On June 6, 1944, “That’s All...Brother” led a mighty armada of aircraft to Normandy, France for the invasion that led to the downfall of Nazi Germany. That plane, including the 800 others, dropped 13,000 paratroopers behind German lines.

The 75th Anniversary of D-Day will be celebrated in Birmingham and will feature events that commemorate the Allied invasion of Europe on June 6, 1944. A major focus of these events will be the restored C-47 lead aircraft “That’s All...Brother”, that was piloted by Col. John M. Donalson, a Birmingham native and member of the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame. The events are sponsored by the Southern Museum of Flight and the Commemorative Air Force, Central Texas Wing.

World War II history programs will be scheduled for area school students during April 9-12, 2019. There will be informative programs that feature the discovery of this historical aircraft and the efforts to restore this C-47 to its original flying condition. You can view the schedule of events planned during the visit of “That’s All...Brother” by visiting the Southern Museum of Flight’s website:

http://www.southernmuseumofflight.org/about/exhibitions/return-to-glory-75th-
The Bay Of Pigs— An Ill-Fated Invasion Of Cuba

Shortly before midnight on 16 April 1961, members of the Alabama Air National Guard secretly took part in the failed invasion of Cuba known as the Bay of Pigs, a covert attempt by the United States to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Approximately 60 members of the Alabama Air National Guard were involved, including 4-pilots and 4-enlisted crewmembers who flew four bombers to support the invasion by U.S.-backed Cuban exiles on the last day when the Cuban pilots were exhausted.

The plan was to overthrow Fidel Castro and his revolution. Instead, it turned into a humiliating defeat which pushed Cuba firmly into the arms of the Soviet Union. The invasion force had been assembled in Guatemala. It departed in six ships from a port in Nicaragua on April 14. On April 15, the American-backed Cuban exiles began to bomb airfields near two points in the Bay of Pigs and the Zapata swamps in Cuba.

In a clumsy effort to make the attacks appear to have been made by defectors, the attacking B-26 airplanes were disguised to look like Cuban aircraft. Within the first few hours of the operation, it began to appear that the invasion would fail because it had not garnered the support from locals on which they were counting. Much to the CIA’s surprise, locals firmly supported Castro and the Revolution.

Because world opinion was against the U.S., it was decided not to provide further air cover until it could be launched from a landing strip somewhere in Cuba. This never happened, and Cuban forces had complete control of the air. A final desperate attempt at air support resulted in the loss of four Alabama Air National Guard airmen on April 19, but the outcome was already sealed.

The invaders surrendered on the afternoon of April 19. More than 200 people been killed; another 1,197 were taken captive. On April 20, President Kennedy told the American Society of Newspaper Editors that the episode was Cubans fighting Cubans and that the U.S. had not been involved.

A few months later, the three responsible for planning the invasion — CIA Director Allen Dulles, Deputy Director of Operations Richard Bissell, and Air Force General Charles Cabell — were fired.

Mass trials of the captured men were held and nearly all were sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. After 20 months of negotiations, they were released in exchange for $53 million in food and medicine.

The failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion set the stage for further aggressions against Castro. President Kennedy made little effort to conceal his continued desire to see Castro deposed. Castro’s insecurity about the future of his rule over Cuba led to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles there, prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

On April 19, 1961, sometime after midnight, the four pilots of the Alabama Air National Guard, Pete Ray and his co-pilot Leo Baker, Riley Shamburger and his co-pilot Wade Gray, were flying their B-26s to the Bay of Pigs expecting to provide air support to the beleaguered anti-Castro troops. At that point, the men on the beach were easy targets for Castro’s pilots. The mission of the anti-Castro air effort was to penetrate the beachhead area, attack Castro forces, and destroy whatever they could. Pete Ray and Leo Baker’s aircraft was fired upon by at least one of the Cuban Air Force’s T-33; it may also have been hit by the extensive ground fire occurring in the area. Their B-26 went down in a ball of fire, crash-landing on the beach. Ray and Baker survived the crash and fled from the heavily damaged aircraft, but shortly thereafter they were killed by Cuban militia men.

Riley Shamburger and Wade Gray’s B-26 was also hit as it approached the target area. When last glimpsed by another American B-26 pilot, it was at 100 feet above the beach, headed for the water at about 300 miles per hour. The plane hit the sea at a shallow angle. There were no survivors. All four men were posthumously awarded the Agency’s highest honor for bravery—the Distinguished Intelligence Cross—and they received four of the original 31 stars on the CIA Memorial Wall when it was created in 1974.

The Bay Of Pigs— An Ill-Fated Invasion Of Cuba
Their Final Mission

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

The Alabama Air National Guard’s Covert Role at the Bay of Pigs

Wings of Denial

The Alabama Air National Guard’s Covert Role at the Bay of Pigs

Ray
Shamburger
Baker
Gray
One of the most visible segments of our volunteer corps are those involved with the restoration and maintenance of our aircraft.

And the restoration cadre are always looking for enthusiastic members to join their group in achieving this important mission.

The Museum has some of the most unique and interesting exhibits to be found in any aviation museum. The diorama scheme brings dramatic realism to the event being depicted and very effectively enhances the learning process and information to be derived from the historical viewing experience.

There will be many volunteer opportunities to participate with the Staff in the design and construction phases as new presentations of aviation history are contemplated.

When research, design and construction begins, these thoughts should be in the minds of the restoration team:

- What do we want our visitors to learn from this exhibit?
- What is the purpose of this exhibit?
- How does this exhibit’s story fit into what was going on during this period in history?
- Why should the visitor care about this story?
- What makes it unique?

So if you are mechanically inclined, love airplanes, and are willing to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty on some of the rarest and most historic aircraft, then we need you as an Aircraft Restoration Volunteer.

You will work and learn alongside some of the most qualified aircraft builders, mechanics and aviators in the Birmingham area, who are some of the most enthusiastic, capable and dedicated volunteers the museum has ever seen.

We thank ALL our current and veteran volunteers so vital to the success of this museum. We would not be the facility we are today without their dedication.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!

Restoration Manager,
Zach Edison