



The Freedom Museum

Manassas Regional Airport

P.O. Box 568 Manassas, Va. 20108 (703) 393-0660

Press Release

Freedom Museum 7th Annual Festival to Host “A Gathering of Eagles”

Contact:

Chuck Colgan Jr.

(w) 703-393-0660

(h) 703-368-3007

(cell) 571-237-2473

John Burns

(w) 703-393-0660

(h) 703-368-8317

The Freedom Museum, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, will host “A Gathering of Eagles” during the 7th annual Festival of Freedom on October 8 and 9, 2005 at Manassas Regional Airport, 9am until 4pm both days.

Prominent veterans including Medal of Honor recipients, former POWs, Aces, Tuskegee Airmen, members of the Black Sheep Squadron, and other distinguished heroes will be recognized. They will be available to meet visitors and participate in programs.

The Festival is best known for its vast array of war birds that will include a B-17 Flying Fortress, B-24 Liberator, British Spitfire, TBM Avenger, F4U Corsair, Russian Yak3, L-39 Czechoslovakian jet and P51 Mustang. The event is also a DOD authorized event and military aircraft will be participating.

Tim Edwards, who is coordinating the re-enactors, predicts this event will draw the most participation from living history units the Festival has ever had. “The British re-enactors will be drawn by the Spitfire and the Russian re-enactors the Yak WWII fighter” says Edwards. “Because this is the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII we are featuring WWII aircraft, music and entertainment. The Collings Foundation will be selling rides in the B-17 and B-24”, Edwards continued. You can purchase a ride via their web site.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 11am Saturday and will include the “Gathering of Eagles”. There will be a fly-by at 2pm.

“This will be a family friendly festival with special activities for young Americans, including a rock wall, moon bounce, and patriotic children’s activities”, says Martha Ochs, member of the Freedom Museum staff.

“This is the Freedom Museum’s 7th Festival and it is clearly going to be our best. We will have vintage aircraft from all over the country, dozens of re-enactors and living history units, and our entertainment, thanks to the support of the USO, is some of the best you’ll see at any event. The Liberty Belles travel the world representing the USO and our country and will perform on both Saturday and Sunday. This is going to be one for the history books and a real tribute to my fellow members of the WWII generation,” says John Burns, Public Affairs Chairman for the Freedom Museum.

There will also be a WWII fashion show put on by the Paper Dolls women’s historical reenactment society.

The festival is being supported by the National Capitol Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force that will provide vintage aircraft and staff support. "The CAF is committed to preserving, flying and displaying WWII aircraft in tribute and memory of the men and women who flew them. This gives us a good opportunity to educate younger Americans [as to] the lessons learned during WWII about freedom and air power," says Squadron Commander Bill Douglas, a retired USAF officer.

WWII veteran Paul Purtell says, "We are looking forward not only to honoring our veterans but giving young Americans a glimpse into their history and heritage. It's exciting and fun for them, but it's also important they understand and appreciate their freedom," says Purtell.

"The re-enactors and living history units and military vehicles are critical in telling the story of the fight for freedom. They are a dedicated group and are critical to the success of the festival," says Army veteran Gene Wells, one of the festival co-coordinators. We have more units participating this year than ever before."

During the event, Freedom Museum staff will be videotaping interviews with veterans and home front heroes as part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. Donations of WWII memorabilia, to become a permanent part of the Freedom Museum collections will also be accepted. Volunteers and sponsors are still needed for the festival and other activities.

The Freedom Museum was opened by local veterans on July 4, 1999 and became an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in 2001. Located at the main terminal at Manassas Regional Airport, the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 7th Annual Festival of Freedom will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. Donations of \$12 per adult and \$6 for children under 10 are requested (infants free).

