

Fly Iowa 2005 Offers Rides for Spectators

FLY IOWA SPECTATORS will have the opportunity to take a ride in a PT-19 Army Air Force Trainer similar to this during the event in Clarinda on Sept. 10-11. Other helicopter and airplane rides will also be offered.



By KENT DINNEBIER

Pilots as well as commercial passengers who take an occasional flight for business or vacation understand how the power and speed of airplanes have revolutionized global travel.

These advances in aviation will be celebrated during Fly Iowa 2005 in Clarinda on Sept. 10-11. However, the best way to gain an appreciation for these amazing flying machines is to actually climb aboard and soar into the clouds.

That is exactly what spectators at Fly Iowa will be able to do as a series of rides on aircraft ranging from helicopters, to historic open cockpit trainers, to World War II fighters will be available during the event.

"People are sure to have a smile plastered across their face for days after they experience a taste of freedom found nowhere else on earth. There will be several different types of aerial steeds taking part in this 'magic carpet ride' high over the skies of Clarinda," Fly Iowa Air Show Coordinator Steve Mowery said.

Children between the ages of 8 and 17 will have the chance to explore the vastness of the sky with an EAA program called "The Young Eagles."

This program has allowed over 1 million children to experience the awe and wonder of fly-

ing with wings of eagles over the past several years. This year, famous movie star and pilot Harrison Ford heads this elite national group.

Representatives from an area chapter of "The Young Eagles" will be in attendance at Fly Iowa 2005 on Sunday morning, Sept. 11, to provide free rides to children in order for them to get a bird's eye view of life.

"These pilots are graciously giving their time and the use of their aircraft for this experience. They deserve a round of applause for making a donation like this. There will be two pilots and aircraft giving rides periodically throughout the morning," Mowery explained.

Next, KCCI TV-8 Meteorologist John McLaughlin of Des Moines will be offering rides in his R-44 helicopter.

Over the years McLaughlin has not only used the helicopter to provide rides at area air shows and to shoot aerial video, but he is also a flight instructor and has chartered flights to couples making wedding proposals.

"The view from his bubble cockpit R-44 helicopter must be seen to be appreciated. It will be a magical ride as you ascend straight up over the thousands of people on the ground. Then, once airborne, the helicopter has the maneuverability to fly forward, backward and sideways. You

will truly feel like you have the freedom of a bird on this unforgettable flight," Mowery said.

McLaughlin will be offering the helicopter flights continuously from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The cost of a 10 minute flight will be \$35 for adults and \$25 for children 12 and under.

For those people wishing to take a step back in history, flights will be offered on the most famous fighters of World War I and World War II.

A perfectly restored PT-19 Army Air Force Trainer will offer passengers the open cockpit experience that thrilled pilots in the early days of aviation.

"Put on the white scarf, leather helmet and goggles and go touch a cloud. This fully aerobatic aircraft will bring back memories from World War I where the wind in your face and the wind in the wires were your constant companion," Mowery said.

The PT-19 Army Air Force Trainer is a member of the Commemorative Air Force and the pilot has agreed to cut the normal charge of the rides to \$200. However, only 10 rides will be offered over the weekend.

Meanwhile, spectators will also have the opportunity to take a ride in one of the P-51 Mustangs that will be used in the

aerial battle reenactment during the Fly Iowa air show.

Lead pilot Brigadier General Reg Urschler will be offering rides in his award winning P-51 D Mustang fighter, "Gunfighter II." Able to reach speeds of 400 miles per hour, the fighter sports a 1,700 horsepower Merlin V-12 engine and can climb at a rate of 4,000 feet per minute.

"The distinctive bubble canopy gives you a 360 degree view that will leave you gasping as you take it all in. This ride is for two kinds of people. Those that are not up to aerobatics will be in ecstasy just experiencing the speed and power of this legendary aircraft, while those more stout of heart will thrill to the aerobatics and G forces imposed as you try to get on the tail of an ME-109. If that were not enough, there is also a control stick in the back seat so you can actually fly the plane," Mowery explained.

Although the price for a 20 minute ride in the Mustang is steep at \$800, Mowery felt the ride would make a wonderful birthday or early Christmas present for an aviation enthusiast.

Finally, spectators should also remember they also will have the rare opportunity to win one of five rides on the B-17 Bomber Thunderbird, which will be the featured attraction of the World War II aerial reenactment.

At approximately 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 10, the five raffle winners will be selected to take a ride on the historic bomber.

Tickets for the raffle are now on sale in Clarinda for \$10 apiece at Bank Iowa, Page County State Bank, Clarinda Hy-Vee, Clarinda City Hall and the Clarinda Chamber of Commerce. Raffle tickets may also be purchased during the Fly Iowa festivities on Saturday, Sept. 10.