

COMMUNITY

# Bill Menkevich earns Master Pilot Award

■ FAA recognition for 50 years of safe flying

### AT A GLANCE

Coon Rapids resident Bill Menkevich has earned the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Master Pilot Award for 50 years of safe flying.

Capt. Bill Menkevich of Coon Rapids, a member of the Minnesota Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, has received the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Wright Brother's Master Pilot Award.

The award recognizes pilots who have demon-

strated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe flights for 50 years or more.

"I am thrilled to receive one of the aviation industry's highest honors," said Menkevich, a member of the Minnesota Wing's Anoka Squadron, who earned his pilot's license in 1959.

"I appreciate that the award recognizes both my personal and professional flying record."

"We are very happy and proud that the FAA has honored a member of the Anoka Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol for 50 years of safe flying - an impressive achievement," said Maj. Don Sorenson, Group 2 commander of the Minnesota Wing.

"Bill sets an example for all of us to follow - that flying can be 100 percent safe given good planning, sound

judgment and attention to detail.

"We salute Bill on this well-deserved award."

Menkevich's first flight occurred in the summer of 1947 when a family friend paid for a one-hour joy ride in an Ercoupe, a low wing monoplane manufactured shortly before World War II that still enjoys a very faithful following today.

The New Jersey native spent 1953-1964 in the U.S.

Air Force, an experience he relishes decades later.

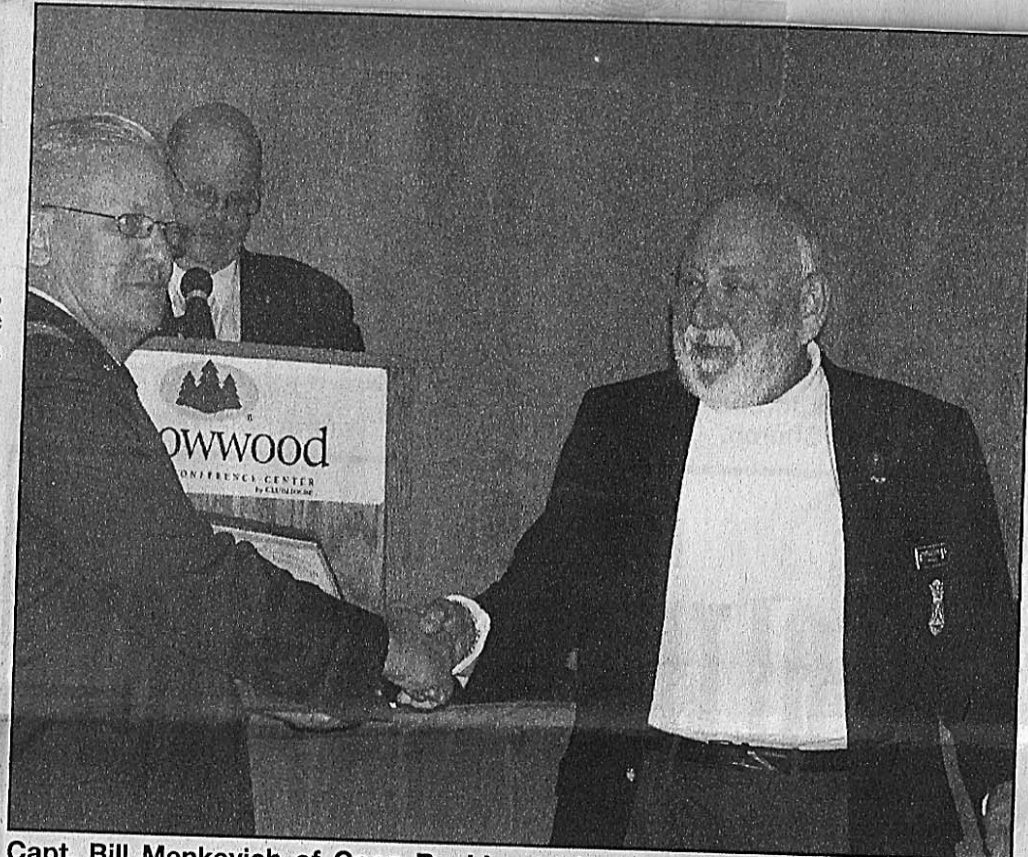
"The two most significant experiences of my Air Force career were my assignment to the 47th Bomb Wing in England, where I flew in B-45's as a tail gunner, and my experience at officer candidate school," Menkevich said.

The B-45 was an important part of the United States' nuclear deterrent for several years in the 1950s, he said.

Menkevich is past president of the 47th Bomb Wing Association.

After leaving the Air Force, Menkevich spent the next 40 years in the computer industry.

There are approximately 1,400 recipients of the prestigious Wright Brother's Master Pilot Award. Recipients receive a certificate and lapel pin, in addition to a Roll of Honor listing on the FAA's Web site.



Capt. Bill Menkevich of Coon Rapids receives the Wright Brother's Master Pilot Award during the 2009 Minnesota Wing conference.

Photo courtesy Minnesota Wing



Left: Capt. Bill Menkevich (center) during his days with the 47th Bomb Wing in England. Photo courtesy Bill Menkevich