



Press Release  
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## **“Gathering of Mustangs and Legends-The Final Round Up” Selects Rickenbacker International Airport to Host 2007 Event**

COLUMBUS – Rickenbacker International Airport has been selected to host the “Gathering of Mustangs and Legends—The Final Round Up” on September 27 – 30, 2007. P-51 Mustangs were escort planes used during World War II to protect American bombers from German fighters. Most of these aircraft are now privately owned and in 1999 many Mustang owners and some of the military legends who flew the aircraft in World War II gathered in Kissimmee, Florida at the home of Stallion 51 Corporation. Stallion 51 conducts various flight operations with P-51 aircraft and provides flight training for Mustang pilots. The 1999 event proved to be highly successful and since then Stallion 51 has been in search of the right time and place to recreate the magic on a much grander scale.

Initial plans for the 2007 event include a massive 51-plane Mustang formation, solo and formation Mustang demonstrations, United States Air Force flight demonstrations, numerous other aerial activities and demonstrations, an aviation auction, as well as ample opportunities to photograph the planes and meet the heroes who flew the P-51 Mustang.

“We thank Experience Columbus and the Ohio Air National Guard for their efforts in helping us to secure this one-of-a-kind event,” said Elaine Roberts, A.A.E., President & CEO of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. “Their expertise in their respective fields was critical to demonstrating that Columbus has the facilities, capabilities and desire to host an event of this magnitude. They will continue to be integral partners as we move into the planning stages of this event.”

Stallion 51 Corporation estimates a minimum of 100,000 people could attend this four-day event which will feature displays and activities of interest not only to aviation enthusiasts and historians but also the general public to create an inviting and invigorating entertainment option for families. Rickenbacker offers superb airport facilities and an abundance of land to host an event of this magnitude in addition to providing a fitting historical tie to the event.

On December 8, 1941 – the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor – the Army announced that an airbase would be built just east of the Village of Lockbourne. Lockbourne Army Air Base, now known as Rickenbacker International Airport, opened in June 1942 as a glider and B-17 training facility. After the war, flight-training activities were halted and the base was used as a development and testing facility for all-weather military flight operations. The primary unit at the base was the all-Black 447th Composite Group, also known as the Tuskegee Airmen. This unit merged with the 477th Composite Group in 1947, becoming the 332nd Fighter wing, one of the first all-Black flying units in the newly created United States Air Force. Rickenbacker will celebrate its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007 while hosting an expected 100 Mustangs and 51 pilots who are heroes for their service during World War II.

For more information about the history of Rickenbacker or the Gathering of the Mustangs and Legends event, contact Angie Tabor, Manager Communications for the Columbus Regional Airport Authority at 614-239-4081 at [ATabor@ColumbusAirports.com](mailto:ATabor@ColumbusAirports.com).