



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

Commemorative Air Force Headquarters
Midland International Airport
P.O. Box 62000, Midland, Texas 79711-2000
(432) 563-1000, ext. 2231, FAX (432) 563-8046
www.commemorativeairforce.org

Director of Membership Marketing/PR
Autumn Esparza
aesparza@cafhq.org
(432) 661-8092

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAF P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* is Airborne Again

MIDLAND, TEXAS (July 23, 2009) –The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) is proud to announce the Red Tail Project P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen*'s return to the skies. The first flight after a complete restoration was at 6:51 pm CDT on July 22, in Wahpeton, North Dakota.

A culmination of five years hard work under the CAF's Red Tail Project has resurrected the P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* to flying condition. When the aircraft suffered a catastrophic engine failure near Red Wing, Minnesota in May of 2004, the resulting accident claimed the life of one of the Red Tail Project's leader and pilot Don Hinz. Hinz had the "...objective to carry the lessons and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen into every classroom in America." Red Tail Project volunteers have dedicated themselves to honoring Hinz's memory by restoring the P 51 C *Tuskegee Airmen*. Marine Captain Ben Hinz, son of Don and a Marine F-18 pilot flew in to witness the first flight.

Many CAF Red Tail Project volunteers were on hand as well to cheer on the return of the P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* to the skies. The first flight is a dedication to the cumulative endeavors of many CAF members, supporters and worldwide financial supporters.

"This day represents the culmination of thousands of individual's time, effort, money and passion. It has been an incredible team effort and I am humbled by the experience", Project Leader and Lead pilot Doug Rozendaal said. "From a pilot's perspective, the flight exceeded my expectations in every way."

The P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* is dedicated to telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, the World War II fighter group composed of African-American pilots and support personnel who fought discrimination and prejudice in order to serve their country. This aircraft will be used once again to spread that message and expose people to the extraordinary gentlemen who set such an inspirational example.

Announcements will be forthcoming at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh during an official press conference in Oshkosh, WI next week regarding the future of CAF's *Tuskegee Airmen* and the CAF's Red Tail Project's new educational program, Rise Above. "It will be exciting to bring the airplane to AirVenture Oshkosh, where it will be once again a tool to tell the powerful story of the Tuskegee Airmen", said Rozendaal. Fundraising will soon begin on behalf the Rise Above program to create a travelling exhibition that will precede the P-51 at different venues across America, to further tell the incredible story of the great American heroes known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

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 approximately 9,000 members and a fleet of 156 airplanes representing more than 60 different types – including airplanes from several foreign countries and military conflicts since World War II. For more information, visit www.commemorativeairforce.org or www.redtail.org or call (432) 563-1000.