



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERIDIAN MOURNS THE LOSS OF ITS FOUNDER, J. KENNETH FORESTER

Teterboro, NJ, June 6, 2016 – Meridian, the award-winning private aviation company based at Teterboro Airport, regrets to announce the loss of its founder and aviation pioneer, J. Kenneth Forester. Mr. Forester died suddenly on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at the age of 94.

Known among his Meridian colleagues as ‘Ken Sr.’ to distinguish him from his son of the same name, Mr. Forester had an illustrious career in aviation. It all began in December 1941 when he joined the US Army Air Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The following year, Forester earned his private pilot’s license at the age of 21. By 1943, his military training had led him to become an engineering test pilot for the US Army Air Force, the predecessor of today’s US Air Force. From 1943 to 1946, he was flying fighters, bombers and transport aircraft. He flew the nation’s first jet, the Bell Airacomet P-59, and the first operational jet fighter, the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star.

Forester attained a mechanic’s license while in the military and, after discharge in 1946, founded Mallard Air Service at Teterboro Airport. Mallard was a distributor for the Republic Seabee and the North American Navion and was a maintenance base and charter operator. Mallard later converted C-47s from military to civilian aircraft. Ken Sr. left Mallard in 1951 to manage a wire machinery plant in

Paterson, NJ and work part time selling and maintaining Navions at Teterboro Airport. He once flew a Navion under the George Washington Bridge in bad weather. In 1958, he was offered a location on the west side of the airport and started a new business that he called General Aviation Company.

His son, Ken, a graduate of the US Air Force Academy and former F-102 pilot, took over full time management of the company in 1974. In 1986, the company became a Million Air franchise. In 2006, the company returned to being independently owned and operated, and rebranded itself under its current name of Meridian.

In 2002, the Federal Aviation Administration presented Ken Sr. with the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic award. Named after Charles Taylor, a mechanic for the Wright Brothers airplane, the award recognizes aviation maintenance personnel who have at least 50 years of experience in the industry. In 2008, he was inducted into the New Jersey Aviation Hall of Fame during the organization's 35th annual induction dinner.

J. Kenneth Forester was a beloved husband for 67 years to the late Annabelle H. (nee Hewitt) and father of Ken and his wife Susan, Gary and his wife Lynne, Lynn and her husband Evelyn, David and his wife Mary, and grandfather to thirteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. He will be missed by family, friends, and colleagues alike.

About Meridian:

Meridian is a full-service, private aviation company based at Teterboro Airport (TEB) in Teterboro, NJ, located just minutes from New York City. Meridian owns and operates businesses that include Air Charter, Aircraft Management, Aircraft Maintenance, and a world-class Executive Terminal / FBO. We also have charter sales offices located at Van Nuys Airport (VNY) and Sonoma County Airport (STS) in California. In 2016, the company is planning to open its second FBO at Hayward Executive Airport (HWD) in Hayward, CA.

Meridian has earned numerous industry awards and accolades for its exceptional service and high safety standards: 2016 Top Rated FBO in Northeast by AIN FBO Survey; 2016 Top US FBO in Northeast by FltPlan.com; 2016 Best FBO at TEB by *Professional Pilot* PRASE Survey; 2016 Best CSRs by *Professional Pilot* PRASE Survey (#3 for Betsy Wines and #5 for Victor Seda); ARG/US Platinum Rated; IS-BAO Registered (Stage 2); Wyvern Wingman Certified.

For more information, please visit our website at www.meridian.aero or call us at 201-288-5040.

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J. Kenneth Forester during his service in the U.S. Army Air Force.