

By **KENT DINNEBIER**

Patriotism will be taken to new heights during the air show at Fly Iowa 2005 to be held in Clarinda on Sept. 10-11, as the Liberty Parachute Team drops in for a special performance.

“Nothing could be a more appropriate opener than this team of jumpers. The beautiful red, white and blue canopies, the red and blue smoke, and their signature, a gigantic United States flag, have make this group a must for every major aviation event across the country each year,” Fly Iowa Air Show Coordinator Steve Mowery explained.

The Liberty Parachute Team is considered the premiere civilian parachute demonstration team in North America. The team has been the opening act at the EAA Oshkosh Air Show for 20 years. This event is known as “The Largest Air Show in the World.”

Team owners Doug Gipe and Larry Bartlett have assembled the top parachute demonstration performers in the county, and have aggressively incorporated state of the art equipment and innovative training methods to set the standard by which all other parachute demonstration teams are judged.

Each member of the team holds an expert parachutist license and a pro rating, placing them among the worlds top skydiving specialists. The members each average 25 years of skydiving experience and have over 2,000 parachute jumps to their credit.

“This team is extremely visual. Their whole thrust is giving the human eye spectacular colors to focus on as they descend one by one to their landing zone with pinpoint accuracy,” Mowery said.

In addition, Chip Davis of Manheim Steamroller, who is a personal friend of the team, has written a moving piece of music for the team to play during their 5,000 feet descent.

As if that was not enough, the final member of the team jumping from the Skyvan being provided by former Clarinda resident Harry Barr of Duncan Aviation will be flying “Mega Glory.”

“Mega Glory” is a 2,500 square feet United States flat that will be strapped to the foot of the parachutist. Members of the Clarinda American Legion will be on hand to catch the flag as it descends to the ground. During the jump, Chandy Clanton of the Unites States Aerobatic Team will also be circling the team in her red, white and blue Edge 540 airplane and will have her smoke system activated for the flight.

The Fly Iowa Committee has also procured the services of professional air show announcer for the performance in Clarinda in order to further enhance the performance for local audiences.

“To top everything off, the team will also be doing a night parachute demonstration on Saturday evening. The jumpers, complete with flares and pyrotechnics hanging from their bodies, will provide a fireworks show that makes the Fourth of July pale in comparison. We are fortunate and grateful the Liberty Parachute Team has agreed to be a part of this show. By being here, the team will heighten each and every person’s spirit of patriotism and place our true heroes, our service men and women who have paid the highest price for our freedom, in a place of honor,” Mowery concluded.

