American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

A flyover salute to New York's first responders and essential workers

6/5/2020

Seventy six years ago, on D-Day, hundreds of aircraft carrying more than 13,000 U.S. paratroopers took to the skies over Normandy, France as part of the Allied invasion of Europe. In commemoration, Whiskey 7 — a Douglas C-47 that transported members of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division in the second wave of airstrikes — will take to the skies again on June 6 as part of a new mission.

Under the command of two American Airlines Captains — Philadelphia-based Capt. Chris Polhemus and New York-based Capt. Ruben Alconero — Whiskey 7 will join Mad Max, a World War-II era North American P-51 Mustang, for a formation flight in **Operation Thanks from Above**.

The initiative, launched in May by the National Warplane Museum, honors the first responders and essential workers battling the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Chris, Ruben and other pilots volunteering for Operation Thanks from Above have flown over more than 100 local hospitals, Veteran's Affairs locations and city centers in Central and Western New York.

"We're indebted to all those on the frontline who take risks every day to ensure our safety and care," Ruben said. "They represent the fabric of our country, and we can think of no better way to say thank you and recognize their bravery and selfless action."

Ruben, a Boeing 737 pilot, along with Chris, a Boeing 767 pilot and Whiskey 7's chief pilot, have volunteered with the museum for more than 20 years collectively.

Their first flight in Operation Thanks from Above stretched more than 750 miles between Buffalo, Rochester and

Syracuse, New York — making it the longest COVID-19 flyover tribute in the country.

Following an outpouring of positive feedback, their next flight is scheduled to take off from Geneseo Airport at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 6, traversing portions of New York's Southern Tier. Catch some love from above at one of the waypoints on their flight plan or follow along by tracking Whiskey 7's tail registration, N345AB, **online**.

Under the command of two American Airlines Captains — Philadelphia-based Capt. Chris Polhemus and New York-based Capt. Ruben Alconero — Mad Max, a World War II-era North American P-51 Mustang, and Whiskey 7, a Douglas C-47, take part in Operation Thanks from Above..