

Nick Cooney, right, stands with his crew in 1945.

## Gunner

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shot off," he continued. "There were times when I wished I could get out and push it to make it go faster."

Cooney said his worst experience was on a torpedo run on a Japanese convoy in the China Sea.

"All our planes from all our carriers were vectored out to try and find it and, unfortunately, if you want to call it that, we found them first," he said.

It was a small convoy of seven Japanese ships, including a couple of Japanese destroyer escorts.

Fighters were up high, he said.

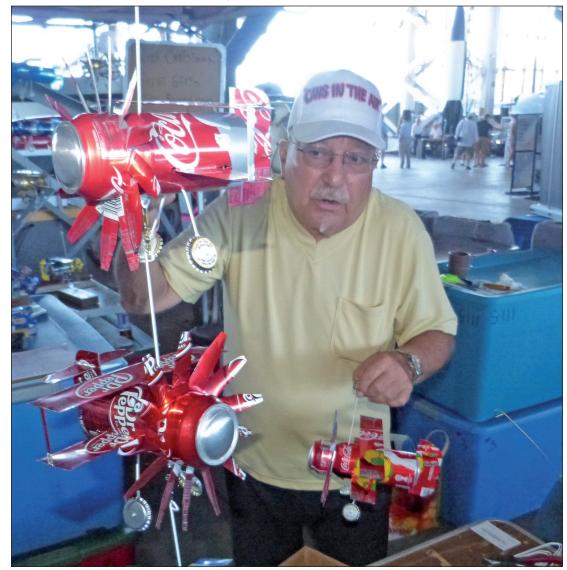
"They came in diving with rockets ahead of us," Cooney said. "We were out on the fringe and we were coming in from both sides and we hit a couple of the Japanese ships."

Just in case the worst happened, Cooney had written a "last letter" about what to do with his life insurance and put it in his locker.

After the war, Cooney re-turned to Philadelphia and met a "beautiful girl from West Catholic" and married her in July 1946.

"It was always a joke in our house whereby I said 'I spent three years in World War II and 67 in World War III."

# Tinsmith makes biplanes out of recycled soda cans



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Jake Sanflippo, of Gloucester Township, makes biplanes from recycled soda cans. He was selling them last week during the 18th annual AirFest at Naval Air Station Wildwood.

#### **By JACK FICHTER** Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — While a B-17 and B-24 roared across the sky

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outside the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum, Jake Sanflippo's "air force" hung from strings of fishing line. His biplanes bore the names "Coke," "Sprite" and

"Dr. Pepper. The Gloucester Township resident was selling his soda and beer can airplanes inside the big hangar during during the 18th annual AirFest last

week at the museum. Sanflippo said he started making airplanes from soda cans as a hobby. He said he did not have a design with which to work.

"I sort of made it myself," he said. "The trick is in the propeller." Each blade of the propeller

is cut and pitched to a certain angle so it spins well in the wind, he said. The propeller,

With the public actively involved in recycling, Sanflippo said it is getting harder to find cans. He said he does not drink beer, which would provide cans for larger planes. "We do all right on the so-das," Sanflippo said.

Friends help him locate cans, which has hazards such as bees attracted by the remaining soda in the can, he said.

Landing gear for the planes are made of coat hanger struts and bottle cap tires. It takes two cans to make the wings of the biplanes, another can for the propeller, one for the body of the plane and one for the tail, Sanflippo said. The propeller shaft runs all the way through the body of the plane.

It takes him about two and half hours to build a plane, not ounting the time

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