

## B-17G *Sentimental Journey* Visits Huntsville

by

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The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) *Flying Legends of Victory Tour* winged its way into Huntsville on September 18 for a week-long visit. The tour takes warbirds across the United States and Canada to educate the public about the machines and heroes that made combat aviation history.

As part of the tour, the B-17G Flying Fortress “*Sentimental Journey*” landed at Huntsville Executive Airport (MDQ) for a week of static display, tours and flights. *Sentimental Journey* is one of seven warbirds operated by the Arizona Wing of the CAF. B-17G 44-83514 was built in late 1944, and was accepted by the U.S. Army Air Forces on 13

March 1945. Assigned to the Pacific theater for the duration of the war, the aircraft was ultimately recommissioned as an air-sea rescue plane, configured with a droppable rescue boat attached to the belly of the aircraft. The aircraft was donated to the CAF in 1978 and has performed in airshows and given rides across the country since then. *Sentimental Journey* also starred in the Steven Spielberg film *1941*.



The Greater Huntsville Section helped publicize the aircraft’s visit and several AIAA members jumped at the opportunity to tour, photograph and fly in the venerable bomber. Of particular interest was the opportunity to see first-hand the production quality from the 1940s and talk with the crew members who maintain and fly the aircraft today along with a veteran who flew B-17s during the World War II. Aviation history truly came alive through a 72-year old warhorse and the people who flew her in peacetime and war.

