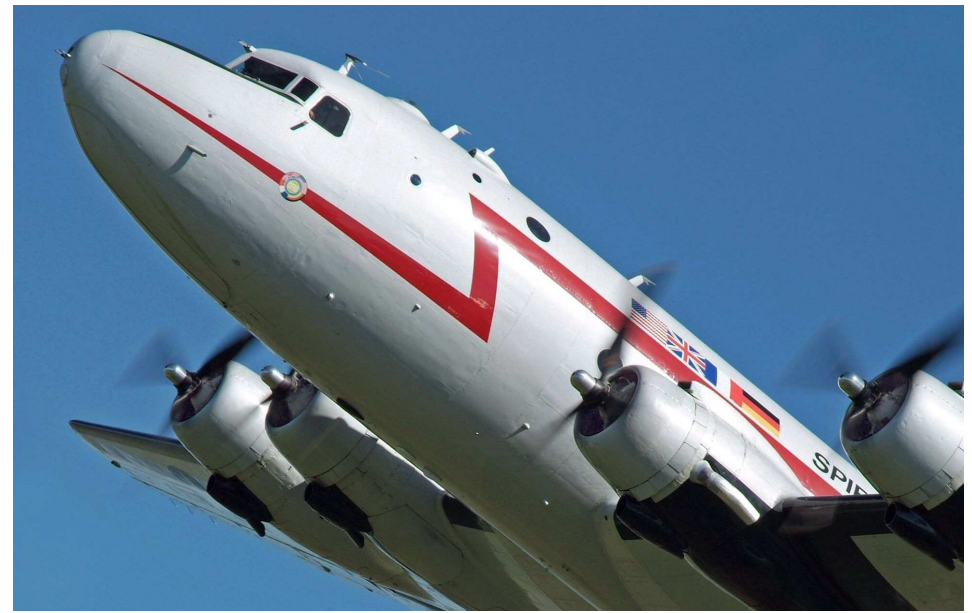




The Spirit of Freedom

A Rare, One-of-a-Kind Aircraft
on a Mission of

- History
- Education
- Remembrance



**The Experimental Aircraft Association
Chapter 960 of Farmville, NC**

and

The Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation

Present:

The Douglas C-54/R5-D

Spirit of Freedom

November 12-15, 2009

Pitt-Greenville Airport



C-54E "Spirit of Freedom" on approach to Tempelhof Airfield in Berlin

The Plane

The C-54/R5-D did meritorious service from WW II through the Viet Nam era in the Army Air Corps, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. The *Spirit of Freedom* (N500EJ) was manufactured by the Douglas Aircraft Company and delivered to the Army Air Corps in March of 1945 as 44-9144. She was then part of a transfer of 25 C-54E's to the United States Navy and received BuNo 90414 on May 30, 1945.

BuNo 90414 served with various units of the US Navy, one being VR-3 and United States Marines in roles such as cargo transports, personnel transport, and finally VIP Transport.

In civilian life *The Spirit* did many jobs including shuttling auto parts between Detroit and Toronto.

She was purchased in 1992 by the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation and today earns her keep as an ambassador of airlift history.

The *Spirit* is one of the 300+ C-54 aircraft that actually participated in the 1948-1949 Berlin Airlift.

The Mission Then

The Berlin Airlift was the first battle of the Cold War. The divided City of Berlin was surrounded on all sides by Soviet occupied East Germany. In June of 1948, the Soviets, in an attempt to starve out western occupying forces, initiated a blockade of the city. The treaty ending World War II made no provision for the protection of ground transport, but did specify air corridors. The Soviets never bargained for what the allies came up with - a plan to keep a city alive by air.

Over the next 15 months, until September of 1949, aircraft from the Allied nations flew over 277,000 missions.

Never before in history had a world power used its military might to help rather than to conquer. This unprecedented humanitarian mission cemented the image of the Americans as the "Good Guys" in the post-war era and it changed the course of history.

The Mission Now

The Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation supports its mission of History Education and Remembrance by operating the beautifully restored, award winning C-54/R5-D *Spirit of Freedom*. Being aboard the Spirit allows an entire generation of school children and others to learn of the importance of this tremendous event in U.S. history. Through interactive displays, memorabilia and, often, one-on-one discourse with Airlift veterans, the Foundation is working to ensure that this momentous event never fades from memory.

With the help of patriots such as the members of EAA Chapter 960 and their generous sponsors, this exciting bit of history is coming to your area.