

## ENTER THE SKIES OF THE CAF



### Commemorative Air Force



The mission of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) is to preserve, in flyable condition, the aircraft that flew, fought, and help win World War II. The CAF

contains over 100 aircraft of all types including fighters, bombers, transports, and trainers in flying units across the United States. Some CAF aircraft, such as the Boeing B-29 Superfortress "FIFI", are the only flyable examples in the world and are priceless. They are expensive to restore, fly, and maintain. The personnel who work on and fly the airplanes volunteer their time and resources to keep these airplanes airworthy to honor the men and women from the "greatest generation" who fought during World War II.

The CAF headquarters are in Midland, Texas. Along with a prestigious museum,

they are both a subsidiary of the American Airpower Heritage Museum, a 501 (c)(3) organization. All contributions to the CAF are tax deductible.

### B-24 Liberator "Diamond Lil"

Consolidated Aircraft Company built diamond Lil in 1941. Of the 18,188 B-24's built during World War II, Lil was the 25<sup>th</sup> airframe off the production line. LIL was built as a B-24A and was included in an order of twenty Liberators (LIL was number 18 of the 20) to be delivered to the British. The Royal Air Force received Diamond LIL on May 18, 1941, designated LB-30, given the serial number AM927, and referred to as a Liberator I in British service. The British Air Commission signed a contract with Trans World Airways (TWA) to conduct four-engine flight training to British crews on how to fly four engine aircraft. They selected LIL as the airplane in which to conduct the training and based at the "Eagles Nest Training Center" in Albuquerque, New Mexico. On July 24, 1941, with TWA pilots at the controls, Diamond LIL experienced a landing accident when the right main landing gear brake locked on touchdown. LIL veered off to the right side of the runway, her nose gear and right main landing gear collapsed and she was subsequently heavily damaged. The British still needed the airplane, so in December of 1941, LIL was flown to San Diego for repairs. Lil was going to be rebuilt as a bomber, but instead became the prototype for the transport version of the Liberator, the C-87 Liberator Express. Diamond LIL's bomb bay racks and doors

were removed as well as all the gun positions. There was a door installed on the left rear fuselage, now the main entry door. Seats were installed as well as a lavatory and galley in the rear of the airplane. For the duration of the war, Diamond LIL became a transport for the dignitaries selling war bonds. After World War II ended, she was used as a corporate airplane for Continental Can Corporation and PEMEX, the national oil company of Mexico. The CAF obtained the airplane in 1968 and until the late-eighties, LIL was the only flyable B-24 in the world. As you tour the airplane, ask a volunteer to show you where the gun positions were installed and the modifications to convert the airplane to a transport. Of the other 19 "sister" airplanes of Diamond LIL in the group of twenty



(serialied AM910 to AM929), two went to BOAC as long range transports, one crashed 9 days after delivery, and the other 16 went to the RAF. Those 16 were modified with radar and served in the famous RAF 120 Squadron over the Atlantic Ocean protecting convoys traveling between the United States and the United Kingdom by hunting German

U-boats. One airplane, AM929, was credited with sinking 5 U-boats and was the highest scoring airplane of all the 2000 Liberators serving in the RAF.

Diamond LIL is the oldest continually flying airplane in the United States. Built in 1941, LIL has flown every year of her existence. While she currently looks like a transport airplane, she was built as a bomber and had all the equipment (bomb bays, doors, and gun positions). Had LIL not had the landing accident and been converted, she would have been scrapped during or shortly after the war. Over 900 late model B-24's were built right here in Tulsa.

### **Experience the thrill of "Diamond LIL"**

The CAF sells rides on Diamond LIL. The cost is \$400 and goes towards fuel and maintenance costs of the airplane. You'll get a flight of approximately 30 minutes and get to experience the sights, sounds, feel, smells, and awesome power of what it was like for those young men who fought and died in these airplanes during World War II. Your contribution is tax deductible.

### **Donate your time during Winter Maintenance.**

During the winter months, from November to March, the CAF brings the B-24 Liberator 'Diamond LIL' to Tulsa. Tulsa Technology Center (TTC) Campus located at the Jenks R.L. Jones Airport has been very gracious to offer hangar space in which our volunteer's can perform the maintenance required to keep Diamond LIL flying for years to come. TTC is a premier vocational school with an aviation maintenance program for adults and

high school students. TTC has been the winter home of Diamond LIL for six years, since the winter of 2000-2001. Our volunteers run the gamut of experience. Those volunteers who don't have aviation maintenance training or experience will work under the supervision of our licensed professional maintenance volunteers who are employees of the American Airlines Maintenance and Engineering Center at Tulsa International Airport. Come join us this winter at the Tulsa Technology Center at the Riverside Airport. You don't have to have aircraft maintenance experience to work on the airplane. Just bring your desire to be a part of flying history!

### **Spirit of Tulsa Squadron**



condition, a Fairchild PT-19 Cornell primary training airplane and a SNV-2, an advanced training airplane from World War II. The PT-19 is an open cockpit, two seat, tandem, tailwheel airplane that Army students learned to fly to become pilots in the Army Air Corps. The SNV-2 is a closed cockpit, two seat, tandem, tail wheel airplane that Navy students used to become Naval Aviators. In addition to restoring the PT-19 and SNV-2, the members of the Spirit of Tulsa Squadron also conduct winter maintenance on Diamond LIL.



### **Spirit of Tulsa Squadron Cadet Program**

The Spirit of Tulsa Squadron has a cadet program, one of many programs offered by the CAF. We give students from the age of 13 to 23 the opportunity to participate in maintenance activities and fly in the aircraft. The purpose of the CAF cadet program is to teach young people about the history of aviation, the principles of flight, the aircraft, and the different careers in aviation.

Please call and come by. We'll be glad to get you involved!

[www.caftulsa.org](http://www.caftulsa.org)

**Spirit of Tulsa Sqn.**

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