

# Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Blackwell, Morton: Files

**Folder Title:** [Air Transport Auxiliary  
Museum Dedication 10/01/1983]

**Box:** 41

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: [reagan.library@nara.gov](mailto:reagan.library@nara.gov)

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 12, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: DODIE LIVINGSTON

FROM: Morton C. Blackwell *MB*

SUBJECT: Presidential Message, Re: Dedication of Air  
Transport Auxiliary Museum

Attached is a copy of correspondence we have received regarding the dedication of a museum to commemorate the Air Transport Auxiliary on October 1, 1983.

The American Legion strongly supports this request and has made arrangements for an American flag flown over the Capitol to be presented at the dedication ceremonies. Since this flag will be presented on behalf of the United States, it would be appropriate for the Presidential remarks to include such a reference.

Please draft an appropriate Presidential message and send it to Mr. Ben Warne, RD #1, Millville, PA 17846.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the greeting so that I may inform Mr. Holdren of the fact that the Presidential message is forthcoming for the event.

MCB:jet

Attachments a/s

C O P Y

Murray F. Holdren  
Box 262,  
Millville, PA 17846

(717) 458-6159

May 19, 1983

Assistant to the President for Public Liaison  
Executive Office of the President  
The White House Office  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

To the Assistant:

I am writing this letter in behalf of Ben Warne, RD #1 Millville, PA 17846. Phone (717) 458-6593.

On October 1, 1983, a museum will be dedicated to the memory of 174 men and women of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) who gave their lives in the Allied cause during WWII. The building will be the repository for memorabilia associated with the organization that linked these people with about 3500 survivors from 24 nations. The dedication will be witnessed by at least 100 survivors or their families representing at least 16 nations

The ATA traces its origins to September 8, 1939 when a group of civilian pilots met in the Royal Hotel in Bristol, England to consider what contribution they could make to the British War Effort. As a result of that meeting an international call was issued for volunteers to ferry aircraft to the RAF, and the response gave birth to the ATA that logged 309,011 aircraft movements that took the lives of 27 Americans.

An earlier monument and now the museum were conceived and built through the dedication of Ben Warne, a pilot with the ATA, who is determined to leave behind a lasting memorial in the United States to the heroic efforts of those volunteers 275 of whom were from this country.

Enclosed are some clippings related to the monument that was dedicated in 1981 and a photograph showing Mr. Warne, the monument and the museum that is nearing completion.

Also enclosed are copies of correspondence with 10 Downing Street that has resulted in the donation of a 3x6 Union Jack for display at the ceremonies.

This letter is a request for a similar or appropriate form of recognition from the government of the United States. Any efforts you make will be warmly appreciated. You may contact me or preferably Mr. Warne himself.

Murray F. Holdren

C O P Y

The Morning Press, Monday, October 20, 1980

# International flavor to dedication

WILKES — "It was a lovely international relations," said one of the dedication of a monument to the Air Transport Group — and he could have been either of the ceremony or himself.

300 people who attended the ceremony Saturday, 100 were ATA members. Thirty-six from England, two from the Bahamas, and Margot, a female pilot from Chile. ATA veterans from Canada and the western United States also attended. Warne, 71, is a veteran of the ATA, a non-military organization founded Sept. 8, 1939 to move civilian aircraft during World War II. The ATA also began flying mail from factories to fighter bases and aerodromes where they were needed.

Pennsylvania members and 3,500 members were drawn

mostly from England, Scotland, and Ireland, but 275 of them came from the United States and Canada. The North American contingent included 27 women and 10 pilots from Pennsylvania — two of whom were killed during duty.

Altogether, 173 of the group's members were killed during the war.

Warne himself was a flight instructor for the group, and served "four years and 10 months," he noted proudly. He had the idea of building a monument to the group, he said, and mentioned it to another ATA veteran, Ray Roberts, a Britisher here on vacation.

Roberts helped build the basic structure, a 7-foot square, 30-inch thick base which stands 6-feet high. Atop the monument is the blade of a B-17 Flying Fortress — a donation from a Colorado pilot not affiliated with the ATA.

Warne met the pilot, he recalled, and told him of the monument. The blade arrived by Greyhound, Warne said, with all freight charges paid.

ATA flag raised again  
The ceremonies, Saturday included the raising of the British flag and the ATA flag. For the latter, it was the first time it had been flown since the end of its World War II work on Nov. 30, 1945.

Wing Commander Eric Viles, MBE (Member of the British Empire, an honorary title bestowed by King George VI, which Warne also received) was present for the event, and returned the salute of the American Legion honor guard.

Rain disrupted the ceremonies, which were finished in the nearby Pine Summit Church. After the ceremonies, participants were served a ham and turkey dinner in the church basement. "It was the most beautiful thing — everybody was

very happy with everyone else."

Many of the ATA members stayed with local families, Warne said. He placed signs in the church asking for rooms for the visitors.

"I had beds for 80 people in nothing flat," he said.

## Unique monument

The monument is the only one in the world to the group, which has been known as "the unknown air force" from World War II. In the six years and three months of its existence, Warne said, the group made 309,011 aircraft movements and logged 414,984 flight hours.

They received no recognition nor wartime bonuses for their services, only a plaque in St. Paul's Cathedral, England, noting their service.

So now, on Warne's Millville R.D. 1 farm, the fieldstone monument recognizes the contribution, and Warne possesses a citation from the state House of Representatives for his work on building the marker.

Representative Ted Stuban presented the citation to Warne, and Governor Richard Thornburgh sent a letter acknowledging the ceremonies.

Congressional candidate James Nelligan also attended the event, and Millville Mayor Glen Gordner gave a testimonial to the ATA and Warne.

Inscribed on a small plaque, donated by the Catawissa Monument Works, on top of the monument, Warne said, is the phrase which might have been the



FOR OUR TOMORROW  
THEY GAVE THEIR  
LIVES

TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE ONE HUNDRED AND  
SEVENTY THREE MEN AND WOMEN OF  
AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY  
REPRESENTING MANY NATIONS  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE  
ALLIED CAUSE DURING THE  
WORLD WAR OF 1939 TO 1945  
REMEMBER THEM THAT ALSO WE  
IN A MOON'S COURSE ARE HISTORY

TELL ME NOT, SWEET I AM UNSHINE  
OF THY CHASTE BREST AND QUIET MIND  
TO WAK AND ARMS I'VE  
YET THUS INCONSTANCY IS SUCH  
THAT THOU THOU SHALT ADDRE  
I COULD NOT LOVE THEE DEAR SO MUCH  
LOVED I NOT HONOUR MORE