BILL BARNES
At the controls of a Lockheed P-38
That’s All...Brother led the main airborne invasion of Normandy. Piloted by Lt. Col. John Donalson, the plane led over 800 C-47s that dropped 13,000 paratroopers into a battle that changed the course of mankind.

As part of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) That’s All... Brother is collaborating with 15 other C-47/DC-3 airplanes to make the epic journey back over the Atlantic in 2019. They will be retracing the classic ferry path from the US to Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Scotland, and England to join up with over 30 C-47/DC-3 airplanes in Duxford, England as part of the Daks Over Normandy project. From there, they will travel to Normandy for the 75th anniversary, then to Germany to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift.

Check out YouTube videos relative to this historic vintage aircraft, and here is a start: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUW6ydhlE

In the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, some 800 planes dropped thousands of paratroopers onto the beaches of occupied France, launching Mission Albany, part of the airborne assault on D-Day. Those planes were led by a Douglas C-47 Skytrain, “That’s All...Brother”, that was flown by a pilot from Alabama, Lt. Col. John M. Donalson.

In April 2019, the Birmingham community was able to visit this historic aircraft. The plane is making a few stops before flying to Normandy, France for the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

“It is a wonderful piece of local history and certainly world history,” stated SMF Executive Director, Dr. Brian Barsanti, but it’s not the only piece of history on display at the museum. Donalson’s family has donated several artifacts from the war to the museum.

After World War II, Donalson became Chief of Staff for the Alabama State Governor and when the Air Force became a separate branch of service as the USAF in 1948, he became a founding Commander of the Alabama Air National Guard. “We are very proud of our history in this unit, so it gives us a chance to reflect on that history,” says Lt. Col. Adams, the current Commander of the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Alabama ANG.

General Donalson was the 2nd person inducted into the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame.

Richard Dixon, 99.5 FM talk radio interviewing Dr. Brian Barsanti live from the museum for “Return to Glory”, commemorating the 75th Anniversary of D-Day.

During this historic aircraft’s visit to Birmingham on April 9-12, 2019, many local schools participated in World War II outreach programs designed to educate the students about the times and the events of World War II.
TOP 25 AIRCRAFT/AVIATION MUSEUMS IN THE USA

The United States is blessed with hundreds of aircraft & aviation museums. Some of these museums are focused on a specific brand or type of aircraft, whereas others offer a more eclectic collection. To help you make the best of your travel time, we have put together a highly opinionated list of what we believe to be the top 25 aircraft & aviation museums in the United States. It is not an easy task to pick 25 museums out of a pool of hundreds, so this webpage will forever be a work-in-progress as we travel & visit more aircraft & aviation museums across the USA.

This top 25 aircraft & aviation museums list is sorted alphabetically by state (and not by quality or rank).

**STATE** | **MUSEUM NAME** | **TOWN / CITY** | **HOW MANY AIRCRAFT?** (as of December 2015)
---|---|---|---
Alabama | Southern Museum of Flight | Birmingham | more than 90 aircraft
Arizona | Dana Air & Space Museum | Tucson | more than 270 aircraft
Arizona | Planes of Fame Air Museum | Williams | more than 150 aircraft, more than 50 of which are flyable
California | March Field Air Museum | Riverside | more than 70 aircraft
California | San Diego Air & Space Museum | San Diego | more than 50 aircraft


With all the quality aviation museums in the USA, a recognition of this type is a testament to the planning and execution of the mission being pursued by the museum.

**UPCOMING SUMMER CAMP**

**Consider This Interesting and Exciting Educational Experiences For Young Aviators**

**AVIATION SUMMER CAMP**

**JULY 22nd - JULY 26th**

Ages: 8-13  
Times: 8:45am-3:30pm

**Early Bird Registration:**  
$325 SMF Members, $375 Non-Members (Due by 6.28.19)

**Late Registration:**  
$375 SMF Members, $425 Non-Members (After 6.28.19)

“Adventurers” will explore the history, science and technology behind the exciting field of Aviation! Campers will learn about Leonardo Di Vinci’s first experiments in flight, the Wright Brothers’ success in powered flight, and the modern challenges facing the various fields of commercial, military, private, and corporate aviation. Campers will learn fundamental instrumentation along with scientific laws of basic aerodynamic and aircraft construction.

Each day, students will be able to receive hands-on experiences that include field trips to the: Birmingham Airport Authority, Birmingham Flight Center, Private and Corporate Hangars, 117th Air National Guard, Quad-Copter Lessons and Demonstrations. This Camp also includes time on a Full-Motion Flight Simulator, Camp T-Shirts & Snacks. For more information or to register, please visit the SMF website shown above, or call 205.833.8226, or email: mmorgan@southernmuseumofflight.org

Stacey David and his crew paid a visit to the SMF recently to view the Blackbird. While they were here, they got to interview Ed Yeilding, the Blackbird pilot who was the last to fly the SR-71 and at the same time, set a new speed record traveling coast-to-coast in 67 minutes! His visit helped provide some inspiration for the GearzTV project and gain some additional insight into the history and achievements of the SR-71 Blackbird.

His current TV series, Stacey David’s GearZ® is in its 13th season with millions of viewers throughout the United States around the world.
In 1939, with the threat of World War II looming, Bill Barnes was a 17-year old student at Ramsay HS when a friend approached him with an idea of joining the RAF (Royal Canadian Air Force). After discussing this idea with his father, who was a VMI graduate and a World War I flyer, he said, “When you fly, you’re going to fly for our air force.” Barnes then finished high school and joined the Army Air Corps, earning his wings in 10 months. At the age of 20, Bill Barnes was piloting a Lockheed P-38 “Lightning” and by the summer of 1942, he was flying anti-submarine patrols, looking for German subs.

After the war, Barnes graduated from Sewanee-University of the South before taking over his father’s furniture business. His interest in history and aviation also resulted in his being invited to many symposiums where he met and interviewed former British and German pilots. Hearing fellow pilots’ stories reinforced his belief that the Battle of Britain was indeed a crucial WW II chapter.

Long active in the Birmingham Aero Club, Barnes once owned a six-passenger Beechcraft that he and his late wife, Coquette, spent many hours flying to distant locations.

Some health issues forced Bill to quit flying, but he never stops thinking about it and still misses flying a lot.

As a passionate history enthusiast, Barnes has been a driving force in organizing historical trips to Normandy and other WW II sites in England. In 2010, he planned a trip for he and his wife, along with their children and grandchildren, to visit the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. As they visited the site, he reminisced that the “real heroes are the ones who didn’t come home.”

Bill Barnes is still an active member of the Southern Museum of Flight’s Foundation Board of Directors. His knowledge and wisdom provide additional perspective as the museum moves forward with its mission.

Now & Then
Bill Barnes in his Brooks Brothers uniform. The inset shows Barnes at the controls of a Lockheed P-38 “Lightning”