

President's Message

Chris and I take every opportunity to enjoy and share AAHS aviation history with family, aviation friends and colleagues, business associates and anyone else that happens to wander into the hangar.

This year, thousands, myself included, will get to share a moment of extraordinary aviation history at the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion of June 6, 1944, at both Duxford, England, and Normandy, France. At this event, the skies over England and France will, possibly for the last time ever, be filled with C-47/DC-3s carrying paratroopers commemorating this tremendous liberation effort of WWII. As of this writing 38 aircraft, coming from all over the world will travel to Duxford to participate in the paratrooper drop across the channel, including several from the United States.

The logistics efforts alone to make this come to pass have been staggering. Participating aircraft owners in the U.S. have overhauled or replaced engines, pre-purchased thousands of gallons of fuel, staged additional engines and other critical parts along the flight route, added instrumentation and gained FAA waivers for needed changes, as well as carefully planning out landing options at the various airports and countries they will land at during the course of their epic flight to Duxford, England. Their flight path, once leaving the U.S. mainland includes Goose Bay Airport, Canada, Narsarsuaq Airport (Blue West One of WW II fame), Greenland, Reykjavik Airport, Iceland, arriving first in the UK at Wick Airport, Scotland.

The event will include celebrations at Duxford Airport, from June 2-5, and at Caen Carpiquet Airport, in Normandy, France June 5-9. 250 paratroopers will board the aircraft in the United Kingdom to fly across the English Channel and jump into the historic drop zones of Normandy, dressed in WWII style Allied uniforms, using military round parachutes. I am currently making arrangements with the Imperial War Museum at Duxford to invite other AAHS members who will be in attendance to socialize for one of the afternoons (June 2-5), and enjoy some of this history together.

As we are spending more time at Flabob Airport, getting our new headquarters ready for our move-in, we've been able to wander out onto the flight line, where several of the C-47s/DC-3 variants making this historic flight are getting their last-minute preparations completed, including Flabob Airport's *Flabob Express* and the C-53 *D-Day Doll* operated by the Riverside Commemorative Air Force unit. Yours truly had the honor of repainting the nose art of *D Day Doll* and several flight crew jackets so she and her crew will look their best.

It's a real treat to step outside the AAHS HQ office and walk into history into the making; an experience I look forward to repeating as we develop our partnership with Flabob Airport. If you are attending the 75th Anniversary of the D Day Invasion event, **contact me via the AAHS email at prez@aahs-online.org**, and I can provide details of the planned AAHS get-together. It will also be posted to the AAHS Facebook page when confirmed.

Jerri Bergen
AAHS President

