



For Immediate Release
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World War II Aircraft On Tour At Williams Gateway Airport

MESA, ARIZ--- Some familiar sounds will soon be heard over the skies of Mesa, AZ; sounds that may have not been heard for over 60 years. Though replaced over the years by the sound of jet engines at the former Williams Air Force Base, the nostalgic growl and sound of the radial piston engine will be heard over the city once again starting **April 7th, 2004** when the Collings Foundation brings the Wings of Freedom Tour of two of the most famous bomber aircraft of World War II to **Williams Gateway Airport** for a three-day visit. Known during World War II as Williams Field, the current Williams Gateway Airport was a hub of flight training activity to educate the pilots, navigators, and bombardiers that would be crewing the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator as well as many other aircraft over enemy territory from 1941 to 1945. Aviation history is no stranger to Williams; in a span of 52 years of active service, over 26,000 pilots earned their wings at Williams Field and Williams Air Force Base.

The famous Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and Consolidated B-24 Liberator will visit as part of the 130 city nationwide tour in honor of our World War II veterans both in the Mesa area and beyond. The B-17 Flying Fortress was the wartime comrade of the B-24 and one of the most familiar bombers in the public eye during World War II as it was made famous with movies such as "Memphis Belle" and "12 'O Clock High". Only a precious nine B-17's currently fly in the world in stark contrast to the 12,000 that were built in World War II. Joining the B-17 will be the legendary Consolidated B-24 Liberator, the most heavily produced multi-engine aircraft ever and the single most produced warplane during World War II. Astonishingly, the Collings Foundation's B-24 Liberator is the last flying example left in the world out of over 19,000 that were built. The B-24 was the true soldier of the air war over enemy territory. It flew more missions in all combat theaters, dropped more bombs, and was flown by more crewmen than any other aircraft during the war.

The aircraft will be displayed at **Williams Gateway Airport** from arrival at 3:00 PM through 6:30 PM on Wednesday, April 7; 9:00 AM through 6:30 PM on Thursday, April 8; 9:00 AM through 1:00 PM on Friday, April 9. Flights will occur in the bomber aircraft before the opening time and before dusk each day (weather and passenger permitting).

The Foundation requests a donation of \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children under 12 to tour the aircraft display. **Flight experiences are available in either aircraft for a tax-deductible donation. B-17 and B-24 flights are \$400 per person for a 30-minute flight. Call 978-562-9182 for flight experience reservations. Advance reservations for flights are recommended.**

For further information, please call Robert Kropp at 480-644-9845 or 602-708-3942, or visit **www.collingsfoundation.org**.

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