

The Commemorative Air Force: *America's Ghost Squadron*



www.dixiewing.org
www.commemorativeairforce.org

The CAF Charter:

“Who are we?”

The Commemorative Air Force is an ***all-volunteer, non-profit***, 501(c)3 organization incorporated under Texas laws for charitable and educational purposes. Our job:

1. To ***preserve***, in flying condition, a complete collection of combat aircraft which were flown by all military services of the United States in World War II.
2. To ***provide*** museum buildings for permanent protection and display of these aircraft as a tribute to the thousands of men and women who built, serviced, and flew them.
3. To ***perpetuate*** in the memory and hearts of all Americans the spirit in which these great planes were flown for the defense of our nation.
4. To ***establish*** an organization having the dedication, enthusiasm and *esprit de corps* necessary to operate, maintain, and preserve these aircraft as symbols of our American military aviation heritage.



Early Commemorative Air Force History

“How we got our name”

- The origin of the CAF dates back to 1951, with the purchase of a surplus Curtiss P-40 Warhawk by Lloyd Nolen, a former World War II Army Air Corps flight instructor.
- In 1957, Nolen and four friends purchased a P-51 Mustang (Red Nose), each sharing in the \$2,500 cost of the aircraft. This was the genesis of what would later become the Commemorative Air Force.
- Legend has it that upon arriving at the Mercedes airfield in deep south Texas one Sunday morning in 1957, the group found that someone had painted a sign on the fuselage of the P-51 as a joke. The sign read Confederate Air Force. All the pilots seemed pleased with the new name, saluted each other and decided it should stay.
- In 1958, the group made their second purchase--two Grumman F8F Bearcats for \$805 each. (That’s about \$4,800 in current-year dollars!)



CAF History (ctd)

“The CAF goes public”

- In 1960, the CAF began seriously to search for other World War II aircraft, but it quickly became apparent that very few were still left in flying condition.
- The CAF Colonels were shocked to find that the aircraft which played such a major role in winning World War II were being rapidly and systematically destroyed - no one was attempting to preserve even one of each type of these historic aircraft to display for future generations to see!
- On September 6, 1961, the Confederate Air Force (later the Commemorative Air Force) was chartered as a non-profit Texas Corporation in order to restore and preserve World War II-era combat aircraft. By the end of the year, there were nine aircraft in the CAF fleet.
- Today the CAF has grown to over 11,000 members 147 aircraft, and over 75 chartered units established in cities across the country.



Why a Flying Museum?

“Flightworthy airplanes have a *soul* like no other”

➤ CAF aircraft fly!

- Their large number (over 130 - all World War II military) and variety (60 types representing almost all major combatant nations of WWII), is what makes the CAF different from other aviation museums.
- Each year more Americans *see*, *touch* the metal, *smell* the smoke, and *hear* the roar of piston-engine CAF aircraft than visit the static displays of *all other aviation museums in the United States!*
- See more at www.commemorativeairforce.org



Dixie Wing of the CAF

“Your friendly neighborhood CAF”



Our Pride and Joy: Douglas SBD-5 “Dauntless”

- Recently restored to flying condition (in 1999)
- The star of the battle of Midway
- Ours is one of only 3 SBDs still flying
- It’s motto: “**S**low **B**ut **D**eadly”
- What a restoration effort...
...but the reward is priceless!

- The “Dixie Wing” is based at Falcon Field, Peachtree City, GA.
- We are one of the most active and energetic wings in the CAF
- Roughly 220 active members from all walks of life, many with *decades* of combined experience
- The wing currently has 6 aircraft, plus individual members own several vintage aircraft
- We’ll be flying to 20 air shows this year, in addition to our participation in ***The Great Georgia Air Show***
- www.dixiewing.org



Aircraft of the Dixie Wing

“A raison d’être”



This May be the Only C-45 Painted this Way in the World!



Beech C-45 “Expeditor”

- Our second airplane
- P&W R-985 “Wasp jr.”, 450 HP ea
- Roughly 9,000 lbs Gross Weight
- Painted in Royal Air Force Colors with D-day Invasion Stripes
- Dubbed “**Bucket of Bolts**”
- Fun to fly, and fun to ride in!



Fairchild PT-26 “Cornell”

- Our first airplane - a primary trainer
- Powerplant: Ranger Straight Six
- *Wood and fabric* construction!
- There’s nothing like an open canopy airplane ride



Aircraft of the Dixie Wing (ctd)

“Lady in Blue and the King”



SBD-5 “Dauntless” - our “Lady in Blue”

- Our third airplane, and very rare
- *Meticulously* restored to factory condition ...even custom-made paint to Navy specs!
- 8 years and \$\$\$ to restore - all volunteers!
- Wright 1820 “Cyclone” engine, 1,200 HP
- Roughly 9,000 lbs Gross Weight
- A graceful airplane...



Bell P-63 “King Cobra”

- Our fourth airplane, undergoing restoration; will be completed in about 5 yr
- Creature comforts optional - that cockpit is not for the claustrophobic!
- Powerplant: Allison V1710 w/ 2 stg Supercharger, V-12, 1,425 HP
- A complete re-design of the Bell P-39...
...and a very unorthodox configuration!
- Only **three** flying in the world today



Aircraft of the Dixie Wing (ctd)

“The latest additions to the family”



P-51 Mustang “Red Nose”

- The newest addition to the Dixie Wing
- Completed restoration in 1993
- The most popular and widely recognized fighter ever produced
- One of the first airplanes in the CAF fleet!



LT-6D, US Air Force Museum

LT-6D “Mosquito”

- Served as forward air control aircraft in the Korean War
- It is an AT-6 equipped with smoke rockets and extra equipment, radios
- Currently in restoration, will be flying in 1-2 years
- Will look approximately like photo when complete



Aircraft Owned by Dixie Wing Members

“Guilty by association”

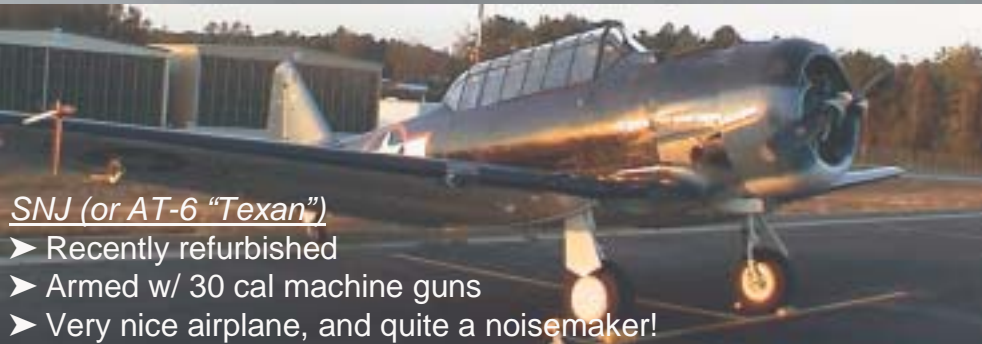
Nakajima B-6N “Kate” Torpedo Bomber

- ▶ Flew in the movie “Tora Tora Tora!”
- ▶ Actually, a heavily modified AT-6
- ▶ It is a 3 place airplane!



Soko 522

- ▶ Yugoslavian Fighter-trainer
- ▶ Owned by the “Soko Seven”...
- ▶ Powerplant: retrofitted P&W “Wasp”



SNJ (or AT-6 “Texan”)

- ▶ Recently refurbished
- ▶ Armed w/ 30 cal machine guns
- ▶ Very nice airplane, and quite a noisemaker!

Hawker “Sea Fury”

- ▶ Smooth as silk...even at 400 MPH!!
- ▶ What a ship - reserved and graceful
- ▶ What an aerobatic routine!



Harvard Mk IV

- ▶ Named “J’s Bird”
- ▶ Canadian version of the AT-6, one of the most unique paint schemes around...



ALSO: PT-17 “Stearman”, FW-149, T-28, YAK-9, AT-6, and others. . .



The Great Georgia Air Show



“A Heapin’ Helpin’ of Airplane Fun”

- ▶ The Dixie Wing and Kiwanis Club produce an Airshow in September of every year...

“Great Georgia Air Show!!”

- ▶ Peachtree City has many aviation enthusiasts... this show draws roughly 15,000 spectators in 2001!



Our New Home...

“A Barn for the Birds”

24Nov01



- As Dixie Wing has grown, there's a need to find a permanent home, and thanks to our volunteers...
...construction began in September!
- Features: 120' X 100' main hangar, large maintenance/restoration workshop, office space, officer's club, museum & exhibit space, etc.
- A wonderful venue to help us support the 4 chartered goals of the CAF
- Expected completion in March '02
- Still much work to be done,
everyone's help will be needed to sustain our momentum!



...And Our Members

“Our Most Important Asset”

- ***Absolutely nothing*** of what you have just seen would be possible without them
- They are volunteers, all!
- Too numerous to acknowledge, yet each with an important role to fill in the organization
- They are from *all walks of life*, not just aviation!
...and they are very much the “*heart and soul*”



Concluding Remarks

“A call to arms (of the past)”

- **The CAF's primary mission is preserving history**—not only the military aircraft aviation and artifacts of World War II but also the aviation-related memories of individuals who participated in or witnessed World War II.
- **The second most important mission of the CAF is teaching history,** especially the lessons so dearly learned about preparedness and about airpower during World War II.
- CAF members are mostly World War II veterans. In 1980 the average Colonel was 51 years old; by 1985, that average had risen to nearly 54. Today the average age of all CAF Colonels is about 60.
- The Commemorative Air Force includes over 70 Wings, Squadrons and Detachments located in 27 U.S. states and districts, and in 4 other countries. Their purpose: To allow YOU - no matter where you live - to ***participate*** in a hands-on way in the history of American air power.

