

## AIRCRAFT SPONSOR PROGRAM

### A. Historic Importance of Sponsorship

Within its first two decades of existence, the CAF acquired one of each major type of combat aircraft to serve with U.S. forces in World War II. Since that time the CAF has added other historic aircraft to its fleet. The principal funding for these acquisitions has come from the Aircraft Sponsorship Program, which remains a key ingredient to the success of the CAF. At its core, the CAF sponsorship program requires that all pilots also be sponsors, staying true to the nature of the program since its inception. (There are limited provisions and policies which allow non-sponsor pilots to operate CAF aircraft, which will be addressed later.)

The Aircraft Sponsor Program provides capital funds for the operation of CAF aircraft. All sponsor funds are deposited in the sponsored aircraft account at CAF Headquarters. These funds are available to the Airbase or Unit the aircraft is assigned to. All sponsorships are treated as tax-deductible donations to the CAF.

Sponsorships are not just for individuals—Units may purchase sponsorships in their name to show their support of other Units. Entities and corporations may also sponsor aircraft. Sponsorships may also be purchased and designated in the name of another person to honor them.

All sponsorships are kept in perpetuity as long as the CAF owns the aircraft. Although sponsors' rights to fly CAF aircraft are not automatic, sponsorships are never dissolved or dismissed. A sponsor will always be memorialized in their donation for a particular aircraft. This remains true even when an aircraft is reassigned to another Airbase or Unit.

Each Airbase or Unit is responsible for the physical and financial maintenance of their aircraft. Units have the right to assess operational fees upon their sponsors in exchange for the right to fly the aircraft. Each Airbase or Unit is different; talk with your local Unit about their program and sponsor expectations.

The information in the next section covers the basic financial rules and concepts that Units must follow. Specific questions regarding financial or operational policies should be addressed to the CAF Headquarters Finance or Operations departments or your local Unit Staff.

### B. Aircraft Sponsorship Levels – All sponsorship level pricing can be found on table 6-1

1. **Aircraft Sponsor** - The highest level of aircraft support. Donation amounts range from \$1,500 to \$10,000 depending on the aircraft model. Becoming an Aircraft Sponsor will allow you to become eligible for selection as a CAF pilot at the full sponsorship level.
2. **Restoration Sponsor** - Shows their significant support for the restoration or continuing maintenance of a CAF aircraft for a donation of from \$750 to \$5,000.
3. **Supporting Sponsor** - Allows members to support an aircraft with donations from \$150 to \$1,000, again depending on the specific aircraft type.

**Note:** Supporting and/or Restoration Sponsorships may be upgraded to Aircraft Sponsorship at any time, which will qualify a pilot for pilot privileges.

### C. Requirements for All CAF Pilots

Aircraft Sponsorship does not guarantee pilot privileges. Piloting CAF aircraft is a privilege. (Lloyd Nolan established that fact in 1957.) To become pilots in the CAF, sponsors must meet the following requirements. An Airbase or Unit may also deny pilot privileges when circumstances or safety warrant it.

1. **Pilots must be vetted and approved** - All CAF pilots must be approved and vetted by their local Airbase or Unit FEB. (See CAFR 60-1 for details on pilot approval.)

2. **Pilots are responsible for all associated fees** - Pilot privileges may require additional costs. Many Sponsor Groups follow a model that requires pilots to pay fees above the sponsorship for aircraft expenses. This assessment is at the discretion of the Airbase or Unit's elected staff.

3. **Pilots must remain active** – Pilot Sponsors who do not fly their sponsored CAF aircraft within 12 calendar months are considered inactive. Pilots who are Aircraft Sponsors may also resign their activity at any time; however, the sponsorship is always in effect. The Airbase or Unit may require an inactive pilot to re-apply to the Airbase or Unit FEB through the process outlined in CAFR 60-1. The Airbase/Unit may retain the right to assess additional contributions to bring an inactive pilot current on fees or assessments.

4. **Pilots must follow all Airbase/Unit Policies** - All Aircraft Sponsors who desire to fly CAF aircraft should always first consult their local Unit for any Unit policies and procedures.

#### 5. Non-Sponsor Pilots

Non-Sponsor Pilots are those who are granted privileges to pilot CAF aircraft and are not listed as an Aircraft Sponsor. All Non-sponsor pilot privileges must be approved by the Chief Aviation Officer. Applications for Non-sponsor pilots can be submitted online at [www.CAFoperations.org](http://www.CAFoperations.org).

Before requesting a non-sponsor pilot, Units must always give first consideration to the current list of active pilot sponsors. Building consensus and understanding amongst all parties prior to requesting a Non-sponsor pilot is important. Non-sponsor pilots do not have any official capacity or position as an aircraft sponsor.

The following terms and conditions must be met for the issuance of a Non-Sponsor pilot approval.

- a. The applicant for Non-sponsor pilot privileges must serve a need that cannot be met by the current active pilot Sponsors within the mission timeline set forth by the Airbase/Unit Staff.
- b. The Airbase/Unit operates a leased aircraft and they are requesting a pilot transition letter. The CAF does not accept Sponsorships for any leased aircraft. This is to preclude any conflict of interest.
- c. A pilot who is already a Sponsor of another aircraft within the same Airbase/Unit is requesting transition. This happens when a unit operates multiple aircraft. In this case, a pilot who sponsors one aircraft in the unit may be granted non-sponsor pilot privileges for another aircraft within the same unit. The Unit may use this request at their discretion. Units are not obligated to request or grant Non-sponsor pilots.

**Note:** CAF pilots who are qualified in a particular make and model may be allowed to fly the same type of aircraft for a different unit by that Unit's request. This scenario happens quite often, and Units utilize pilots from other Units even though they may not sponsor that exact aircraft. This is approved without consultation from CAF HQ so long as the pilot meets the qualifications of CAFR 60-1. Unit Operations Officers are the approval basis for these pilots to operate on a temporary and provisional basis.

#### **D. Airbases, Wings & Squadrons**

If you are one of many sponsors of an aircraft assigned to a large Airbase, Wing or Squadron, your individual responsibility could be much different than if you belong to a smaller Sponsor group. Your “fair share” will vary based on the Unit of assignment’s capability to support the aircraft at the time of need.

Many larger Units have funds available from events that include airshows, hangar dances, and other fundraisers. Additionally, many aircraft generate funds through appearance fees and ride programs. When there is a deficit, Sponsors may be asked to step forward and contribute to the needs of a specific aircraft. This decision for assessment will come from the Unit elected staff.

The Airbase, Wing or Squadron Staff is ultimately responsible for the safe operation, scheduling, maintenance, and financial support of its assigned aircraft. Optional officers may be appointed in Airbases/Units with assigned aircraft to perform duties as delegated by the Unit Staff. This is to help facilitate coordination among the Pilot Sponsors for scheduling, training, and operational purposes. These optional officers are sometimes called Aircraft Liaisons, Assistant Operations Officers, or Aircraft Coordinators.

Aircraft Sponsors for aircraft which are assigned to Airbases, Wings or Squadrons **do not** hold the ultimate decision-making authority. The aircraft and its schedule, mission, and direction is always set by the Unit Staff in their respective positions. This is in contrast with and distinctly different than Aircraft Sponsor Groups.

When disputes arise, the Unit Staff, along with the Pilot Sponsors, must come to a compromise to ensure the continued safe operation is handled in a way that recognizes the support of the sponsors while meeting CAF policy and the operational requirements. The ultimate authority for decision making will always rest with the Unit Staff.

#### **E. Aircraft Sponsor Groups**

Aircraft Sponsor Groups are designed to be a Unit where all Pilot Sponsors have a vote. The intent of this Unit structure is that all pilots share in the cost to operate the aircraft and ultimately control its direction and mission within CAF guidelines.

Each Sponsor Group is required to designate an Aircraft Coordinator. The Aircraft Coordinator is responsible for providing leadership to the group and speaking for the group with one voice. The Aircraft Coordinator must work within the limits of CAF policy. Each Aircraft Coordinator must find consensus and compromise in the group for the continued direction of the aircraft.

In special circumstances (i.e., TORA Sponsor Group), operational, maintenance, and financial responsibility have been transferred directly to the sponsor(s) with prior coordination and approval of the President of the CAF.

#### **G. Units with Multiple Aircraft**

Units which operate multiple aircraft may request special provisions for sponsorship. It is understandable that Pilot Sponsors in these units have already contributed a great deal of money towards Aircraft Sponsorship. In this scenario, the Unit may request a Non-Sponsor Pilot approval. It should be understood, however, that only those who contribute the required amount will be considered Sponsors. Non-sponsor approval is not another type of sponsorship.

A very common scenario is to require pilots who already sponsor a Unit aircraft, and who wish to fly other aircraft within the Unit, to sponsor the additional aircraft at the Supporting Sponsorship level. The Supporting Sponsor level is only 10% the cost of a full Aircraft Sponsor. This is allowed without express approval of

CAF HQ so long as the information is recorded properly when the Airbase/Unit requests a Pilot Transition Letter from CAF HQ.

## H. Frequently Asked Questions

The exact implementation and operation of the Sponsorship Program is spelled out in the various regulations and policies of the CAF. Overall guidance for the program comes from the President of the CAF, while the implementation is done by the CAF Headquarters Administrative Staff, especially Finance and Operations.

Below are some of the most common questions about the Sponsorship program. If you have a specific question that is not addressed below, please ask CAF HQ Staff.

1. If I am a Sponsor, can I fly?

**Yes**, if you meet the stringent requirements for a CAF pilot or crew rating in the aircraft with the appropriate qualifications for experience, knowledge, and skill, and if there is a need for additional active pilots or aircrews on the aircraft. You must be approved and vetted by the Airbase/Unit FEB per CAFR 60-1.

2. I don't qualify as a pilot or co-pilot. Can I still be involved with the aircraft?

**Yes**, Sponsors who are not pilots are given priority for crew assignments and can become part of the aircraft's support team, as much as their individual time and experience permits.

3. Can I make time payments on an Aircraft or Restoration Sponsorship?

**Yes**, if you make an initial donation of at least 10% of the cost of the sponsorship and indicate a schedule for the balance of the payments, not to exceed two years. **Your sponsor status, plaque, and any privileges will be awarded upon completion of the payment schedule. (See Sponsorship checklist attached to the end of this Section.)**

4. Can I make time payments on a Supporting Sponsorship?

**No**. This level of support, which is normally 10 % of the cost of a full Aircraft Sponsorship, must be paid in full in a single amount.

5. Can I trade my labor for a Sponsorship?

**No**. The intent of the Sponsor Program is to raise the necessary funds for the continued restoration and maintenance of the aircraft. This is becoming more expensive every year and takes cash. We hope Sponsors with the necessary skill to help with restoration and maintenance will become members of the aircraft support team and give freely of their time and experience.

6. Can I trade goods for a Sponsorship?

**No**. Sponsorships require a fund transfer into the aircraft's account to be valid, and to provide adequate documentation of the Sponsor's donation for tax purposes. However, the sponsorship funds deposited in the aircraft account are immediately available to purchase those items needed to maintain or restore the aircraft. If a sponsor has an engine or other item that is needed by the aircraft, that item may be purchased from them with the agreement and approval of the Aircraft Coordinator and other Active Aircraft Sponsors.

7. Must I send the money to CAF Headquarters, or can I just send the amount of the sponsorship for items needed by the aircraft in question?

**All sponsorship funds must be sent to CAF Headquarters clearly marked as being for a specific level of sponsorship for a specific aircraft.**

There are several reasons for this:

First, it is important that an "audit trail" be established to validate your donation for income tax credit. If you are audited by the IRS and the donation is questioned, the CAF Headquarters records will substantiate your donation. This is for your protection.

Second, in some instances, CAF Headquarters or another CAF Unit may have the part or components needed already available at a fraction of the commercial cost. In such a case, your money may go much further toward restoring or repairing the aircraft if it is placed in the aircraft's Headquarters account. The cost of the plaque, a processing fee, and credit card fees (if applicable) will be deducted from the Sponsorship donation.

8. Is there anyone at CAF Headquarters who can advise me regarding the effect of my donation on my income tax?

**No.** Only your CPA or tax attorney can do that.

9. Can a corporation Sponsor an aircraft?

**Yes,** such sponsorships are encouraged as part of the continuing plan to endow the CAF fleet with adequate funds for restoration and maintenance in the future. All inquiries or other leads regarding potential Corporate Sponsors must be referred to CAF Headquarters, Chief Relationship Officer, or the President of the CAF.

10. Does becoming an Aircraft Sponsor and having the appropriate flight experience guarantee that I can fly the aircraft?

**No.** Some CAF aircraft may currently have as many pilots or flight crewmembers as can be kept current, competent, and safe for flight in the airshow environment. CAF Headquarters Operations can provide information about those CAF aircraft that may need additional Pilot Sponsors and air crews.

11. Is my Sponsorship a "one time only" contribution?

It is if you wish to simply provide funds to support the aircraft and not participate actively with the aircraft. However, Pilot Sponsors must continue to share the costs of the maintenance, restoration, and operation of the aircraft each year in order to remain qualified as an Active Pilot Sponsor.

12. May I sponsor more than one aircraft?

**Yes.** Many CAF members sponsor more than one aircraft.

13. Can a CAF Unit sponsor an aircraft?

**Yes.** Although the Sponsor Program is intended primarily for individuals, some CAF Units have donated sponsorships for various CAF aircraft. Caution is urged, however, in the case of a Unit sponsoring an aircraft assigned to that Unit and then allowing a number of members to fly or act as crewmembers on the aircraft. This can preclude other individual sponsorships and is not in the true spirit and intent of the Sponsorship Program. For further information and guidelines on Unit sponsorships, contact CAF Headquarters Operations.

## **I. Donations of Aircraft**

### 1. General Guidelines

Donations of aircraft to the American Airpower Heritage Flying Museum and Commemorative Air Force have allowed the Ghost Squadron® to grow to its current fleet size of over 165 World War II and other historic aircraft. This growth has brought with it an increased burden for sponsors of all levels to care for these aircraft.

CAF's current policy emphasizes the restoration and maintenance of the aircraft in our existing inventory as a primary goal. This policy does provide for controlled growth of the fleet, and the acceptance of donated aircraft is therefore under the guidance and authorization of the Administrative Staff as directed by the President of the CAF and the board of directors of the American Airpower Heritage Flying Museum.

### 2. Frequently Asked Questions.

#### **Can I donate my aircraft to a CAF Unit?**

**No.** The aircraft operated by the CAF are owned by The American Airpower Heritage Flying Museum (AAHFM), and any donation must be made to that organization. CAF Airbase/Units are not separate tax-exempt entities, but rather branch offices of the Commemorative Air Force, and thus cannot own the aircraft or other properties. Under certain circumstances the donated aircraft may, at the discretion of the President of the CAF, be assigned to a particular CAF Unit. Under IRS rules, however, the donor cannot attach conditions to the donation, nor can they specify the way donated property can be used.

#### **If I donate my aircraft, can I still fly it?**

**Yes.** However, under IRS rules, there can be no special benefits given to the donor in trade for the donation. You will need to become an Aircraft Sponsor. If you qualify under appropriate CAF regulations as a pilot on the aircraft, along with others of the same type in the CAF fleet, and if they are only one of a number of pilots assigned to that type aircraft, they may be authorized and assigned to fly the aircraft in question.

The donated aircraft must be under the control of CAF Headquarters Operations, on an approved flight movement or mission, and the donor must receive no special treatment or consideration that could be construed as a benefit or privilege not received by other Active Aircraft Sponsor pilots in the CAF for that aircraft.

## **J. Headquarters Assigned Aircraft**

All aircraft assigned to Headquarters are open to sponsorship; however, all new sponsors must understand that this policy will be mandatory. Although the sponsors will generally maintain all the privileges enjoyed by other sponsors of CAF aircraft, operational scheduling and maintenance will be controlled by Headquarters Operations Department.

The Chief Aviation Officer shall be the Aircraft Coordinator for all Headquarters assigned aircraft.

**Table 6-1**  
Aircraft Sponsorship Levels

<b>Aircraft</b>	<b>Supporting Sponsor</b>	<b>Restoration Sponsor</b>	<b>Aircraft Sponsor</b>
A-26	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
A6M3 Zero	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
AN-2	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
AT-19	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
AT-6/SNJ	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
B-17	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
B-24	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
B-25	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
B-29	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
Bell 47	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
BT-13/14/15	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
C-45	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
C-46	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
C-47/C-53/R4D	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
C-60	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
F8F	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
F6F	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
FG-1D/F4U	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Fleet Finch	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
Fi-156	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
FM-2/F4F	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
F-24/UC-61	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
FW-44	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
L-2/L-3/L-4/L-5	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
L-16/L-17/L-19	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
Me-108	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
N3N	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
P-39	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
P-40	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
P-47	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
P-51	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
P-63	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
PBY	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
PT-13/17/N2S	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
PT-19/23/26	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
PT-22	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
S-105/108	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
SB2C	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
SBD	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
Spitfire	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
T-28	\$350	\$1,750	\$3,500
T-33	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
T-34/T-41	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
TBM	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000
U-3	\$150	\$750	\$1,500
UC-78/T-50	\$150	\$750	\$1,500



COMMEMORATIVE  
AIR FORCE

# Aircraft Sponsorship Checklist

(Rev. July 2020)

AIRCRAFT TO BE SPONSORED

N#

UNIT AIRCRAFT IS ASSIGNED TO

DO YOU INTEND TO PILOT THE AIRCRAFT

YES

NO

NAME SPONSORSHIP IS TO BE RECORDED UNDER

ADDRESS

PHONE NO.

EMAIL

Type of Sponsorship	Total Amount	Deferred Payments	Amount of Initial Payment (10% Min)
Aircraft Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3,500	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000		
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000		
Restoration Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$700	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,750	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500		
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000		
Supporting Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	Deferred Payments Not Available	XXXX
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$350		
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500		
	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000		

**All sponsorship privileges will be granted in accordance with Sec. 6 of the CAF Unit manual.**

The new sponsor must complete this form and return it to ensure the sponsorship is recorded. This form must be filled out and printed; all payments should be sent to CAF Headquarters at PO Box 764769 Dallas, TX 75376.

**Do not send form with credit card information electronically via email.**

**All deferred payments must be completed within a two (2) year period.** All sponsorship privileges are granted upon full payment of the total sponsorship funds. Deferred Sponsorships that are not paid in full within two years will be considered donations to the aircraft and will not be recognized as completed sponsorships. Please use the form letter (on the next page) for deferred payments to establish a schedule. **If you have any questions, please contact the Development Office at [development@cafhq.org](mailto:development@cafhq.org) or (214) 330-1700, x 105.**

By checking this box, I will be eligible to receive the full tax deduction of my gift, to the extent provided by law. By doing so, I understand I will forgo the Aircraft Sponsorship Benefit of a Sponsorship Plaque, and the entire amount of the aircraft sponsorship will be directed to the designated aircraft. (The cost of the plaque is approximately \$80.)



Dear CAF Development Office:

I wish to take advantage of the Aircraft Sponsorship Deferred Payment Plan. I am placing  down (minimum of 10%) and will pay

the remainder in:  Monthly  Quarterly  Semi-annual  Annual installments of

I am aware that my sponsorship wings, plaque and other privileges if applicable, will be granted upon completion of my obligations and that there will be no interest charged for participation under this plan.

Additionally, I understand that if I am not able to make the payment schedule indicated above, I must contact the CAF Development Office and work out an alternate payment option. Should I fail to meet the deferred sponsorship time limit of two (2) years, all funds will be considered a donation to the aircraft account.

NAME  COL. I.D.

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP CODE

AIRCRAFT & N-NUMBER

SIGNATURE  DATE

Payment enclosed  Charge my card this amount

Charge my card  One time  Monthly  Quarterly  Semi-annually  Annually until completion of the payments.

CARD NUMBER  EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE    
DATE

