

For Immediate Release

Aviation Heritage Leaders Announce Nationwide Flyover to Mark 70th Anniversary of the End of WW II in 2015

[Keep 'em flying: 'Spirit of 45' celebration kicks off](#)



Spirit of '45 Day spokesman Jerry Yellin, Tuskegee Airman Calvin Monet, Nell Calloway, Director of the Chennault Aviation Museum, Dr. Harold Cannon, president of EAA Warbirds of America, and Mayor Jamie Mayo

(Monroe, LA) On December 20, 2013, leaders of more than 100 aviation WWII heritage preservation organizations announced preparations for commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II with a nationwide flyover of WWII aircraft in communities throughout America on the weekend of August 15-16, 2015.

The announcement was made at a press conference hosted by the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum (701 Kansas Lane, Monroe, LA, 71203) at 10:00 AM CST, and was followed by a reception at the historic Selman Field, which was the site of the largest navigator training school during WWII. Monroe was the hometown of the legendary Gen. Claire Chennault, whose famous "Flying Tigers" took to the skies over China on December 20, 1941, in the first counter attack against Japan just 12 days after Pearl Harbor.

"We are pleased and honored to be hosting this historic press conference here in Monroe," said Nell Calloway, Director of the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum, and granddaughter of Gen. Chennault. "My grandfather and the Flying Tigers helped lay the foundations for what became the U.S. Air Force and are a fitting symbol for a movement to pay tribute to the achievements of American Airpower during WWII."

Calloway co-chairs a steering committee that includes the **Air Force Association, EAA Warbirds of America, Commemorative Air Force, Rosie the Riveters of America, 8th Air Force Historical Society**, WWII museums and heritage organizations, aviation publications, and others that are participating in the 2015 nationwide flyover.

“Our members look forward to the opportunity to help commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII in 2015,” said Dr. Harold Cannon, president of the EAA Warbirds of America. “Our mission is dedicated to maintaining and flying some of the world’s most iconic aircraft. These aircraft serve as flying memorials to those who bravely served our nation.”



Dr. Harold Cannon, president, EAA Warbirds of America

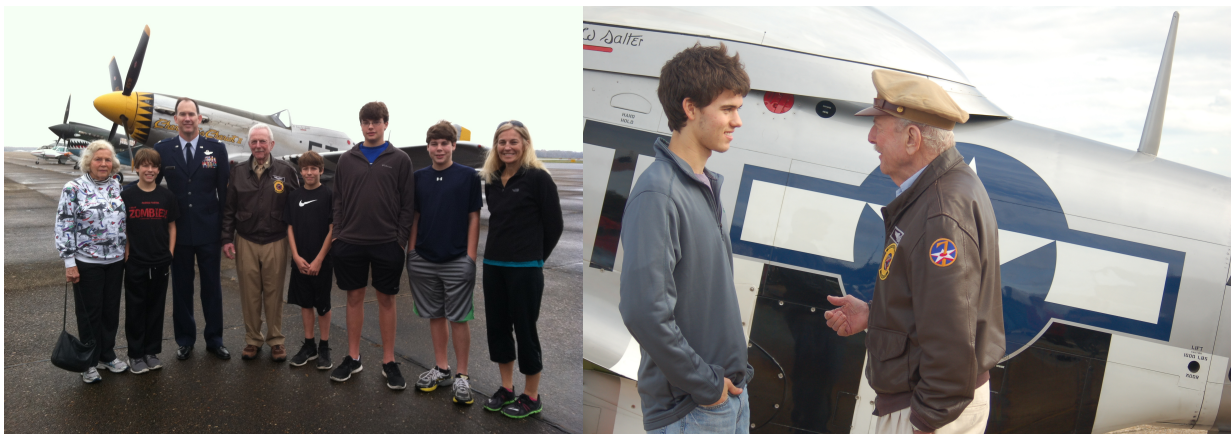
Tuskegee Airman, Calvin Monet, 88, attended the press conference to represent the legendary African Americans who flew the iconic “Red Tail” P51’s. “We must assure that the youth of America carry forward the story of what was achieved when all of our citizens came together in common cause,” said Monet.

Representing the US Air Force was Col. Russell Mathers, Chief of Staff of the Eighth Air Force. “We are very proud to have been invited to participate in today’s kick off, and to do what we can to support this historic project that will help remind the America public of the achievements of the Mighty Eighth during WWII” said Col. Mathers.

“The Air Force Association is very proud of this endeavor to preserve our airpower heritage for future generations. We must ensure this heritage is not forgotten,” said Air Force Association President Craig McKinley.

The goal of the mass flyover is to pay tribute to the pivotal role American airpower played during WWII and to remind the public of the importance of preserving the last remaining planes of the era so they can continue to educate and inspire future generations.

“These aircraft symbolize the courage and valor of the men and women who fought to defend freedom not just for America, but for the whole world,” said Dan Fordice, founder of the Southern Heritage Air Foundation, based in Vicksburg, Mississippi, which is flying in three in three WWII fighter planes for the press conference- a Curtiss P40, a F4U Corsair, and North American P51.



Airpower Legacy co-chair Capt. Jerry Yellin, 89, Col. Russell Mathers, Chief of Staff, Eighth Air Force meet

“Airpower was the decisive factor in winning the war and the source of technological advances of the postwar era, including man’s exploration of space,” said Jerry Yellin, 89, who flew the final combat mission of WWII in a P51 fighter on August 14, 1945, and is the honorary co-chair of the steering committee. “We need to assure these precious aircraft are maintained in flyable condition so that they can continue to educate and inspire the youth of America.”

Other groups that are developing plans for similar “signature” projects honoring the Army, the Seaborne Services, and the Home Front will be meeting in San Diego in February to finalize their plans for 2015. www.Spiritof45Conference.org



Two of the fighter planes that will be flown in to Monroe, LA by the Southern Air Heritage Foundation as part of the December 20 press conference that will announce preparations for a nationwide flyover of vintage aircraft to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in August 2015. Below, P-51 at Selman Field. Lower right, Capt. Yellin with Rene Dugas, Southern Air Heritage Foundation.

