



## WWII Warbirds Slated to Participate in Events Surrounding the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the End of WWII

(Honolulu, HI, Aug. 5, 2020) – At a press conference today, Co-Chairs of the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the End of WWII announced the pending arrival of 14 classic combat aircraft slated to participate in Oahu flyovers as part of the commemoration events.

“*Salute Their Service, Honor Their Hope*” is the theme of the Commemoration in Hawaii in recognition of the veterans and civilians who participated in WWII and contributed to the actions that led to the end of the war. The 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the End of WWII will include three Legacy of Peace Aerial Parades and will culminate with the Official 75<sup>th</sup> WWII Commemoration Ceremony on September 2. Flyovers of the Warbirds will include: Around Oahu (August 29), Connecting the Military Bases (August 30) and Fly Over the Battleship Missouri Memorial, Pearl Harbor to Waikiki (September 2). The Commemoration is supported in part by the generosity of sponsors including the national presenting sponsor, Linda Hope who represents the Bob Hope Legacy as part of the Bob & Dolores Hope Foundation.

"We are honored to join the State of Hawaii in supporting the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration series of events. The World War II Warbird aerial performances are a symbolic reminder of our Greatest Generation's will and determination that ultimately led to victory. Indeed, the legacy of our World War II heroes lives on in the Pacific," said ADM Phil Davidson, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

At the press conference, organizers provided updates on the 75th Commemoration events, as well as detailed measures that will be implemented to ensure the safety of WWII veterans and their guardians; Warbird crews; Hawaii, U.S. and Foreign dignitaries; media; and our community. For our WWII veterans and their guardians joining us from the U.S. Mainland or the Neighbor Islands, Southwest Airlines is our exclusive airline partner.

75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Committee Co-Chairs, Maj Gen Darryll Wong, USAF (Ret) and Capt Steve Colón, USN (Ret) were joined by committee members, all of whom have worked diligently to create commemoration programs and events to honor the heroes of our Greatest Generation who fought on the battlefield and served on the home front.

“This 75<sup>th</sup> WWII Commemoration is especially significant because of the role all of our islands played in the efforts to help bring global peace, and our historic connections with the military, then and now,” stated Co-Chairs Maj Gen Darryll Wong, USAF (Ret) and Capt Steve Colón, USN (Ret). “Our primary efforts are focused on WWII veterans from around the islands and outside Hawaii, who are passionate and driven to be here to commemorate the end of WWII 75 years ago.”



Some details about the herculean efforts from multiple civilian and military organizations to coordinate, manage and transport the Warbirds to Hawaii were shared. More information about each aircraft, owners, pilots, and images will soon be available on the official commemoration website.

“For many of our WWII veterans, these Warbirds hold very special significance, unleashing memories that, in many cases, they never shared,” stated Elissa Lines, Executive Director of Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum. “To have these Warbirds in Hawaii, flying over the very deck of the USS Missouri where the Instrument of Surrender was signed on September 2, 1945 ending this global conflict, to honor all WWII veterans, is a tribute that will live on in the hearts of all who see it. We can’t thank the DoD and our U.S. Navy enough for making this possible.”

### **The Warbirds arriving in Honolulu on August 10 are:**

A **North American SNJ/AT- 6 Texan** which was the most widely used advanced training aircraft in the allied inventory and will be piloted by John Johnson. Four **AT-6 Texans** will be piloted by Kim Middleton, Jason Karlin, Joe Fisher, and Bruce Graham.

A **North American B-25 Mitchell** owned by David Prescott, represents a medium bomber used by almost all allied air forces. B-25 bombers were used in the famous Doolittle Raid on Tokyo.

Michael Polley will pilot a **Grumman FM2 Wildcat** that was a carrier and land-based fighter flown by the U.S. Navy and Marines in battles such as Guadalcanal, the Coral Sea, Midway and the Solomons.

A **Grumman F8F Bearcat**, owned by John O’Connor was the next generation of Grumman, and is still considered one of the foremost piston-engine fighter designs of the WWII era.

A **Boeing-Stearman Model 75** was the type of aircraft most widely used primary training aircraft in WWII. More than 10,000 units were built. Later, many civilians purchased them to use them for crop dusting and aerobatic demonstrators. Dustin Mosher will fly the Stearman.

**Grumman TBM Avenger**, brought into service in 1942, Avengers were the primary US Navy torpedo bombers in WWII and were used for the first time Battle of Midway is provided by Bruce Graham.

Kendall Wagner will fly a **North American P-51 Mustang** which excelled as a long-range, high altitude bomber escort. The Mustang became well-known for escorting the bombers over Europe and was one of the first escorts over Berlin. It was also the favored fighter of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group of the famed Tuskegee Airmen.

Two **Consolidated/Boeing Canada PBY Catalina**, made possible by Cory Pfaff and John O’Connor were primarily used for long range patrol and reconnaissance missions, anti-submarine warfare, as well as search and rescue. 33 of these aircraft were destroyed during the attack on Pearl Harbor, leaving only 6 serviceable aircraft by the end of Dec. 7.



A new type of trainer emerged following WWII, as our air technology exploded. A piston engine aircraft used by the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy beginning in the 1950s, a **North American T-28 Trojan** was used as a trainer and has continued in civilian use as an aerobatics and warbird performer. Dan Hill will pilot the T-28.

More details and updates are available by visiting the official website at [75thwwiicommemoration.org](http://75thwwiicommemoration.org)

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