

# MT. VERNON Sentinel

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## Hall of Honor inducts

*World War II veteran  
Billie Gene Bullock honored  
at Mt. Vernon Airport*

**BY EMILY ROTH**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — On Friday afternoon, the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport recognized their 500th inductee into the Jefferson County Veterans Hall of Honor.

Navy Seaman Billie Gene Bullock, age 90, was issued a tribute in recognition of his service in World War II to be placed on the walls of the airport. Next to Bullock in the

Hall of Honor are his sons Torpedoman Second Class Billie Dale Bullock (Navy) and Specialist Fourth Class David R. Bullock (Army). He was also given his own tribute to keep.

Chris Collins, airport director, gathered with members of the Hall of Honor Committee, veterans, and others to celebrate the occasion.

"We've gathered everybody here for something that we think is a very significant occasion," said Collins. "Today we're celebrating the 500th tribute to the walls of the terminal. I did a little research this morning and when we were given approval in October 2009 ... and January 2010 was when we started putting up the first tributes. If you do the math

from January 2010 to this week in September, I think it's 247 weeks. With the 500th tribute that averages out to two tributes a week. ... It's a pretty significant milestone. When all of us first met we thought 500 tributes would probably be in 2020 or something like that."

Collins stated that the committee members were just as surprised as he was at how fast the tribute has grown. The tribute with pictures of Bullock with his service information was made by graphic designer Jona McReynolds.

"I'm very very appreciative of the Greatest Generation," continued Collins.

He said that he has all the veterans who served in World War II sign his copy of *The Greatest Generation* by Tom Brokaw.

Bullock wrote to Collins: "Providence, R.I., 1943. I was loading on a troop ship and your grandpa Collins was in formation onshore. I yelled 'Hey Collins!' And he smiled at me and waved. He was the last person I saw from Mt. Vernon before heading into the South Pacific."

Bullock was a member of the United States Construction Battalion, also called "Seabees" for the initials CB. Bullock served from 1943 to 1946.

The Hall of Honor Committee is currently seeking new members. According to Collins, all that is required of them is a love of history and an appreciation for the service of veterans.

"I appreciate everybody doing this," said Bullock to the committee, Collins, and McReynolds. When members of the committee told Bullock that he had earned the honor of having his name on the airport wall, his reply was, "no more than anybody else."

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## 500th tribute



Sentinel Photo/EMILY ROTH

**LOOKING IT OVER** — World War II veteran Billie Gene Bullock smiles as he looks over his tribute placed at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Friday. Bullock was the 500th veteran recognized by the Hall of Honor.