

Fly-In and Veterans Reunion to be held

By **NICK MARIANO**

nick.mariano@register-news.com

MT. VERNON — Chris Collins of the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport has a special invitation for WWII veterans.

“We want to do something of special significance for the WWII veterans,” said Collins, general manager of the airport. “What I’d like to do is invite all WWII veterans to the airport ... and I’d like you to take a photo in front of the B-25 Mitchell.”

The photo is scheduled to be taken at 10 a.m. during the 16th annual Little Egypt Fly-in and Veterans Reunion on Saturday, Oct. 20.

First organized by the Experimental Aircraft Association, the event is held as part of the Mt. Vernon Fall Fest. It will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. However, the antique Mitchell will arrive the evening before so those working at the parade will get a chance to see the war-

FLY-IN

continued from 1A

bird.

The Mitchell was a medium bomber used in all WWII theaters and made particularly famous by being the first craft used in an air raid of Japan in the Doolittle Raid on April 18, 1942, and make in-roads for the U.S. military. The raid was planned and led by Lt. Col. James “Jimmy” Doolittle of the U.S. Army Air Forces.

“I just want to emphatically state how significant the greatest generation is to me and my family and

people here at the airport. If it weren’t for that generation, we wouldn’t have anything in this country,” Collins said.

The reunion usually draws a couple hundred veterans each year, Collins said. It is an opportunity for them to share their stories with younger generations and their peers.

New for veterans this year will be free rides on turbine helicopters provided by Kash Helicopter Services, based at the airport, Collins said. An ID will be required to show status as a veteran.

Rides will also be available to the public on the Mitchell and other aircraft

during the event, and other antique planes are expected to be there, Collins said.

Collins also said the event is an opportunity for children and young people to be introduced to aviation, including free rides for 8 to 17 year olds as part of the Young Eagle Rides.

“We want to try and get them involved in aviation or a related field such as math or science and show them there is more to the world than video games,” Collins said.

They can also pull up a chair next to a veteran and hear their stories of that vast world.

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