

Howard “Mac” McCue



Howard “Mac” McCue, 104, is a dedicated family man, a proud veteran, and all around gearhead who resides at Brookdale Hamilton in New Jersey. He served in the military as a maintenance supervisor at Fort Dix for 32 years and during the conflicts of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. After his military career ended he used his skills as a master mechanic to provide for his family. Now retired, his only wish was to fly again.

Brookdale and Wish of a Lifetime helped Mac’s Wish become a reality when he traveled with a motorcycle escort of combat veterans to Trenton-Mercer Airport where a Cessna 182 was waiting to take him on his first flight in 20 years. Upon arrival at the airport, Colonel Steven Tracy of the New Jersey Wing Civil Air Patrol surprised Mac by awarding him the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest honors given to civilians. He received the medal in acknowledgment of the sacrifices he made during World War II, and he also received an American flag that was flown over the nation’s capital. After receiving his medal, Howard strapped himself into the Cessna 182 for a private half-hour flight, taking him up into the clouds one more time. “They gave me a medal! I didn’t expect that, I just wanted to fly again,” said Mac of his Wish experience.

In 2010, Brookdale Senior Living and Wish of a Lifetime formed a partnership to provide a helping hand in making some of the dreams of Brookdale’s residents come true. To request a Wish, residents fill out a Wish application explaining an experience they would like to have fulfilled and how that experience relates to one or more dimensions of Brookdale’s Optimum Life® platform. Optimum Life cultivates whole-person wellness through fulfillment in the six key dimensions: purposeful, emotional, physical, social, spiritual and intellectual. Since the partnership’s inception, more than 800 Brookdale seniors have had their Wish granted.