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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 20, 2011**

**CAF to Host WASP Reunion at AIRSHO 2011**

Midland, Texas (*May 20, 2011*) — The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) is proud to announce that it will be hosting a reunion of Women Air Service Pilots (WASP) at the 2011 CAF AIRSHO presented by Western National Bank. To date, 28 of the WASP veterans have committed to take part in the reunion. *The Best Warbird Show in America* returns to the skies Oct. 8-9, 2011, above Midland International Airport between Midland and Odessa, Texas.

The CAF Ambassadors Committee, who will be hosting the WASP, is currently raising funds to bring as many of the remaining 266 WASP as possible to AIRSHO 2011. The Ambassadors will provide lodging, travel and meals for each WASP and one guest. In addition, they will be given reserved seating and honored with a special celebration at AIRSHO.

“As of May 19<sup>th</sup>, 28 WASP have committed and we still have about four months until AIRSHO, which means this is only the beginning,” said CAF President/CEO Stephan Brown. “Over the next few months we expect many more of the surviving WASP to sign up for the reunion. These ladies are an important part of our history and were an integral part of our military services during World War II. The CAF is proud to honor these unique women and we would like to invite our community to help show their gratitude.”

Both members of the Commemorative Air Force and non-members are invited to participate in supporting this reunion through monetary donations or donations of airline tickets and miles.

“These ladies are on fixed retirement,” said CAF Ambassadors Committee member Bob Halford. “But they deserve the opportunity to reunite with their fellow WASP. This is why we are doing everything we can to raise the funds and support needed to bring these brave ladies back together at AIRSHO.”

Unlike other women who served their country in a military capacity during World War II, the WASP were never recognized as veterans of the war and did not enjoy veterans privileges. The 38 women who

died in the line of duty were buried without military honors and surviving members often had to pass around a hat for funeral expenses. In 1977, recognition finally came when Congress declared WASP were indeed veterans of World War II. Official military acceptance came from the Air Force in 1979. In 1984, each WASP was awarded the Victory Medal. Those who served for more than one year were also awarded the American Theater Medal.

In March 2010, the 300 surviving WASP were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for their service.

“We have a unique opportunity to share, maybe for the last time with many, their lives and sacrifices,” said Bob Halford.

To make a donation to the CAF Ambassadors Committee WASP Reunion, please contact the Commemorative Air Force at (877) 767-7175 or submit your donation to CAF Ambassadors Committee, P.O. Box 62000, Midland, Texas 79711-2000.

In addition to the WASP reunion, AIRSHO will feature aircraft on display and in the air, ranging from early vintage aircraft to the thundering sounds of today's American military. CAF AIRSHO takes great pride in bringing modern military to the public along with the historic aircraft of the CAF fleet.

AIRSHO will also feature recreated historic battles of World War II using the CAF's collection of rare vintage warbirds. The show will include aerial dogfights, simulated bomb explosions that rock the ground and a recreation of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor with the world-renowned *TORA TORA TORA* pilots.

Collecting, restoring and flying vintage historical aircraft for more than half a century, the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) 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. A non-profit educational association, the CAF has more than 8,000 members and a fleet of 156 airplanes distributed throughout the country to 74 units located in 27 states for care and operation. For more information, visit [www.commemorativeairforce.org](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org) or call (432) 563-1000.

*The above information has been provided by The CAF Airpower Museum and distributed by the Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau.*

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