



Richard “Bub” Milligan ‘44

Richard Campbell Milligan was born on Tuesday, November 25, 1925 at Southside Hospital, Bay Shore, the second son of Rhoda Campbell and William Francis Milligan. Their first son, William Francis, Jr. was born the previous September and when he was informed that he had a new brother, he could not pronounce the word and it became “bubber”, which was eventually shortened to Bub and has lasted 84 plus years to this day in 2013. Dick Milligan was Bub to his family, friends and acquaintances for his entire life.

Bub attended the Bay Shore school system from kindergarten to his senior year in 1944. While in high school, he was active in the Arts Guild, Psi Lambda Phi Fraternity, Pre-Flight Aviation course and sports, namely football, basketball, wrestling and track. During the summers of 1942 and 1943, he bucked rivets at Grumman Aerospace in Bethpage on JRF amphibians and was a F6F hellcat plane captain. He graduated early in the fall of 1943 to enter the Army Air Corps at 18 years of age, serving as a flight engineer and gunner on B-24 bombers and participating in 34 bombing runs over Germany and Austria - missions flown through vast clouds of flak. He was the recipient of several decorations and citations, including the Purple Heart for wounds received in action over Austria in 1945. At war's end, he was honorably discharged with the rank of Staff Sergeant, before reaching the age of 20.

After the war, Bub attended St. Lawrence University in upstate New York for two years and then transferred to the Art Students League in New York Cit. In 1949, he returned to Grumman, now as a full time employee and plane captain on the flight line. By 1956, he had risen to the Engineering Department as a commercial artist, organizing the flight test film library. In 1960, he was selected to produce a “Blue Angels” move, since that air group flew Grumman F9F Panthers, performing at various air shows around the country as the first official aerobatic flight team.

These accomplishments lead to producing promotional films about Grumman aircraft, such as “Gulf Stream I”, “Goblin on the Doorstep”, “Ready on Arrival”, “Sea of Contention” and “No Points for Second Place”. Some of these films are principal attractions at the National Air and Space Museum's Sea-Air Gallery and the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola. A few years later, Bub would dash off a drawing of a gun slinging tomcat, producing the world-famous symbol for the F-14. A fellow worker says he remembers Bub making faces in the mirror to get the right expression for that tough cat image. Bub is also remembered for his sense of humor and his “doodling” while attending meetings. His cartoons were posted all over the hangars where he first worked.

His experience filming aircraft led him to assist with building special on-board camera mounts for three Hollywood movies involving dog fights and carrier flight operations sequences – “Top Gun” with Tom Cruise, “The Final Countdown” with Kirk Douglas and Martin Sheen and “Flight of the Intruder” with Willem Dafoe. Another film he made, “Air Power at Sea”, plays daily on board the USS Intrepid museum in New York City with narration by actor Cliff Robertson.



After his forty-on years at Grumman, Bub retired and began a busy and interesting involvement with activities at his local alma mater, Bay Shore, taking photos of sports events (especially girls' softball, where is granddaughter, Caitlin Arbeiter, played for Coach Jim McGowan). He enjoyed attending the Annual Community Summit, again taking photos of all the activities. His community involvement also extended to the Bay Shore Historical Society, Sagtikos Manor Historical Society, and Seatuck Environmental Association.

One of Bub's favorite film successes was the one he made about the history of early aviation on Long Island with fellow writer, director and producer, Michael Laurence of Port Washington, New York with whom he had frequently worked on films. This documentary, "Daredevils and Dreamers" was compiled of thirty-five oral histories of Long Island aviators from the 1920's and 1930's. The Friends of Long Island Heritage agreed to fund the video taping of fifteen veteran aviators which were then incorporated with early archival footage. The film can be seen at the Bay Shore/Brightwaters Library or purchased from the Bay Shore Historical Society.

Bub was married six weeks short of sixty years to Mary Lawlor, an Islip High School graduate. Together, they had four children, three daughters and one son – Jane E. Milligan Arbeiter of Brightwaters, who was married to Alfred Arbeiter (just short of thirty-four years – he passed away in June, 2010, a victim of Lou Gehrig's disease), Brian Campbell Milligan of Oakdale, married to Terri Judson, Anne E. Milligan Rogers of Round Rock, Texas, married to Patrick Rogers, a high school classmate and Suzanne Milligan married to Paul Anderson of Australia. Bub and Marty have ten grandchildren – Andrew, Caitlin and William Arbeiter, Shannon Milligan Urbancik (married to Jay Urbancik) and Devin Milligan, Matthew and Conor Rogers (recently married to Lori Wittig) and Coen and identical twin girls, Sara and Hazel Anderson.

