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TWO SECTIONS • 75 CENTS



Congressman Rob Wittman (right) presents Raymond Burrell Sr. with the proclamation that was read into the Congressional Record.

Congress honors WWII vet

by Tom Chillemi

World War II veteran Raymond Burrell Sr., who was a member of the first African-American tank battalion, was honored on May 15, 2019 when First District Congressman Rob Wittman read into the Congressional Record a resolution recognizing Burrell's military service.

Burrell, of Deltaville, turned 100 years old on May 9.

On May 29 Rep. Wittman presented a copy of the proclamation to Burrell in a brief ceremony at the Deltaville Maritime Museum.

"In the winter of 1944-45 Burrell was a member of the now famous 761st Tank Battalion, the Black Panthers," states the resolution.

The Black Panthers were part of General George Patton's Third Army and saw extensive action at the Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's last desperate attempt to stop the Allies at the border between Belgium and Germany.

On December 16, 1944 three German armies (more than a quarter-million troops) launched an offensive at a lightly-defended sec-

tion of the Allied line in Belgium. The five-week-long Battle of the Bulge was the costliest World War II action for the U.S. Army that suffered over 100,000 casualties.

Raymond Burrell Sr. was a survivor.

"Despite experiencing seemingly hopeless situations, Raymond (Burrell) persevered along with the other members of the 761st Tank Battalion and held their vital positions on the battlefield," states the resolution. "Our nation is lucky to have had someone like him risk his life to protect us all. Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing the accomplishments, bravery and dedication of Raymond Burrell Sr. Words alone cannot express our gratitude. May God bless Raymond Burrell Sr."

Burrell was also presented with one of Rep. Wittman's personal Congressional Challenge Coins. The coin honors a person for a special achievement.

Read Raymond Burrell's story in the May 16, 2019 Southside Sentinel. An online version is available with a subscription at www.southsidesentinel.va.newsmemory.com.



Hummel Field at Topping

Work continues on creating a regional airport at Hummel Field

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on July 2 to appoint board chair Chip Holt, Harmony Village supervisor Kathleen Swinehart and county administrator Matt Walker to a committee charged with the selection of securing an attorney and a firm to provide economic analysis services to create a regional airport at Hummel Field in Topping.

Walker reported "we have received a good, robust, healthy amount of interest from the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) that we put out for securing an attorney and economic analysis services for potential creation of a regional airport authority."

RFQs are expected to be opened later in July and Walker requested the board appoint three members to meet with Lancaster and Northumberland representatives as part of the selection committee.

This is the first step in the process to secure a consultant "to guide us through the process and, if the coalition is willing, continue to move a bill to the (Virginia) General Assembly hopefully by the next session (to make Hummel Field a regional airport)," said Walker.

Swinehart asked, "Isn't this about how to lay out the groundwork as to how this (regional airport) will benefit Middlesex County?" The airport is in the Harmony Village District that Swinehart represents.

"Yes," answered Walker. "I hope the review process will be this month. It will depend on when Lancaster and Northumberland meet and appoint their representatives."

Walker said he had heard that Lancaster supervisors are going to appoint members to the committee from its Economic Development Authority.

Saluda District supervisor Pete Mansfield said, "We are not turning over any part of our airport to outside people without knowing one heck of a lot more."

Walker said, "It would not be that easy. No sir! This is just the first step to coordinate with the other two coun-

ties on the process. The board will have to come back in at the end of the process and vote based on terms negotiated and on the economic assessment given as to whether or not the board wants to participate in this authority."

Mansfield also asked, "Will this

committee determine how much Lancaster and Northumberland will contribute economically to the regional airport?"

Walker said the committee will have to come back to the supervisors

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Middlesex acquired Hummel Field in 1970

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County Board of Supervisors is considering making the county-owned Hummel Field in Topping a regional airport and turning the operations over to an authority made up of representatives from Middlesex, Northumberland and Lancaster counties.

Hummel Field was founded as an official Middlesex County airport in January 1970 when Fred F. Hummel and his wife Maria Jones Hummel gave 85 acres of land at Topping to the county and specified that it be utilized as a public airport.

Hummel had originally purchased the property in 1925 and built a private airstrip there so he and his wife would have a place to land their plane when they stayed at their summer home in Topping. Hummel had grown up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where in 1911, just eight years after the Wright brothers flew at Kitty Hawk, he built a glider and flew it from a cliff overlooking Lake Michigan.

The flight earned him a place in the "Early Birds of Aviation" listing. To qualify for membership a pilot had to have flown some time between the years of 1903 and 1916. Hummel's father, founder of Hummel Rose Fiber Corp., moved his family and business to Hopewell. Hummel eventually took over the company and headed it until 1947 when he sold his interest and retired.

The 1970 airport agreement stated that the county of Middlesex would pay the Hummels \$1 for the parcel of land, which included a 2,550-foot paved and lighted runway, an adjoining taxi strip and nearby undeveloped land.

Hummel also requested the county set up an aviation committee to oversee the operation of the airport. Sidney L. Shannon, a state certified aviator who operated Shannon Airport in Fredericksburg and who owned a grass runway at Rosegill near Urbanna, Thomas F. Marshall Sr. of Urbanna, James M. Barnhardt Jr. of Urbanna and Louis Madonia of Topping were named to the first Middlesex Airport Committee.

Several years before the land was given to the county, Madonia had opened the Pilot House Inn, and the airport was billed as the state's first "fly-in" restaurant. When Hummel gave the land to the county, he stated that airports attract business and commerce.

Throughout the years, a private light industrial park has developed beside the airport, and several retail stores and other businesses have opened nearby all due to the generosity and foresight of Fred and Maria Hummel.

The Middlesex County Airport Committee advises the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors in the operation of Hummel Field.

Supervisors want to remove junk vehicles

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County Board of Supervisors agreed on July 2 to consider developing an inoperable vehicle ordinance to remove junk vehicles from the county.

County attorney Heather Lewis said most surrounding counties have inoperable vehicle ordinances but Middlesex has a junk yard ordinance that does not address an inoperable vehicle in someone's yard.

"Recently I have been spending a substantial amount of my time working with the Codes and Compliance Department to address the various complaints the department has received regarding inoperable vehicles," she said. "As you may be aware the county does not have an ordinance, but most surrounding counties do. Without an ordinance that specifically addresses inoperable vehicles, it is very difficult to address the various complaints the department is receiving."

"What (state code) does allow is

that the county can define what an inoperable vehicle is—such as not having a valid license plate and state inspection decal; and allows you to decide how many vehicles can be outside and inside of a garage," Lewis said.

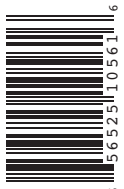
"Some counties allow one to three on the property but differ in how many can be inside of a garage and outside on the grounds of the property," she said.

Board chair Chip Holt said he thinks the board wants the county attorney to work on an ordinance looking at what surrounding counties are doing. "We can always get tighter but the place to start is not getting too tight," said Holt. "This inoperable vehicle thing needs to be addressed in my opinion."

Mathews and King and Queen counties have inoperable vehicle ordinances and they differ in language, said Lewis. "One says there can be one car outside of a garage, covered by a tarp and another does not require

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