

War birds honor

'Greatest Generation' soldiers

Fly-in at 10 a.m. today at Mount Vernon Outland Airport

TODAY

What: Little Egypt Fly-in and Veterans Reunion
When: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., today
Where: Mount Vernon Outland Airport
Activities: Include: 10 a.m. salute to World War II veterans; free helicopter rides for any veteran; free airplane rides for youth ages 8 to 17; B-52 Mitchell, C-130 Hercules, CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Blackhawk aircraft; concessions
Cost: Free admission and parking



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BY BECKY MALKOVICH
THE SOUTHERN

MOUNT VERNON — A touching tribute to soldiers of the "Greatest Generation" will be one of the highlights of the 16th Little Egypt Fly-in and Veterans Reunion at Mount Vernon Outland Airport today.

The tribute, beginning at 10 a.m., will begin with a gathering of World War II veterans in front of a Commemorative Air Force B-25 Mitchell, the aircraft made famous by the April 18th, 1942, Doolittle Raid on Japan, airport manager and event coordinator Chris Collins said.

The raid was the first U.S. air attack on the Japanese mainland during World War II.

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BECKY MALKOVICH / THE SOUTHERN

The B-25 Mitchell 'Show Me' arrived at Mount Vernon Outland Airport Friday in advance of today's Little Egypt Fly-in and Veterans Reunion. The event, held in conjunction with the Mount Vernon Fall Festival, features a salute to World War II veterans at 10 a.m. and free helicopter rides for all veterans.

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Photos will be taken of the veterans with the venerable plane, followed by a short program featuring remarks by retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Ted Buck.

"We wanted to do something to honor the World War II veterans. They were part of what is called the Greatest Generation, and it wasn't called that by accident. If not for their sacrifices, this country would not look the way it does today," Collins said. "We are losing them every day, and the day of not having the Greatest Generation among us is fast approaching. This is our way of honoring them."

A rifle salute and playing of taps will conclude the ceremony.

Veterans also will be in attendance at the Jefferson County Hall of Honor and Museum, located inside the airport, to talk about their military service and experiences.

Free helicopter rides, courtesy of Kash Helicopter Services, will be offered to any interested veteran.

Other aircraft flying in for the event, Collins said, include a C-130 Hercules, CH-47 Chinook and a UH-60 Blackhawk.

"Having them all at the same place at the same

time is a rarity and a chance for people to see something really spectacular for free," Collins said.

Another feature of the event focuses on youth ages 8 to 17, who will be given free airplane rides by members of the Experimental Aircraft Association's local chapter. The Young Eagles program will give youth the opportunity to learn about aviation, go on a flight and be rewarded with a certificate, all at no cost, Collins said.

"Over the years, we've flown over 3,000 kids at this event through the Young Eagles program," he said.

Hot-air balloons and other craft will also be at the event, part of the reason volunteer Don Lewis of Mount Vernon hasn't missed a single year of the fly-in.

"I love seeing all the aircraft and the war birds," Lewis said. "It's a chance to see history and how aircraft has changed over the years."

The event, which takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., is done in conjunction with the Mount Vernon Fall Festival in downtown Mount Vernon.

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