



**GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER  
MILITARY OFFICERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
NEWS BULLETIN # 4  
SUBJECT: GLENN CURTISS MUSEUM**



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**Serving Members and Their Country**

**May 2013**

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On Tuesday, October 15, we will visit the Glenn Curtiss Aviation Museum in Hammondsport. The day will begin with breakfast at 0730 with a business meeting following. We will board a tour bus at 1115 for a scenic drive along Keuka Lake and we will have lunch at the museum. The museum is dedicated to aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss, Hammondsport's favorite son who is well-known for many significant accomplishments, both in and out of aviation.

He became the "fastest man on earth" in 1907 when he set a world record of 136 mph on an eight cylinder motorcycle he designed and built. A reproduction is in the museum. The original is in the Smithsonian. In 1908 Curtiss was credited with the first "pre-announced" public flight of an aircraft in America. Named the June Bug, it is in the museum, one of several historic aircraft on display ([see attachment](#)). Curtiss also invented ailerons, a method of controlling an aircraft in flight which replaced "wing-warping," the method used by the Wright brothers.

Curtiss made a little known but extremely important contribution to the Hammondsport champagne industry. The pressure in champagne was forcing corks out of bottles during shipment. The producers approached Curtiss and asked for help. Curtiss assigned the project to one of his machinists. The result is the twisted wire hood that now adorns just about every cork on a bottle of champagne produced anywhere in the world. A toast to Glenn Curtiss every January 1<sup>st</sup> would be fitting.

Curtiss gave the first demonstration of aerial bombing to Army and Navy representatives at Keuka Lake in an attempt to give credence to the notion that airplanes had a potential for wartime use. In addition to making the airplane a practical reality, Curtiss pioneered in the design of seaplanes and flying boats. Curtiss built the U.S. Navy NC-4 Flying Boat, the first aircraft to successfully cross the Atlantic Ocean. Navy aircraft carrier operations are a direct result of Curtiss's influence.

Curtiss began his aviation career in earnest as a member of the Aerial Experiment Association. The group which included Alexander Graham Bell focused on getting a man into the air. Curtiss had a unique relationship with Bell. Bell's wife Mabel was deaf, a fact that had a profound influence on Bell's scientific pursuits. Curtiss's sister Rutha was also deaf and as a boy Curtiss learned sign so he could communicate with his sister. At the AEA meetings, sometimes Mabel would be present and Curtiss would sign to her to enable her to understand the conversation, a gesture which endeared him to Bell and they remained lifetime friends.

Curtiss's amazing career was tragically terminated in 1930 when at the age of 52 during an appendectomy he developed a blood clot that ended his life. Curtiss is remembered today as the Father of Naval Aviation and the founder of the American aircraft industry.

The tour bus will return to the Inn at Canandaigua at about 1700 with Installation Banquet to follow soon after. The details will be in the convention schedule which will be available at registration.

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