

For Immediate Release
Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
Fort Myers, Florida
Contact: Daniel Eaton
Public Information Officer
pio@fmarc.net
239-425-7914

Hamwaves of History: Commemorating WWII Veterans at Buckingham Army Airfield

Fort Myers, February 22, 2024 -- Join us at Buckingham Field in Lehigh Acres, March 12th, 13th and 14th, 2024, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at 15191 Homestead Rd, Lehigh Acres, FL 33971 to participate in a special event Ham Radio station on the air to commemorate all of the men and women who trained at this facility during World War II, when it was called Buckingham Army Airfield.

Buckingham Army Airfield, situated around 10 miles east of Fort Myers, Florida, served as an active United States Air Force base during World War II under the Army Air Forces Training Command. Shut down on September 30, 1945, a portion of the airfield now resides within the Wild Turkey Strand Preserve.

Established in 1942 under the AAF Eastern Flying Training Command, Buckingham Army Airfield was a pivotal training base and, during its active period, held the distinction of being the largest airfield in Florida. Its primary wartime objective was the training of aerial gunners responsible for defending bombers. During its operational lifetime, it graduated almost 48,000 aerial gunners. At that time, many American fighter planes lacked the necessary range to accompany bombers on extended flights over enemy territory, leaving the bombers and their crews vulnerable.

A crucial aspect of the airfield's mission involved preparing gunners to sit in turrets or stand behind openings in the bomber's fuselage, tasked with shooting down attacking aircraft. This role played a critical part in ensuring the success of the United States in both the European and Pacific theaters. In addition to training gunnery students, Buckingham AAF served as the primary training center for instructors at the Army's other flexible gunnery schools. The term "flexible gunnery" referred to the use of a mount in the station or turret of the aircraft, as opposed to the fixed aerial guns found on fighter aircraft.

Established in 1957, the Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club, Inc. has been dedicated to fostering camaraderie among individuals with a shared passion for Amateur Radio. With a commitment to facilitating the exchange of information, promoting electronics and amateur radio knowledge, advocating for good radio operating practices, and advancing the art of Amateur Radio, the club strives to create a vibrant community. Additionally, the club actively sponsors and promotes various activities related to amateur radio, provides crucial public service during emergencies, and actively engages in other community initiatives. FMARC is affiliated with and sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), which is the national association for amateur radio, connecting hams around the U.S. with news, information, and resources. The club meets at 7 pm

on the last Tuesday of the month at the Lee County Emergency Operations Center. Call 941-275-9145 to attend a meeting or visit www.fmarc.net to learn more.

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