



AMERICAN★AIR MUSEUM★NEWS

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D-Day at 75: History Repeats in the Skies of Duxford

If not for all the people using smartphones to take photos, visitors to the American Air Museum in Britain might have thought they had traveled back in time on June 4 and 5, as the airfield played host to Daks Over Duxford as part of the commemorations of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

The 21 C-47 Skytrain/Dakota and DC-3 aircraft on display certainly gave that impression as they lifted off from the historic Duxford airfield to re-create the mass parachute jump that began the D-Day invasion in the early hours of June 6, 1944.

People from around the world came to marvel at the vintage aircraft and honor all the heroes of D-Day — especially those who paid the ultimate price for freedom on the beaches of Normandy 75 years ago. The C-47s, which played a pivotal



A C-47 Skytrain, showcasing its D-Day stripes, prepares for takeoff at Duxford Airfield.

role in all World War II theaters but are most closely associated with D-Day, made up the largest gathering of such aircraft in one place since the end of the war.

As Britain's best-preserved World War II airfield, Duxford was a fitting location for this grand gathering. First constructed to train fliers for the Royal Air Force during World War I, it became home to the U.S. Army Air Forces 78th Fighter Group from April 1943 until after the Allies secured victory in November 1945. As American airmen piloting P-47 Thunderbolts took off from Duxford on D-Day to attack targets inland of the invasion

beaches, ground crews worked 24-hour shifts providing operational support.

The Sky Was Full of Planes

The American Air Museum's collection includes both a fully restored P-47 Thunderbolt and a C-47 Skytrain that are on display year round to give visitors an up close look at aircraft that American airmen flew to victory on D-Day.

Our C-47 may be the very aircraft that transported Sergeant Henry "Duke" Boswell and other paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne

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Letter from Phil Reed

It was a busy and quite productive summer here at the American Air Museum in Britain.

With your help, we conducted a series of special events commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day — one of which was *uplifting* in every sense of the word. Your support was also crucial to adding a unique 21st-century aircraft to our collection — the MQ-1B Predator — carrying the Museum's ongoing story of American aircraft and the men and women who flew them right up to the present.



PHIL REED OBE
Executive Vice President

You can read about these and other developments in this issue of *American Air Museum News*. I hope you will be pleased to learn about our latest shared accomplishments. You should take pride in helping make it all possible, just as I know you take pride in the service of generations of American airmen and women.

As you look back on this summer's activities at the American Air Museum, rest assured that we are looking forward and planning ahead for commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Such historic milestones provide us with opportunities to draw greater attention to the valor of high-flying American heroes, whose service and sacrifice would be lost to history without the concerted effort of organizations such as the American Air Museum. What becomes of those opportunities, however, always depends on your personal commitment to the Museum's educational and memorial mission.

So I want to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your kind support. The American Air Museum would not exist without friends like you. And because of you, I am confident we will keep the memories of American airmen alive for many seasons — and generations — to come.

Sincerely,

Phil Reed OBE,
Executive Vice President

D-Day at 75: History Repeats in the Skies of Duxford

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Division to their jump point behind German lines in occupied France on D-Day. Duke recalled that jump as well as three others — over Sicily, Italy and the Netherlands.

"You usually had to wear from 75 to 100 pounds of extra stuff hanging on you somewhere. Of course you had a helmet, a bayonet, a first aid kit ... you were really loaded. That C-47 had those two little metal steps to get into it. And we would have one guy on each side to help you get into the plane [because] it was almost too hard with all that extra weight."

"On D-Day, the sky was full of planes as far as I could see. And if it wasn't ours — I mean our jump planes — they were fighters in and out and all around us, protecting us. That's when I thought, 'Well, we should win this war; we sure got a lot of people here.'"

Passing Out of Living Memory

John Delaney, Head of Second World War at IWM, notes that the flying conditions at Duxford on D-Day were less than ideal:

"It was a horrible day, pouring with rain. They couldn't see to the end of the runway; they were doing instrument-only takeoffs. We aren't even sure how many aircraft flew out of here on June 6. The records are incomplete. They state that 'every available aircraft flew' but aren't specific on how many. You could probably say there were more important things to worry about."

Delaney also makes a point that remains on the minds of American Air Museum staff as we continue spotlighting the valor of D-Day warriors with special events throughout 2019:

*"This 75th milestone is particularly important because it may be the last major anniversary when you will have significant attendance from people who were there. **We are reaching the point where D-Day is passing out of living memory.**"*

Indeed, the stories of all American airmen of the Greatest Generation who won World War II are increasingly at risk of being forgotten as time marches on. But their service and sacrifices will always be honored at the American Air Museum thanks to the support of our members. 🇺🇸



Crowds from all around the world came to the American Air Museum to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

© IWM

Membership Corner

Since the March newsletter, we have been busy at several public community events to raise the profile of the AAM in the States. The AAM participated in Alexandria, Virginia's D-Day 75th Anniversary community event and was featured at the British American Business Association's D-Day Commemoration reception in Washington, D.C. We were well received in both venues and are looking for more opportunities like these for higher visibility. We also had a small promotional presence at the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh air show, in advance of our 2020 participation.

If you would like the AAM to participate in similar events in your area, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact us directly at events@aamb.us to provide those details. We are incorporating a range of activities to build our capacity and would welcome the opportunity to appear at community events in your area.

We are also in the very early stages of planning for a 360° virtual tour of the AAM. Our hope is to transport our loyal members directly to the scene, where they can experience the wonder of the Museum firsthand — all from the convenience of your favorite device. We will be working with a renowned videographer and are beyond thrilled for this project to commence. More details will follow in the coming months, so stay tuned!

Thank you for your continued commitment to the mission of the American Air Museum. Please reach out to us at members@aamb.us with any other questions!

Featured Aircraft: MQ-1B Predator

The newest addition to the American Air Museum in Britain's collection of historic aircraft is one that never had a pilot inside it. However, it nonetheless dramatically changed air combat as we know it, and our world, in the post-9/11 era.

The MQ-1B Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that is now on display at the Museum, often referred to as a drone, flew 288 sorties in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and logged nearly 6,000 flight hours over 10 years of service with the U.S. Air Force and the Royal Air Force. Now it will serve in a different, yet still important, way by helping tell the ongoing story of American men and women in uniform — both in the air and on the ground — defending freedom with ingenuity and impact.

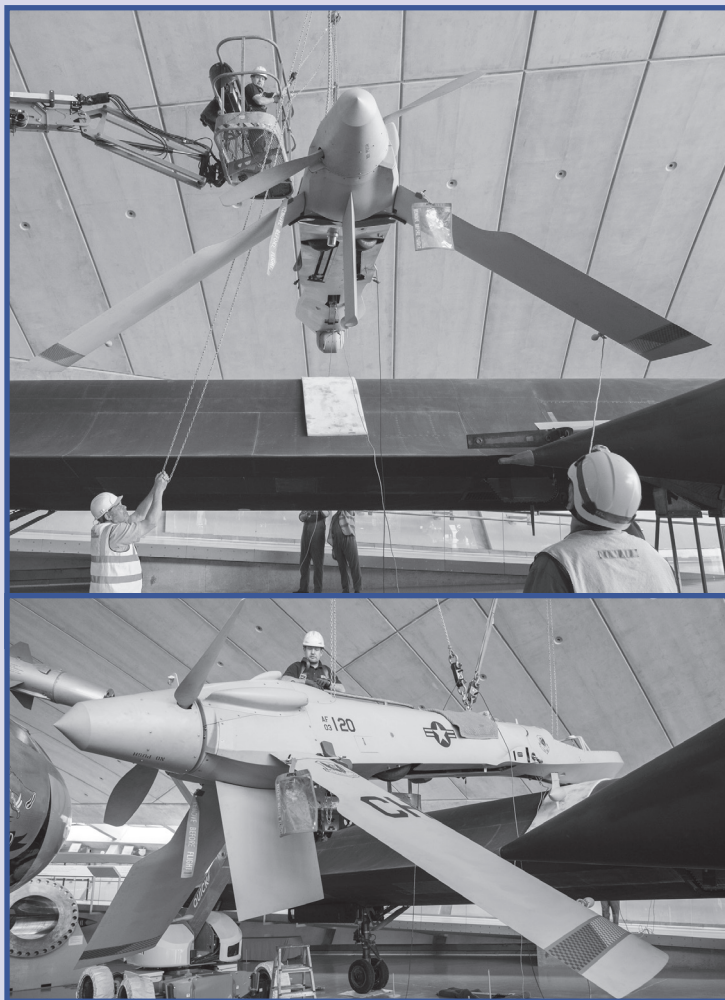
Predators were initially conceived and developed for intelligence-gathering purposes. With state-of-the-art cameras, infrared sensors, and the ability to linger overhead for extended periods without detection, Predators quickly proved invaluable to reconnaissance missions in combat operations.

The Predator was redesignated as the MQ-1, with M indicating *multi-role*, in 2002 to reflect its use as an armed aircraft. Whether providing near-real-time video of Taliban fighters' movements or attacking remote mountain strongholds, Predators successfully filled multiple roles from their first flight in 1994 until being officially retired by the Air Force just last March.

Unmanned But Not Pilotless

Each Predator required a crew of two: a pilot to control flight and a sensor operator to direct the aircraft's surveillance and targeting systems. They were supported by intelligence analysts to glean actionable information from video footage and photographs. The operators could be in the United States, half a world away from where the Predator prowled hostile skies, a fact that forever changed air reconnaissance and combat strategies. It also sparked a debate about the future of remote control warfare and the morality of wielding such a lethal weapon from afar.

Museum staff spent months preparing for the challenge of suspending the Predator inside the Museum. At just over 1,100 pounds and with a wingspan of 55 feet, the Predator is not the heaviest or largest aircraft in



Crews work to suspend the new MQ-1 Predator, the first unmanned aircraft available for view at the American Air Museum.

the Museum's collection. But its carbon fiber fuselage presented a series of obstacles. So great care was taken to secure it in a position indicative of a Predator in action.

Support from Museum members helps fund special projects, such as getting a new aircraft ready for public presentation. But the installation of the Predator is just the first step in telling its incredible history. We need your support to share the personal stories and firsthand insights that will enable visitors to reach their own conclusions about the controversial aspects of the Predator and its impact on modern warfare.

This will help the American Air Museum better tell the ongoing story of American airmen's service to their nation and our world. Just as teamwork was essential to successful Predator missions, it now takes the combined efforts of many patriots to ensure that airmen of every era are remembered by future generations. ★

Celebrating the Fall of the Wall



On November 9, 1989, after a spokesman for the Soviet state announced the rollback of travel regulations between East and West Berlin, Germans from both sides flocked to the wall to chip away at the barrier that had separated the city for so long.

November 9 will mark the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This momentous event thrilled people around the world and signaled the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

The seeds of the Cold War were sown after World War II as Germany was divided into zones of occupation by Western allies and the Soviet Union. Germany formally split into two countries in 1949, with Berlin becoming a divided city deep within East Germany.

Eager to oust their former American, British, and French allies, the Soviets began a progressive strangulation of Berlin by prohibiting ground and waterway access to West Berlin. This led to more than two million Berliners needing to be supplied with food, fuel, and other essentials. With three air corridors into Berlin as the only available route, American airmen joined British and French military personnel in leading what would

become known as the Berlin Airlift. At its peak, this highly coordinated around-the-clock operation was landing aircraft loaded with supplies every three minutes. One of the aircraft that took part in these missions is the American Air Museum's own C-47 Skytrain.

The Soviet Union ended its blockade of Berlin within a year. But tensions continued as the city remained the only access point where people could cross from East to West in search of friends and family members, as well as democratic freedoms and better lives. As the number of Germans emigrating from East to West kept growing, Soviet officials became increasingly alarmed and moved aggressively to stop the flow.

The Berlin Wall started as a barbed wire barricade in August 1961. Concrete sections were soon added as the Wall eventually grew to nearly 70 miles long. It would stand as both a physical barrier and a symbol of Soviet oppression until November 9, 1989. That is when a spokesman for the Soviet state

government announced relaxed travel regulations during a live press conference.

Within hours, a rush of East Berlin residents seeking to cross to the West were allowed to do so by confused and overwhelmed border guards. Media reports of the Berlin Wall being opened resulted in even larger crowds gathering at checkpoints and hailing the first step toward reunification of Germany.

Although it would take months for the Wall to be entirely deconstructed, Berliners began chipping away at it immediately.

One section of the Berlin Wall now on display at the American Air Museum shows some of the graffiti that appeared on sections across Berlin. It is one of the most popular Cold War objects on display, and it serves as a reminder of the history-shaping role American airmen played in the decades after World War II, as well as their continued service in the cause of freedom. ★

Eagle Squadron Heritage Society 2019

The *Eagle Squadron Heritage Society* was formed in 2007 to recognize the extraordinary commitment of a number of the AAM's members to the Museum's mission to educate young and old alike about the American airmen who gave their lives in defense of liberty. The Board of Trustees of the American Air Museum in Britain would therefore like to welcome the following donors as 2019 members of this select group of supporters and thank them for their most generous support.

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Membership in the Eagle Squadron Heritage Society for 2020 opens on October 1, 2019, and runs until September 30, 2020.

To learn more about the Eagle Squadron and how you can join, please contact Keri Donohoo at kerid@aamb.us.