

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: In response to World War II, the United States government decided to create an Army Air Forces Flying School near Walnut Ridge. Having originally chosen Dyersburg, Tennessee, for the location of the new airbase, the government changed the location to Arkansas after deciding that the Tennessee location would be unfeasible due to the fact that millions of cubic yards of dirt would have to be moved in order to construct the runway; and

WHEREAS: Construction of the airbase began on June 20, 1942. The flying school officially opened on August 15, 1942 and began training its first class of cadets. Over the next two years, pilots were trained to fly BT-13s; and

WHEREAS: In the last year of WWII, the airbase was used to hold German POWs. Very few local citizens knew about these prisoners. The Army Air Force's use of the airbase officially ended in 1944 when it was traded to the Marine Corps, becoming the Walnut Ridge Marine Air Facility; and

WHEREAS: Over 10,000 planes were flown in and stored at the airport, including planes used by General Douglas McArthur and Admiral William "Bull" Halsey. It was the largest number of airplanes ever amassed in any one place. Half of the planes were sold around the world for both civilian and military use. The other half were melted down and sold as scrap metal. On January 5, 1950, the United States government formally turned the base over to Walnut Ridge; and

WHEREAS: The Wings of Honor Museum, founded in 1999 to preserve the rich history of the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field, is sponsoring the 17th Annual Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Reunion in celebration of the WRAAF's 73rd birthday and to honor those who have served and who now serve in the armed forces;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim May 1 through May 2, 2015, as

THE 17TH ANNUAL WALNUT RIDGE
ARMY AIR FIELD REUNION

across the State, and I urge my fellow citizens to observe this day by participating in appropriate activities.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 28th day of April, in the year of our Lord 2015.



Handwritten signature of Asa Hutchinson in black ink.

Asa Hutchinson, Governor

Handwritten signature of Mark Martin in blue ink.

Mark Martin, Secretary Of State