



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RARE WWII B-17 BOMBER TO APPEAR AT JASPER AIR SHOW

SPRING, TEXAS – Celebrating its forty years of American Military Aviation preservation, the vintage B-17 World War Two Bomber, *Texas Raiders*, will perform at Jasper Air Show Bell Field March 17-18, 2012. After nearly eight years of extensive restoration this aircraft has flown in air shows throughout the central Midwestern United States, conducted sports-event flyovers and reunited remaining World War Two veterans with their link to the aircraft flown in the European and Pacific theatres of this historic period. To date there are just nine (9) remaining flyable B-17s left in the United States.

After a successful touring summer in 2001, *Texas Raiders* was required to undergo an FAA mandated Airworthiness Directive (AD) where damage to the wing spars and associated structures was discovered. Following a nearly complete dismantling of the aircraft and eight years of corrosion repair and restoration, the B-17 Flying Fortress became airworthy in October, 2009. To date, over \$600,000 of donations and sponsorship monies have been spent along with nearly 250,000 volunteer and contract hours of maintenance to bring the Bomber back into flying condition. Although the non-profit 501-(c)-3 organization, the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) is the owner of this vintage Bomber, the maintenance, restoration and operation is assigned to the Gulf Coast Wing, an all volunteer CAF membership group. It is estimated that the cost to operate this vintage Bomber is \$3,000 per flying hour.

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To support the flying operation of *Texas Raiders*, the volunteer members of the Gulf Coast Wing will be offering rides and walk-through tours at the JASPER AIR SHOW on Saturday, March 17th and Sunday, 18th, 2012. All donations for tours and rides are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Texas Raiders was delivered to the U.S. Army Air Force July 12, 1945 and became a member of the Commemorative Air Force's *Ghost Squadron* in September of 1967 and thereby assigned to the Gulf Coast Wing in 1971. Her last public flying mission prior to the restoration was November, 2001, when the National D-day Museum in New Orleans, LA celebrated its Grand Opening. She has appeared in two movies, *Ike The War Years* and *Brady's Escape*, one PBS Documentary *Honor Squadrons* and two television commercials. In 2011, *Texas Raiders* reunited the remaining living veterans of the 381st Bomb Group with an airworthy representation of their aircraft flown during World War Two.

Collecting, restoring and flying warbirds for more than half a century, the Commemorative Air Force ranks as one of the largest private air forces in the world. The CAF is dedicated to honoring American Military Aviation through flight, exhibition and remembrance with a flying museum of classic military aircraft. A non-profit educational association, the CAF has approximately 9,000 members and a fleet of almost 160 airplanes representing more than 60 different types – including planes from several foreign countries and military conflicts since WWII. For more CAF information, visit www.commemorativeairforce.org or call (432) 563-1000. For more information on tours and rides on *Texas Raiders*, contact Sandy Thompson, Public Information Officer at 817 304 0393 or info@gulfcoastwing.org