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World War II bomber heading back to Auburn

By Jenny Kobiela-Mondor jennyk@kpcnews.net
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AUBURN — A World War II-era bomber will make a stop at the DeKalb County Airport.

Aluminum Overcast, the Experimental Aircraft Association's B-17G Flying Fortress bomber, will be at the DeKalb County Airport Sept. 25-27 as part of the EAA's nationwide "Original Salute to Veterans" tour.

"The national tour EAA undertakes each year as become the nation's most popular way to learn about this unique aircraft in an up-close way," said EAA president Tom Poberezny in a press release. "EAA is dedicated to preserving the spirit of aviation through these B-17 tours. This year, we also take great pride in saluting all our nation's veterans as the airplane makes its way through our country."

The EAA will sell flights in the bomber while it is at Auburn. Flight experiences are approximately 40 minutes long, with about 24 minutes in the air. Once the B-17 is airborne, passengers will be able to sit in the nose, where the bombardier sat; stand at the waist gunner's position; and sit at the flight engineer's station. Flights cost \$359 for EAA members and \$399 for non-EAA members if prebooked before the plane arrives, and \$385 for EAA members and \$425 for non-EAA members if booked once the B-17 arrives. People who wish to prebook can call 800-359-6217 or visit b17.org.

While the plane is at the DeKalb County Airport, people may also take tours of the plane in the afternoons. Ground tours cost \$5 for adults and students 8 years old and older. Children under 8 are free when accompanied by a paying adult. World War II veterans and EAA members who join or renew their membership that day also may take a ground tour for free.

EAA Vintage Aircraft Association Chapter 37, based at DeKalb County, is

Images



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED This publicity shot supplied by the Experimental Aircraft Association shows its World War II-era B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, Aluminum Overcast. The plane will be at the DeKalb County Airport Sept. 25-27, and the EAA will sell ground tours and short flights in the plane.



FILE PHOTO BY JENNY KOBIELA-MONDOR Aluminum Overcast, the Experimental Aircraft Association's B-17G Flying Fortress bomber, flies over Garrett during the plane's stop at the DeKalb County Airport in Sept. 2008. The plane will return to DeKalb County Sept. 25-27.



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excited to have the B-17 back this year.

"It's a great old plane," said VAA Chapter 37 president Tim Fox. "We're looking forward to it coming back. We're very happy to share our great airport."

From 1935 to 1945, 12,731 B-17s were built, and 4,754 were destroyed in combat. B-17 bombers were long-range bombers, which often struck targets deep in enemy territory on missions that lasted eight hours or more. Formations of B-17 bombers often would fly into battle with no fighter escorts.

Aluminum Overcast was built in 1945, but was delivered to the Army Air Corps too late to see active service in World War II. It was purchase as war surplus and served in mapping and spraying operations before being purchased by a preservation group in 1978. The bomber then was donated to the EAA Aviation Foundation in 1981, with the provision that it should remain airworthy. In 1994, after a decade of museum display, the EAA began flying the plane around the country on annual national tours.

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