Countries in Asia, Africa and South America are deeply involved in trademark piracy, according to the subcommittee's report, which noted in some parts of the world product counterfeiting has become part of the national industrial development strategy, he concluded.



YULE FOR 'THE LADY'...The Clark Police Cadets decided this year in lieu of having a Christmas party the money set aside for the party will be donated to the Restoration Fund for the Statue of Liberty. The check is handed to Clark Council President Fred Eckel, center, by one of the Cadet post advisors Police Lt. Anton Danco. Some of the cadets, shown in the rear, left to right are: Cadets John Loza, Sal Bove, David Slater, Jodi Stoddard, Leo Urso, Chris Canada and Joe Colombo.



NOT FORGOTTEN...On Dec. 9 a gathering of Clark residents, township dignitaries and members of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars came to honor Maj. John Petach, their adopted World War II pilot, who flew with the Flying Tigers during that war. A service was conducted at the Clark municipal building's memorial site at 2 p.m. A formation of World War II fighter planes flew over the area. One of the planes released a steamless smoke stream and dipped its wings for the deceased pilot. At the ceremony,

shown, left to right, are: Rich Schrader, the person instrumental in arranging the squadron's appearance; Fred Eckel, Clark Township Council president; Comm. John Specht of Clark Post No. 328 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Mary Palach, a sister of the pilot; Lt. Dan Dumas of the Naval Air Force, the pilot's mother; Michael Cordasco, Vice Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Clark Mayor Bernard G. Yarusavage, chairman of the program.

# Season's Greetings to All