

Capt. Michiels Day to be proclaimed

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PALMDALE - City officials will unveil a refurbished C-46 cargo plane and proclaim Capt. Joe Michiels Day at 11 a.m. Wednesday at the Joe Davies Heritage Airpark at Palmdale Plant 42. The free event is open to the public.



The C-46, which has been refurbished by airpark volunteers, served as a military transport aircraft during World War II.

The C-46 was noted for its operations in the China/Burma/India theater and the Far East, where it was used extensively to fly over "The Hump," American forces' nickname for the Himalayas.

Although several different transports were used in the campaign, only the C-46 could handle the wide range of adverse conditions created by the mountain range, according to military historians, and was vital in transporting desperately needed supplies to troops in China from bases in India and Burma.

Michiels, one of the pilots who flew the C-46 over "The Hump," came to the Antelope Valley in 1942 to teach British and American flight cadets in the Polaris Flight Academy at War Eagle Field, where the Mira Loma detention center is today.



In 1945, he was recruited by Pan American to fly "The Hump" for the China National Aviation Corp. At the end of the Chinese civil war, Michiels turned to alfalfa farming on land adjacent to Air Force Plant 42.

In 1965 he sold his ranch and moved to Lancaster, where he was active in real estate.

Michiels passed away in 1982.

For more on the Joe Davies Heritage Airpark at Palmdale Plant 42, including hours of operation and location, visit www.cityofpalmdale.org/airpark.