

# REMEMBERING THE MILAUSKAS MILLER BROTHERS

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- Part of World War II History
- All Six Served Honorably

On November 11, we celebrated Veterans Day, a federal holiday dedicated to honoring those who have served in our Armed Forces. Initially, it was called Armistice Day, marking the end of World War I with the German surrender on the 11th hour of the 11th day of November 1918. The U.S. had mobilized over 4 million Americans bringing the nation together for the first time since the Civil War. By the summer of 1918, some two million U.S. soldiers had arrived in France. During that war, the nation lost over 65,000 of its finest. Lithuanian Americans served in both combat and civilian positions. On June 4, 1926, at the request of President Calvin Coolidge, the U.S. Congress proclaimed November 11 a day dedicated to world peace.

Unfortunately, the “War to End All Wars” was not so. Germany’s unprovoked invasion of Poland in 1939 initiated World War II. The U.S. initially took a neutral position but was drawn in after the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Approximately 16 million Americans fought worldwide during World War II, 405,399 were killed, and 672,278 were wounded in action. Lithuanian Americans served alongside their fellow countrymen once again. On May 26, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a congressional amendment changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day, which now honors all of the nation’s veterans.

The American journalist, Tom Brokaw, popularized the term “The Greatest Generation” to describe the Americans who endured the deprivations of the Great Depression and then went on to fight and win World War II. Over a million Lithuanian American immigrants and their children were part of this generation. Each has a story to tell, and each deserves to be honored for their service. This time, let’s consider the unique Baltimore family of Antanas and Nellie Milauskas – they had six sons who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II.

## It all began with Antanas from Lithuania

Antanas Juozas Milauskas was born on July 11, 1885, in the Suvalkai Region, located in southwestern Lithuania along the Polish border. It was a region noted for its small independent farm homesteads. Its people often endured droughts, famine, and disease; the two most extreme periods were 1868-1870 and 1891-1892. Russia, which occupied the area, regularly con-



An Even Half Dozen – The Miller brothers in a 1951 newspaper clipping.

scripted young men for extended military service. Such was the case in 1905 during the ill-fated Russo-Japanese War. These economic and social difficulties contributed to a significant out-migration from the area.

Little is known about Antanas’s early life in Lithuania. He was probably born into a large family and raised on a traditional small Suvalkai homestead. In November 1904, Antanas chose to immigrate to the United States following the pattern of many young men who had few prospects in their homeland. Families tended to leave the homestead to the eldest son and sought to marry their daughters to similar land-rich neighbors. Families scraped together their resources to fund the next oldest son’s one-way ticket to America. That son would begin a new life and, in turn, help finance his next brother’s journey westward. Each successive brother would do the same, followed by their sisters whom they hoped would marry a fellow immigrant countryman. Such marriages were arranged quickly, as there were three males for every female in the Lithuanian immigrant population.

Antanas’s future wife, Anelė Kaubris, was born in the Kaunas region on July 15, 1892, and immigrated to the U.S. in May 1901. It was common practice in that era (either by a U.S. Immigration Service agent or by the immigrant himself) to “correct” difficult to pronounce or spell Lithuanian names to something more “American.” Antanas Juozas Milauskas became An-

thon Joseph Miller, and Anelė Kaubris turned into Nellie Covers, which became Nellie Anna Miller after her marriage.

Anthony and Nellie were married on May 26, 1912, at St. John the Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. Anthony quickly obtained employment as a tailor in the thriving Baltimore garment industry. Working assiduously and being frugal by nature, Anthony and his brother Vincent established their own clothing manufacturing company within a few years.

Before her marriage, Nellie also worked in the garment industry until she became a full-time mother and housewife. She bore seven children – Anthony Joseph, Jr. (1912); Edward (1913); Roland (1916); Norman (1918); Elaine (1922); Victor (1924); and Charles (1927). As if being a mother and housewife were not enough, Nellie also helped in the family shop, doing whatever was needed to complete a sale or pending contract.

All of the Miller offspring grew up like typical immigrant children of the time. They spoke Lithuanian at home and English at school and with their friends. The family regularly attended St. Alphonsus Lithuanian Catholic Church. All graduated from public grade and high schools in the city. Following the old country tradition, the children worked in the family tailor business, but in the 1929-1939 depression years, some took to other trades. Two started families before the war. In many ways, the Millers were well on their way to becoming a typical “All American Family” until World War II broke out.

## Focus on Anthony Joseph Miller, Jr.

The coming of the war turned this idyllic world into a mere memory. Eventually, all six Miller brothers joined the U.S. Armed Forces and served honorably with distinction during World War II. I would have liked to present a detailed history of each one, but I will concentrate on the eldest son, Anthony Joseph Miller, Jr., known as “Tony,” to family and friends. He started work in the family tailoring business early on, but his sense of patriotism and the love of military things, as well as the need for extra money, directed Tony to join the Maryland National Guard in 1931. He enlisted in the prestigious Baltimore “Dandy 5th” Infantry Regiment, which traces its roots to the American Revolution. Here the son of an immigrant slowly worked his way up the enlistment ranks through Private, Corporal, and Sergeant. In the land of the free, working hard has its rewards – in March 1938, Tony was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant joining a long tradition of volunteer officers.



Street fighting in Brest, France,



Photo courtesy of US Army

German officers surrender in Brest.

Photo courtesy of National Archives



Officers from the 115th Regimental Combat Team of the 29th Infantry Division. Lt. Col Anthony Miller, Jr. is fifth from left. September 1944.



Generalmajor Hans von der Mosel, Konteradmiral Otto Kähler and Generalmajor Hans Kroh surrender to Lt. Col. Anthony Miller at Brest, France, September 1944.

Perhaps because of Tony's example, his younger brothers, Roland and Norman, also joined the elite National Guard unit.

One might imagine that Tony's garment work and military training hindered his socializing; nevertheless, he managed to date and ultimately married Lilyan Kasinskas, the daughter of fellow Lithuanian immigrants. They had a daughter, Lynn. Many Americans similarly situated imagined bright futures for themselves until the clouds of war began gathering again in Europe. By 1941, the United States was engaged in combat in two theaters – Europe and the Pacific.

When faced with major military obligations, the U.S. military first turns to its already existing and trained Reserve and National Guard units. As one would expect, Tony's 175th Maryland National Guard unit would be among the first to be called to active duty. On February 3, 1941, the unit was activated at Fort Mead, Maryland. It became part of the 29th U.S. Infantry Division consisting of Guard units from Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. It adopted the nickname "North and South Division" and donned blue-gray, yin-yang insignia. After twelve months of additional training, the 29th Division sailed to Britain in October 1942 – the first Americans to arrive in this combat area. Tony Miller was one of the Division's Battalion Commanders.

**Organized a Booby Trap School**

For the next eight months, the 29th Division, consisting of the 115th, 116th, and 175th Infantry Regiments with its supporting units, trained for the anticipated allied D-Day invasion to liberate Europe from the Nazis. While the division was in training in England, Captain Miller originated and established an American Booby Trap School serving all units in its assigned area. It educated American soldiers about the dangers they would soon be facing while clearing buildings and structures. Booby traps had become commonplace in areas abandoned by the Nazis forces, resulting in numerous casualties.

**D-Day**

Captain Tony Miller was promoted to Major and soon became the commander of the 115th Regiment, 2nd Battalion. The three 116th Regiment Battalions were part of the first D-Day wave of troops that landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, and sustained heavy casualties along the beach bluffs. The 175th Battalions landed in the second wave and were immediately engaged in heavy fighting to secure the beachhead. They, in turn, were followed by the 115th Regiment, with virtually all of the 29th Division components being ashore by nightfall. Tony and his brother Norman Miller were among the thousands of soldiers that landed and heroically fought that historic day. Norman was seriously wounded and had to convalesce in England for several months before rejoining his unit fighting in Germany.

In a post-war interview, Tony noted that he was gripped by fear only after D-Day ended; before then, he had not envisioned what horror a shell or bullet could inflict on a man. Another veteran at the same interview added that there was no time for fear when they hit that beach.

After securing Omaha Beach, the assigned objective of the 29th Division was to save the 12,000 residents of Saint Lo, a critical logistic junction. On June 9, 1944, the 175th regiment liberated the town of Isigny-Sur-Mer, while the 115th Regiment advanced towards the River Aure and the town of Longueville. On June 12, 1944, Major Anthony J. Miller, Jr., was awarded his first Silver Star medal for bravery in combat. After five weeks of heavy fighting and sustaining heavy casualties, the 29th Division liberated Saint Lo on July 18, 1944. It continued through northwest Brittany, capturing vital seaport facilities en route to Normandy.

During the American push inward, a large portion of the German forces, consisting of some 40,000 fighting men assigned to 2nd Parachute, 266th and 343 Infantry Divisions, with other supporting Wehrmacht elements, became isolated in the Brittany peninsula. These units quickly consolidated and established a solid defensive position around the harbor city of Brest, using its already existing German Naval Atlantic Fleet U-Boat fortifications. Although cut off, the Germans had no intention of surrendering and put up a village-by-village battle against the advancing American units. Only after prolonged heavy infantry battle with heavy allied air bombardment did the beleaguered city of Brest and its seaport succumb to units of the 29th Division. On August 7, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony J. Miller, 29th Division, 2nd Battalion, 115th U.S. Infantry Regiment accepted the initial surrender of the combined German Brest garrison, consisting of airforce, naval, and infantry units. During the proceeding, Miller was handed a dagger by the capitulating German Naval Admiral and a pearl-handled pistol by the surrendering German Army Commanding General.

For the remainder of the war, the division fought its way through Holland's villages, towns, and cities. After crossing the Rhine River into Germany, Colonel Tony Miller sustained his third combat wound early on November 18, 1944. His battalion was engaged

in battle at Durboslar, Germany, home of the vital Sierschaf coal mines. As Miller and his battlegroup were approaching the town under cover of darkness, an overlooked German machine gun nest opened fire. His military unit report documented that a bullet hit Miller, passing through the back of his hand and breaking several bones. Although wounded, Miller remained at the front, directing his unit's attack for several hours, before being evacuated to a rear-area hospital. After several weeks, he rejoined the 29th Division in its advance into Germany. When the war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945, the 29th Division was occupying Hanover, the third-largest city in Northern Germany.

During the 11 months since their D-Day landing, the 29th Division had become one of the nation's most distinguished fighting units. Still, that glory came at a great price as the 29th Division lost 4,700 soldiers and had 16,600 wounded. It ranked fourth for sustained losses among U.S. Army units.

**Decorated for his service**

I could not locate a complete list of Miller's decorations; however, an article in the *Baltimore Sun*, dated November 10, 1944, confirmed that Miller had already received several Silver Star Medals, the third-highest American decoration for Valor in Combat; the Bronze Star Medal, the fourth-highest decoration for Meritorious Service in Combat; two Purple Heart Medals for sustained combat wounds; and the Combat Infantryman Badge award for engagement in armed combat with an enemy. Upon returning home after the war, Miller received the American and European Theater Medals and the American World War II Victory Medal. As Miller related in a wartime letter to his wife, he looked like a Christmas tree when wearing all of his decorations.

Continued on page 7



The November 10, 1944, issue of the *Baltimore Sun* reported that Lt. Col. Anthony J. Miller received his seventh medal and promotion. The paper ran a photograph of himself superimposed over an image of his wife and daughter.

ly, the most important treaties are in good condition. They are being cataloged and studied at present. There are plans to organize an exhibition of the find next summer in Vilnius.

During the Zoom conference, museum director Danguolė Juozapavičienė presented slides of some of the recovered documents. They can be viewed on the museum's website [lithuanianheritage.ca](http://lithuanianheritage.ca) under the heading "Long Journey Home - Great Discovery."

After the presentations, the floor was opened to comments. Canadian Lithuanian author Antanas Šileika remarked that he thought the presenters were too understated. In his view, the events surrounding the find re-

minded him of a John le Carre spy novel and that someone ought to write a book about these remarkable events. Perhaps he, a published author, will be the one to do so?

This remarkable find is important on several levels. Besides its immense historical significance, it also is a source of pride for Lithuanians. It provides documentary proof that their predecessors in the 20th century signed international treaties with many countries of the world and thereby demonstrated that Lithuania was a sovereign, independent and respected member of the international community. Thank you, Consul Gyls and Prof. Hopkins. It's been a remarkable odyssey.

## Among the remarkable finds

### Prisoner exchange

The recovered documents contain a protocol between the Republic of Lithuania and the USSR, signed in Moscow in 1933, which sets out the details of a prisoner exchange. The prisoners held by the Soviets include Teofilis Matulionis, a Lithuanian Catholic priest and gulag survivor. After returning to Lithuania, he was made a bishop and later archbishop. He died in 1962 and has recently been proclaimed Blessed by the Catholic Church. A historical footnote: after Father Matulionis was released as a part of the noted prisoner exchange agreement, he visited Lithuanian communities in the United States in 1935. During his stay in Chicago, he blessed the newly-erected monument to Darius and Girėnas located in Chicago's Marquette Park.

### Three U.S. Presidents

The find includes several treaties between the U.S. and Lithuania. The treaty of 1929 bears the original signature of President Calvin Coolidge. The treaty of 1932 has the signature of President Herbert Hoover. The treaty of 1938 features the signature of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

### Treaties

Perhaps the most significant treaties are the ones entered into between the Republic of Lithuania and Soviet Russia. In agreements signed in 1920 and 1931, Soviet Russia recognized Lithuania as a sovereign state. The first treaty includes a large map, which sets boundaries between the two countries. A "plain pouvoir" document authorizes negotiations between the two countries. This document is signed by one Vladimir Ulyanov, also known as Lenin.

### Pope, King and Emperor

Some of the other important treaties recovered were an extradition treaty with Great Britain, signed by King George V, a treaty with the Vatican, signed by Pope Pius XI, a treaty with Denmark, signed by King Christian X, a pact with the Weimar Republic of Germany, signed by President Paul von Hindenburg, and a treaty with Japan, signed by Emperor Hirohito.

5. VELIČKA Kazimieras.
6. GINETIENĖ Ona.
7. DEINIS Vincas.
8. ILGINAS Vincas.
9. KAZAKEVIČIUS Juozas.
10. LADYGA Jonas.
11. MATULIONIS Teofilis.
12. PAULAVIČIUS Jonas.
13. PAŠKEVIČIUS Vytautas.
14. FRANCKIETIS Augustinas.
15. STEBULIS Juozas.
16. ČEGIS Vladas.
17. JURŠANČ Kazimieras.
18. JASENAUSKAS Albinas.

5. This Agreement shall be executed in two counterparts, each of which shall have the force and effect of an original.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Lithuania has caused this Agreement to be executed on its behalf by its Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington, thereunto duly authorized, and the United States has likewise caused this Agreement to be executed on its behalf by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approval of the President, pursuant to a Joint Resolution of Congress approved December 23, 1931, all on the day and year first above written.

THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA  
By *Bronius M. Baurė*  
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
By *William G. Hale*  
Secretary of the Treasury

Approved: *Herbert Hoover*  
President



Given at Our Court of St. James, the Seventh day of July in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-six and in the Seventeenth year of Our Reign.

*George V*

## The Milauskas Miller Brothers

Continued from page 5

After the war, Tony Miller returned home to his beloved family in Baltimore and resumed work in his father's tailor shop, eventually managing the family business. His father, Anthony J. Miller Sr., died on August 29, 1968, and was buried from St. Alphonsus Church, the family's Lithuanian parish. His wife, Anelė, aka Nellie, passed away, on February 18, 1989, at the age of 96. She was laid to rest alongside her husband and many Lithuanian friends in Baltimore's Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery.

Tony remained active in the 29th Division Association, where he would meet and talk to his old buddies. He passed away on January 29, 1980, and after a funeral Mass at St. Alphonsus Church, he was interred in the Loudon Park Cemetery Mausoleum, Baltimore, Maryland. His beloved wife, Lillian, died on May 8, 2007.

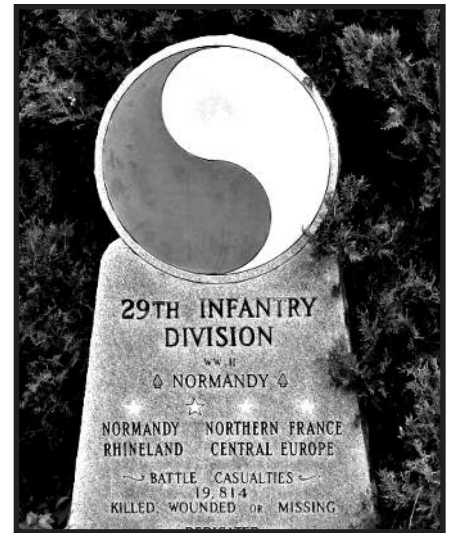
### The other five

Although Anthony Miller was the most distinguished of the six Miller brothers who served their country during World War II, each brother deserves recognition. I would be remiss if I did not provide a brief record of their service.

**Technical Sergeant Edward Ignatius Miller** enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in March 1943 and served in World War II until 1945. While serving as a navigator-radio technician, he flew 63 combat missions over the enemy in France and Germany. He came home, married, and lived happy post-war years in Charles County, Maryland.

**Roland Vincent Miller** began his military service like his brother Tony as a Private in the Maryland 175th National Guard Regiment in 1937. Roland subsequently became a Sergeant with the 102nd Infantry Division and went overseas in 1943 with that unit. He quickly transferred to the 29th Infantry Division and joined his two brothers. Roland remained in combat with the 29th Division from 1944 through 1945, participating in the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. Roland lived in Baltimore during the post-war period and continued his military service in the Maryland National Guard until 1974. In retirement, he was active in the American Legion, Lithuanian Post 154, Baltimore, Maryland, and served as the Post Commander from 1960-1962.

**Norman Anthony Miller** also started his military service with his brothers serving with the 175th Maryland National Guard Regiment in 1934, and was activated with the unit in February 1941. He was with his brother Tony when the unit landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Norman was the first Sergeant to reach the beach on that bloody day. After the war, he remained in the Maryland National Guard and became a commissioned officer. His final assignment was Chief Management Analyst at the U.S. Edgewood Arsenal in Edgewood, Maryland. Norman's military service decorations included the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the American and European



29th Division Monument, Grove City, Oklahoma



St. Alphonsus Church, WWII Commemorative Plaque.

Theater Campaign and World War II Victory Medal.

**Victor Benjamin Miller** began his military service after graduating from high school in 1943 when he joined the US Marine Corps. After completing officer's training, Lieutenant Miller also served with Marine Corps units in Guam, New Hebrides, Saipan, and Guadalcanal. During the post-war period, Victor returned to military service in 1949 when he enlisted as a Cadet in the U.S. Air Force flight training. Major Victor subsequently became one of the first USAF elite F-80 Shooting Star Fighter Pilots and served during the Korean War.

**Charles Frank Miller**, known to the family and friends as Chuck, joined his five older brothers in military service to the country. Chuck, who was seriously wounded while a Private serving with the 231 Armored Field Artillery Regiment in Camp Leonard Wood, Missouri, served in both World War II and Korea. He worked with the Cottonwood Corporation in Lawrence, Kansas, during his post-war years, helping disabled adults. In retirement, he and his wife became religious missionaries and continued to serve around the world.

Although millions of Americans served honorably and with distinction during World War II, few families can match the 115 man-years of military service that the Miller family gave to their country. Let us all remember the service the all of the members of our Finest Generation.