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#WOHAirshow

Meet Ace Pilots, Astronauts and other Distinguished Veterans at the CAF Wings Over Houston Airshow

HOUSTON (October 9, 2019) – Ace pilots, distinguished military veterans, and astronauts will make appearances at the [35th Annual Commemorative Air Force \(CAF\) Wings Over Houston Airshow](#), on Saturday and Sunday, **Oct. 19-20**, at Ellington Airport. Fans attending the airshow can meet these notable guests in the **Legends & Heroes Autograph Tent** before the world-famous U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds perform.

“We fly to give to honor our veterans, express thanks for our freedom, and bring history to life,” said **Airshow Director Bill Roach**. “We are grateful to these veterans, astronauts, and other distinguished guests who support our show and come to meet the fans. This is a rare opportunity to meet true heroes in every sense of the word.”

Some of the show’s guests making appearances will be:

Col. Dean Caswell joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1942 after which he was assigned to Marine Fighter Squadron 221 aboard the USS Bunker Hill for combat in the Pacific, Japanese homeland islands, Iwo Jima, Honshu and Kyushu with major action against the Kamikaze. He piloted the F4U Corsair and was credited with seven kills and three probables. Caswell served two tours in the Korean War as an AII-Weather Fighter Pilot.

Col. Joe McPhail, USMC, flew with the most successful Marine Fighting squadron of 1945, VMF-323, known as the Death Rattlers. In a just a few weeks, the squadron shot down 124.5 Japanese planes

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and counted a dozen aces. On April 12, 1945, while on patrol flying a Corsair, Joe McPhail shot down a lone Ki-27 Nate.

Staff Sgt. Patt Meara joined the Army Air Forces in February 1942. He was sent to North Africa in mid-1943 and then to India as a gunner manning the .50-caliber machine gun on a six-ton truck. Meara then volunteered for the 1st Air Commando Group in January 1944 and was an aerial gunner on B-25H medium bombers flying close support missions over Burma and during Operation Thursday on March 5, 1944, which was the birth of Air Commandos. He served with that elite unit until October 1944 and was discharged in 1946.

Tech. Sgt. Raul Baldit was a combat infantryman of the 87th Division of the Third Army. In 1944, his unit entered combat in France's Alsace-Lorraine. Following heavy fighting, his division crossed the German border in the Saar Region in December 1944. On Christmas Day, his unit took part in the historic counterattack in the Battle of the Bulge, with his division attacking the German Panzer Lehr Division near Bastogne. Sgt. Baldit also participated in the Breaching of the Siegfried Line, Moselle River Crossing, Capture of Koblenz and the Rhine Crossing.

Spc. Clarence Sasser, who served as a combat medic in Vietnam, is a Medal of Honor recipient. On a mission in the Mekong Delta in 1968, Sasser's undermanned company, flying in on a dozen helicopters, was ambushed by gun and rocket fire. Engaged in a fierce ground battle, 30 American soldiers were quickly cut down. While aiding the wounded, mortar fire stuck Sasser; he extracted the shrapnel from his own body and continued to aid others. Sasser was then hit in both legs by automatic weapon fire, but he used his arms to move through 100 yards of mud to help another wounded soldier. Although suffering blood loss and agonizing pain, Sasser continued to treat the wounded. Sasser was recognized for his valor with the Medal of Honor.

Capt. Royce Williams, USN, flew the F9F-5 Panther during the Korean War in the early 1950s. Williams took part in an air strike mission, launched from three U.S. aircraft carriers, against the Hoeryong industrial complex near the North Korean-Soviet border. For the first time in history, Soviet pilots were secretly flying against NATO and U.S. military forces. In a 35-minute dogfight with seven Soviet MiG-15s, Williams single handedly shot down four of them, a feat that was classified by the

U.S. government for 50 years. Williams flew over 220 missions, most in Korea and Vietnam, and retired in 1980 with more than 30 years of service.

Lt. Col. John R. Pardo, a pilot during the Vietnam War, is perhaps best known for a mission in 1967 during which the F-4 Phantom IIs he and his wingman, Capt. Earl Aman, were flying were both hit by anti-aircraft fire near Hanoi. With Aman's ship rapidly losing fuel with no tanker nearby to save him, Pardo used Aman's tailhook as a contact point to push the plane. They both reached Laotian airspace where they ejected and were safely recovered. Initially reprimanded for not saving his own aircraft, Pardo and Aman were bestowed Silver Stars after the case was reexamined two decades later.

Capt. Mike Trahan flew the AC-47 "Spooky" Gunship in Vietnam as a pilot in the 4th Special Operations Squadron. He also flew the AC-47 for eight months and when the Air Force turned that mission over to the Vietnam Air Force, he was reassigned to the EC-47 "Electronic Countermeasures" aircraft. He was assigned to the 362nd Electronic Warfare Squadron in Pleiku, Vietnam. After retiring from the Air Force in 1970, he was a pilot for Delta Air Lines for 32 years.

Cdr. Randall Harold "Duke" Cunningham was an officer in the U.S. Navy for 20 years. Together with his Radar Intercept Officer, William P. "Irish" Driscoll, Cunningham became the only navy flying ace from the Vietnam War to obtain five confirmed aerial victories during that conflict, and one of only five U.S. aviators to become an ace during that conflict. To date, Cunningham and Driscoll are the two last aircrew of the United States Navy to achieve "ace" status. Following the war, Cunningham was later an instructor at the U.S. Navy's Fighter Weapons School, better known as TOPGUN, and commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 126 (VF-126), a shore-based adversary squadron at NAS Miramar, California.

Maj. Terry Pappas piloted the fastest airplane ever built, the SR-71 Blackbird. His aviation experience spans 36 years in 37 military and civil aircraft, including four years as an operational SR-71 pilot flying day and night all-weather reconnaissance missions, worldwide. Pappas held many titles during his career including project manager for DOD-FAA airspace tracking system, executive officer to the Air Force Flight Test Center Commander and Chief of aircrew training and instructor pilot for B-52 operations. He also flew aircraft for NASA.

Master Sgt. Wes Fields is a 24-year decorated U.S. Air Force combat veteran, having served as an aerial gunner on the AC-130 gunship. He participated in numerous special operation missions throughout the world. His military career included supporting coalition forces during the first Iraqi offensive in the Gulf War of 1991 to the Bosnian War of 1995, NATO's biggest combat undertaking and the largest air operation in Europe since World War II.

Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Flores, a Houston native, flew the AH-64 Apache helicopter. He was activated in 2005 for deployment to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom and, during his one-year tour, was witness to the resurgence of the Taliban. Daniel participated in some of the fiercest fighting in the Hindu Kush Mountains.

George W.S. Abbey is a former director of the Johnson Space Center (JSC) and Fellow in Space Policy at the Baker Institute of Rice University. He had more influence on human spaceflight than almost anyone in history. Abbey oversaw the selection of every astronaut class from 1978 to 1987, deciding who got to fly and when. He was with the Apollo 1 astronauts the night before the fatal fire in January 1967. He was in mission control the night of the Apollo 13 accident and organized the recovery effort. Abbey also led NASA's recruitment of women and minorities as space shuttle astronauts and was responsible for hiring Sally Ride.

Col. Alfred Worden was a NASA astronaut. As the command module pilot for the Apollo 15 mission to the moon in 1971, Al Worden flew on what is widely regarded as the greatest exploration mission that humans have ever attempted. He spent six days orbiting the moon, including three days completely alone, the most isolated human in existence. During the return from the moon to Earth he also conducted the first spacewalk in deep space, becoming the first human ever to see both the entire Earth and moon simply by turning his head. The Apollo 15 flight capped an already-impressive career as an astronaut, including important work on the pioneering Apollo 9 and Apollo 12 missions, as well as the perilous flight of Apollo 13.

Col. Jerry Ross is a retired United States Air Force officer and a former NASA astronaut and a member of the Astronaut Hall of Fame. He is a veteran of seven Space Shuttle missions, making him the joint record holder for most spaceflights, a record he shares with Franklin Chang-Diaz, and made nine space walks. Among his many recognitions, Ross earned two Defense Superior Service Medals, the Air Force Legion of Merit, four Defense Meritorious Service Medals, two Air Force Meritorious

Service Medals and the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement, received 15 NASA medals, and was awarded the American Astronautical Society's Victor A. Prather Award for spacewalking achievements and the Flight Achievement Award.

Brig. Gen. Jean-Loup Chrétien is a French astronaut and was the first person from Western Europe to go into space, aboard a Soviet flight to the Salyut 7 space station in June 1982. Chrétien flew a second Soviet mission to space station Mir in 1988 and then returned to Mir as a U.S.-trained astronaut aboard NASA's space shuttle in 1997.

Franklin Chang Díaz, Ph.D., appearing Saturday only, is a native of Costa Rica who is a mechanical engineer, physicist and former NASA Astronaut. He is the founder and CEO of Ad Astra Rocket Company. Chang Díaz became an American citizen in 1977. He is a veteran of seven Space Shuttle missions, making him the record holder as of 2018 for the most spaceflights (a record he shares with Jerry L. Ross). Chang Díaz was the first Latin-American immigrant NASA astronaut selected to go into space and is a member of the NASA Astronaut Hall of Fame.

Spec. Justin "JP" Lane joined the U.S. Army in 2008 at the age of 20 years old. Like most young men watching the World Trade Center towers fall in 2001, JP knew he wanted to join the military when he was old enough to do so. As a combat engineer, he was deployed to Afghanistan as a Specialist with the 428th Engineer Company in October 2010 to search for IEDs. On July 2, 2011, his RG31 truck was penetrated by a 200 lb. IED while on a mission. He was in a coma for six weeks, having 26 injuries and 28 surgeries – changing his life forever. JP is a double amputee and the doctors told him he wasn't going to do many things like use prosthetics because his legs were so badly damaged or speak properly again because of a tracheotomy. An inspirational speaker and author, JP has proven them wrong.

2nd Lt. Regina Mayor was an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve and interned at the Pentagon as part of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) liaison office. Today, she serves as KPMG's Global Sector Head and the U.S. National Sector Leader of Energy and Natural Resources. In both capacities, she helps determine the firm's strategy to better serve the industry as well as optimize the delivery of KPMG's services nationally and globally. Mayor served as an adjunct professor at Rice University's Jones School of Business teaching energy strategy to professional MBA candidates in

2013 and 2014. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University. Mayor also is a strong voice supporting women's leadership and networking programs. She serves as co-chair of the Houston Women Corporate Directors Chapter, is on the board of the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, and supports the United Way Women's Initiative steering committee in Houston.

Dr. Du Hua, a Navy veteran, was born in Vietnam during the war and lived under communist rule until escaping in 1981 and coming to the United States a year later. After learning English and earning a GED and an associate's degree, Dr. Hua joined the United States Navy in 1987. He served multiple deployments, including Operation Desert Storm. After his military career, he became a pharmacist.

William "Buzz" Barron, a veteran of the Vietnam War, served as crew chief for the F-105 fighter aircraft during his tour at Korat, Thailand, in 1966. He represents the many maintenance crews that serviced, launched, and recovered aircraft during the war.

Christina Olds is the author of the bestseller book about her father, *Fighter Pilot; The Memoirs of Legendary Ace Robin Olds*. Christina is now working on a screenplay based upon the book, and is writing a second book about her grandfather, Maj. Gen. Robert Olds, who was an instrumental leader in the development of early air power and the U.S. Air Force. A Vassar College graduate, Christina is a sought-after speaker at Air Force and NATO bases, aviation museums and air shows, both nationally and abroad, and is dedicated to furthering her father's legacy to inspire today's active duty fighter pilots around the world.

To purchase tickets for the 2019 CAF Wings Over Houston Airshow, please visit the airshow's website, www.wingsoverhouston.com, or call 888-4-FLYSHOW.

About Commemorative Air Force (CAF) Wings Over Houston Airshow

The [Commemorative Air Force \(CAF\) Wings Over Houston Airshow](http://www.wingsoverhouston.com) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) community event produced by a volunteer effort of the Gulf Coast Wing, Houston Wing, and Tora! Tora! Tora! of the Commemorative Air Force, with support from the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston, Vietnam War Flight Museum, Lewis Air Legends and Collings Foundation West. The

Airshow is dedicated to showcasing vintage World War II aircraft, along with the thrills of modern aviation. One of the top air shows in the United States in its category, the CAF Wings Over Houston Airshow attracts more than 90,000 festival goers throughout Houston as well as from around the globe. The 2019 Airshow benefits the CAF Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, Exchange Club of Sugar Land, military recruiting efforts, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs, in addition to numerous other nonprofit participating organizations.

About the Commemorative Air Force

The Commemorative Air Force is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Dallas, and the recognized leader of the Warbird Movement—the effort to preserve and honor American military aviation history. Since it was founded in 1957, the CAF has accrued 170 historic aircraft—the largest collection of vintage military aircraft in the world. Educational outreach programs impact an estimated 20 million Americans each year thanks to over 12,000 volunteers who support the CAF nationally and overseas. The Commemorative Air Force honors the men and women who built, maintained, and flew in American airplanes during World War II. The organization believes that is best accomplished by maintaining the airplanes in flying condition; taking the airplanes to the people, allowing them to experience the sight and sound of the aircraft in flight. For more information, visit www.commemorativeairforce.org.