

Blue Devils Documentary to Shoot on the USS Lexington

PRESS RELEASE: November 3, 2006

The public is invited to witness a show of aircraft and airmen, as the USS Lexington becomes stunt double for the USS Bunker Hill, November 9-11. Two Michigan production companies are coming to Corpus Christi to shoot the documentary, *The Blue Devils: The Story of VMF-451 During WWII*.

Coming with them is a veritable squadron of vintage aircraft, including replicas of Japanese fighters and kamikazes. They plan to recreate several key events in the history of Lexington's fellow Essex class carrier, the Bunker Hill. The VMF-451 squadron was a Marine Corsair fighter squadron flying missions off the USS Bunker Hill during World War II.

“We are telling the story of the men of VMF-451,” said Terry Dodge, CEO of TLD-Productions. “The Lexington is the spitting image of the Bunker Hill. We are simulating the kamikaze attack that eventually sank the Bunker Hill. This is a key event in the life of VMF-451, and changed the lives of these men who braved the air war in the Pacific.”

As the story of VMF-451 is really about the men, not the hardware, surviving veterans of that highly decorated squadron, including WWII fighter ace, retired Col. Archie Donahue, will be on hand to witness the show, share their stories, and sign autographs. Donahue is known for becoming an “ace in a day” not just once during the war, but twice.

“I came to this project to honor these men. The story of their courage and sacrifice is compelling. But, what really got me excited was the men themselves, and how they were shaped and changed by the events.” Dodge says the story of these men is an inspirational one, and he wants to share it with others. “I am so happy to bring these men together here and honor them in time for Veteran's Day,” Dodge said.

A reenactment group that specializes in recreating the attack on Pearl Harbor will be on hand to simulate the attack. A pair of vintage Corsairs and a North American P-64, will be on hand to “defend” the carrier.

“I love these aircraft, and the men who flew them. To bring all these pieces together, the men, the planes and the carrier will be a wonderful and very rare event,” Dodge said.

The USS Lexington will be open to visitors during filming. For the price of admission to the carrier, the public can watch the filming from the ship's deck.

The film, *The Blue Devils: The Story of VMF-451 During WWII*, is a labor of love for one of the film's makers director & producer, Terry Dodge. A pilot himself, Dodge has a deep love for vintage WWII aircraft and particularly the Corsair.

Michigan based filmmakers, Terry Dodge and Leonard Brown, CEO of Lighthouse Productions, have been personally funding the project with the help of others who share Terry's vision of seeing the story of VMF-451 told. Reenactment groups, including Texas' own Lone Star Flight Museum have become involved in the project. The USS Lexington Museum and staff are allowing Terry Dodge and his crew to film aboard the ship.

“I never dreamed that this project would have been blessed like it has,” Dodge said. “and, I am humbled at the support of people coming forward to help with this project investing time, money and equipment to the cause. It is truly amazing, and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart.”

So come out and join the men of VMF-451 aboard the USS Lexington and relive their stories as seen through the eyes of these old warriors. It's a once in a lifetime experience!