



Contact: Carla Meadows
carla@northstarpr.net; 214.676.5906

FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM WELCOMES THE ARRIVAL OF THE “FLYING PANCAKE” WWII AIRCRAFT WITH A VIP PANCAKE BREAKFAST

*Museum Guests Get A Sneak Peek at the Incredible Vought -173;
A One-Of-A-Kind Historic WWII Aviation Marvel and Rare Smithsonian Artifact*

DALLAS (March 27, 2012) – This morning, supporters and VIP guests of the Frontiers of Flight Museum celebrated the arrival of the historic World War II Vought V-173 "Flying Pancake" with a special invitation-only pancake breakfast, generously sponsored by Christian Care Centers. The Flying Pancake is the sole example of the Vought V-173 in the world.

Many regard this one-of-a-kind aviation marvel to resemble a flying saucer or to be as “flat as a pancake.” The V-173, produced in 1942 and test flown on one occasion by Charles Lindbergh, was loaned for restoration to the Vought Aircraft Heritage Foundation in Grand Prairie by the National Air and Space Museum.

The Vought V-173 "Flying Pancake" designed by Charles H. Zimmerman was an American experimental test aircraft built as part of the Vought XF5U "Flying Flapjack" World War II United States Navy fighter aircraft program. Both aircraft featured an unorthodox "all-wing" design consisting of a flat, somewhat disk-shaped body (hence its name) serving as the lifting surface. Two piston engines buried in the body drove propellers located on the leading edge at the outer edges of the disk.

Today, after an eight-year restoration by the Vought Aircraft Heritage Foundation, the Frontiers of Flight Museum accepted this unique Smithsonian artifact on a long-term loan.

After traveling overnight from the Vought Aircraft Plant in Grand Prairie, the “Flying Pancake” made a grand entrance into the Frontiers of Flight Museum this morning to a rousing group of aviation enthusiasts including members of the Vought- 173 Restoration Team, WWII Veterans, Frontiers of Flight Museum supporters, volunteers and special guests. After the celebratory arrival, the aircraft will be covered until the official exhibit dedication at the museum on April 16.

More on the Vought V-173 “Flying Pancake”

The first flight of the V-173 was on November 23, 1942 with Vought Chief Test Pilot Boone Guyton at the controls. The aircraft's most significant problem concerned its complicated gearbox that routed power from the engines to its two long propeller shafts. The gearbox produced unacceptable amounts of vibration in ground testing, delaying the aircraft's first test flight for months. Flight testing of the V-173 went on through 1942 and 1943 with 190 flights, resulting in widespread reports of "flying saucers."

Charles Lindbergh piloted the V-173 during this time and found it surprisingly easy to handle and exhibiting impressive low-speed capabilities.

On one occasion, the V-173 was forced to make an emergency landing on a beach. As the pilot made his final approach, he noticed two bathers directly in his path. The pilot locked the aircraft's brakes on landing, causing the aircraft to flip over onto its back. Remarkably, the airframe proved so strong that neither the plane nor the pilot sustained any significant damage. The developmental V-173 made its last flight March 31, 1947. In 131.8 hours of flying over 190 flights, Zimmerman's theory of a near-vertical takeoff- and landing-capable fighter had been proven.

ABOUT THE FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM

The Frontiers of Flight Museum, a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate, is a gem in our community that attracts 100,000 visitors annually including 30,000 students. The Museum is a learning laboratory using aviation and space flight to encourage and promote student excellence in science, technology, engineering and math.

For information call: (214) 350-1651 or visit www.flightmuseum.com.

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