

WWII Heroes Announced to Speak at Arsenal of Democracy Victory Gala



75th WWII Commemoration
PO Box 1945
Washington, D.C. 20005
Ph. 877.883.4773
Fax 585.924.8537

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the full lineup of World War II heroes participating in a historic panel discussion during the Arsenal of Democracy Victory Gala, which is the kick-off event of the National 75th WWII Commemoration program, was announced. The gala will provide a unique opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of WWII experiences from the heroes themselves. This event precedes the May 8th WWII Memorial ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII in Europe and the historic Arsenal of Democracy Flyover of the National Mall featuring 100 WWII aircraft in formations sequenced to commemorate major battles fought on the land, sea and in the air in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation.

Award-winning broadcast journalist David Hartman will lead the discussions between two panels of WWII heroes. The first panel will focus on the European Theater and panelists will include - Brigadier General Charles McGee (U.S. Army Air Forces and USAF), Colonel Bud Anderson (U.S. Army Air Forces and USAF), Lieutenant Colonel David Hamilton (U.S. Army Air Forces and USAF) and Flight Sergeant Bob Middleton (Royal Canadian Air Force). The second panel will focus on the war in the Pacific Theater. Panelists will include an original Rosie the Riveter – Connie Palacioz, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Vaucher (U.S. Army Air Corps, U.S. Army Air Forces and USAF), Commander Dean Laird (U.S. Navy) and Sergeant Paul Hilliard (U.S. Marine Corps).

The Arsenal of Democracy Victory Gala will honor, remember and celebrate the heroes who fought and served in the global conflict in the air, on land and sea, those who worked and sacrificed on the home front, and those who suffered the horrors of the Holocaust. This event will take place in the historic Signature Flight Support Hangar 7 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on Thursday, May 7, 2020. Individual seating and tables for the gala are available for purchase at <https://ww2flyover.org/gala>.

For more information on the Arsenal of Democracy and the 75th World War II Victory Commemoration Flyover, please visit the following websites: <https://www.75thwwiicommemoration.org/> and <https://ww2flyover.org/about-the-flyover>.

About the WWII Heroes:

Connie Palacioz

At the age of 18, Connie Palacioz, joined the workforce at Boeing in Wichita, Kansas, as a riveter on the B-29 Superfortress during WWII. She was part of the team that manufactured the B-29 “DOC”, which will participate in the Arsenal of Democracy Flyover on May 8th.

Brigadier General Charles McGee

U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Charles McGee served during WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He is a Tuskegee Airman and holds the record of 409 combat missions flown while serving in three wars.

Colonel Bud Anderson

During WWII, U.S. Air Force Colonel Bud Anderson was assigned to the 357th Fighter Group. He is one of America's top WWII Aces, scoring over 16 victories in a P-51 Mustang.

Lieutenant Colonel David Hamilton

U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel David Hamilton was assigned to the 436th Troop Carrier Group during WWII. He participated in many missions, including being one of 20 pathfinder aircraft commanders preceding more than 800 transports dropping paratroopers into Normandy on D-Day. He also led C-47s for supply drops to the 101st Airborne at Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Vaucher

U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Robert Vaucher flew 117 combat patrol, bombing, mining and photography missions during WWII, including leading the largest in-trail assembly of 454 B-29s over a single target during the war. He also served as Mission Commander and lead pilot for the American "Show of Force Flyover" when 525 B-29 Superfortresses flew over the Japanese surrender ceremony aboard the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945.

Commander Dean Laird

U.S. Navy Commander Dean Laird served during WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He is the only Navy Ace to score victories in both the European and Pacific theaters of WWII.

Flight Sergeant Bob Middleton

During WWII, Royal Canadian Air Force Flight Sergeant Bob Middleton was assigned to the No. 6 Bomber Group operating from Yorkshire, England. He flew 10 missions on Halifax bombers and 23 missions on Lancaster bombers during WWII.

Sergeant Paul Hilliard

U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Paul Hilliard served as a radioman and gunner in SBD Dauntless dive bombers in the Pacific Theater of WWII. He currently serves as chairman of the National World War II Museum board.

###