

240329 BRA Air Show McDill AFB Tampa

The US Air Force hosts an airshow in Tampa at McDowell Air Force Base once a year. However, it's been three years since the last show because Covid canceled many and provided an excuse not to have any more since. It seems the Air Force is not the only one using Covid for this purpose.



But, the Air Force understood that it would be three more years before it could hold any additional airshows. They are reconstructing the hangers for the KC 135 air refuel aircraft. So they thought it was a good idea to have one now.



These shows are wildly popular. It's not an exaggeration to say that they probably have 20 to 30,000 people attend on the two days of the show. As you can see, they have both Air Force and the other military branch equipment.



It's hard to believe, but this was my jeep when I was in the Army in the mid 70s. The Willis Jeep of course are famous. But the World War II Willis is noted by the split window which has two glass panels. That's how you can tell the difference between a vintage Willis and the newer models.



I went with my son and my friend and we had a great time. We went very early and arrived promptly at 9 AM. The show runs until 4 PM. The air demonstration started at 12 but we left early.



MacDill Air Force Base has the famous KC 135 fuel tanker station there. I actually flew in this aircraft as a army captain on space available flight. This was from Hawaii to the Philippines and back.



In 1982 I sat and looked out this window in the back. This provides a view of the boom, which extends from the back of the plane. This boom connects to aircraft in flight and refuels them. I remember refueling F-16s in flight during one of my trips.



What a wonderful site this was. There were dozens of families camped out underneath these enormous airplanes. They use the airplanes for shade cover. I don't know of any other Air Force, or any other country which would allow their people this close to operational military aircraft. It's a great testament to the country, to the Air Force and to our people.

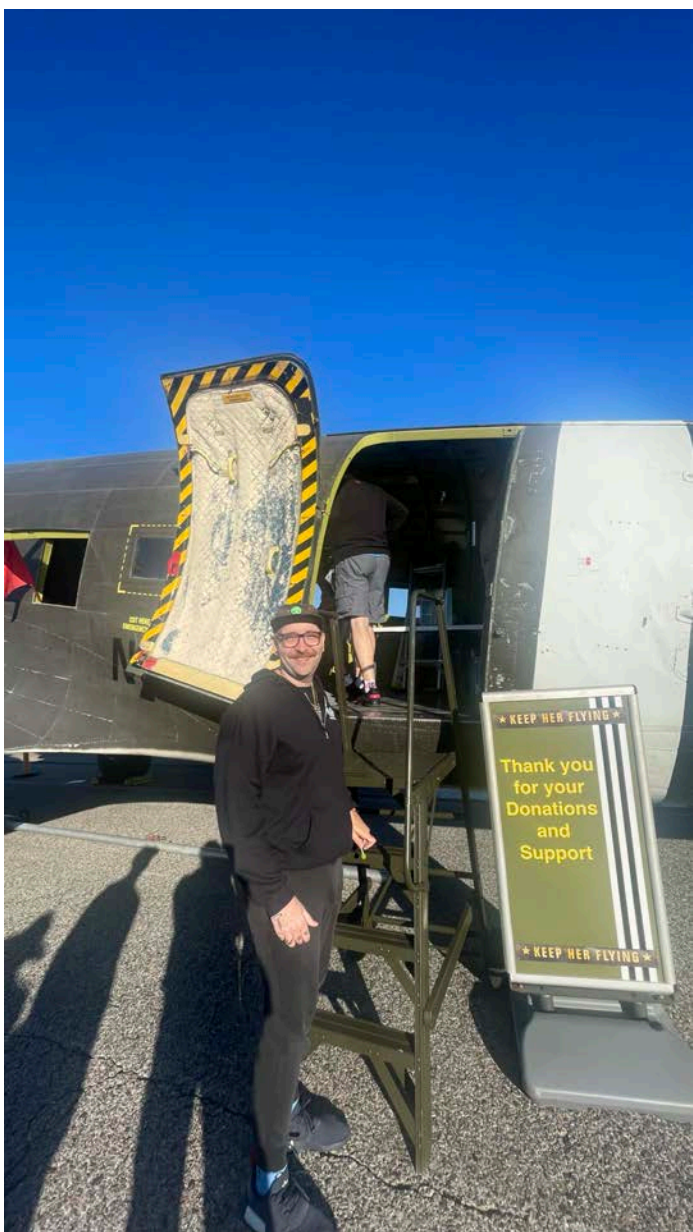


Every conceivable model of aircraft was on display. The most famous, of course, are the ones that survived simply because they were more well thought of. There are clubs

of all sorts that rescue these planes, keep them flying, preserve them and allow us to see them in all their glory.

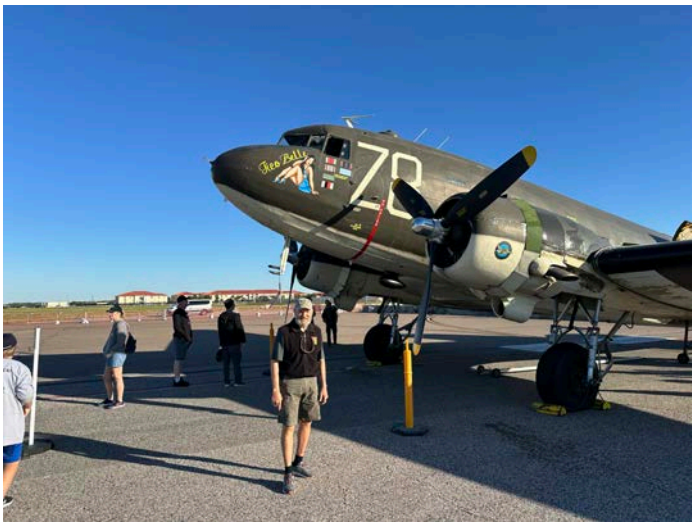


This aircraft participated in the airborne assault on D-Day and the Berlin airlift. There's a lot of history in these aircraft.



This is amazing to see these old aircraft still in operational status. It takes a lot more maintenance and of course the repair parts are history. But 3-D printing allows a lot of

these parts to be remade.



The gentleman is holding what is called a static line. I hooked up to this 13 times for my airborne jumps. I'm very happy to say that the difference in the number of landings versus takeoffs will remain the same for the rest of my life.



How did they do it back then? These planes literally had to be flown by hand, and the instruments were all analog. If you weren't looking at one, you wouldn't know something was wrong. I don't know what's harder, all the manual and analog instruments or the completely automated and electronic versions we have today. I think each is difficult to operate in its own way.



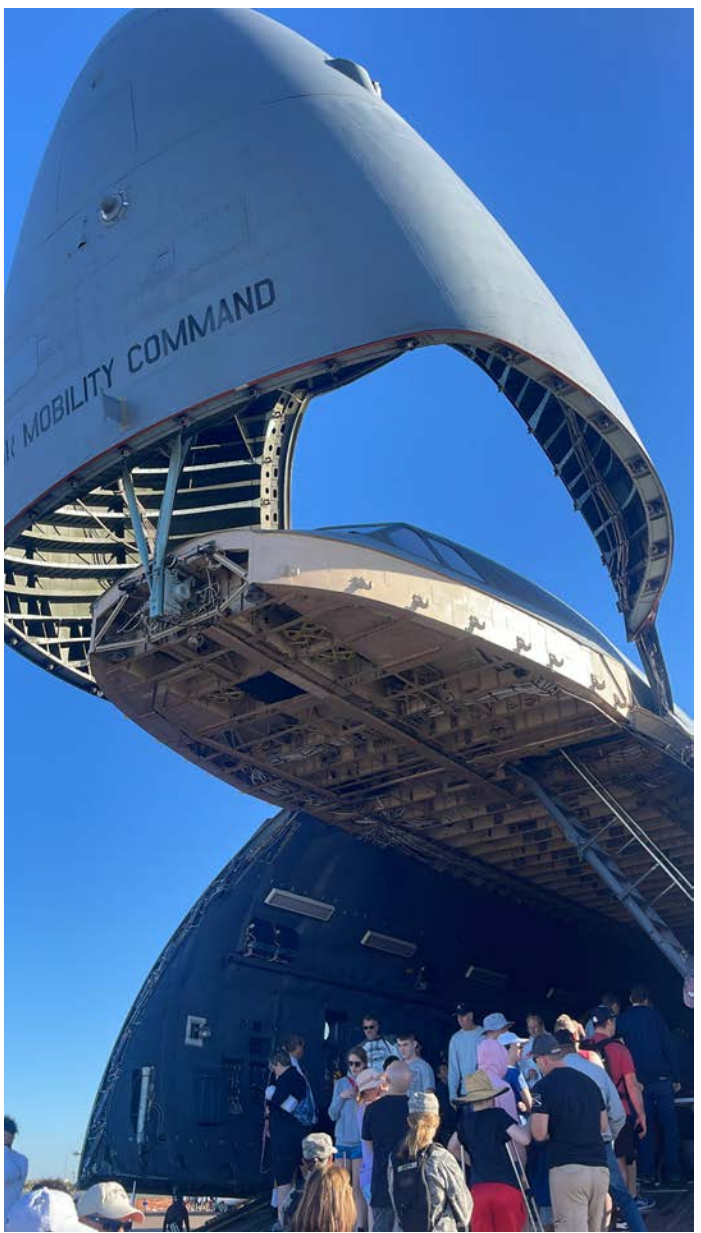
This is the C5 galaxy, which is the largest aircraft that the US Air Force operates. These airplanes are older than the pace to fly them.



It's really amazing to see how tall these aircraft are. This tail easily sort above us to the equivalent of a 15 or 18 story building.



The front and the back of the C5 A galaxy open, so it's called Drive on drive off. The front looks very much like a giant, great white shark opening its mouth. This is a popular plane, of course, because of its size and the ease of access. All the other planes have a giant line waiting to go in one door and come out the same.



This was a rebuilt plane of the Tuskegee airman. There was also a traveling video presentation for this famous air wing. This P 35 had the famous English Spitfire engine installed, and its speed was amazing for a propeller driven airplane.



From the old to the absolutely new. This is the current state of the art 5th generation stealth F 35 fighter. It's sold the worldwide and is considered the best combat aircraft flying today.



The other popular plane with all crowds are the A-10 warthog close air support aircraft. The Air Force hates these and the general population loves them.



The army recruiters are also there at the show. I saw this young child picked this up and thought it was a dummy weight set. But it actually does have the weights shown and it wasn't until I stopped to pick it up that I realized that. Of course, I was committed by that point, and had to do it or face some humiliation. No my back did not break.



The classic stalwart F-16 fighter. This is a great plane that dates back to the 70s. Fantastic design that is still popular worldwide. A great aircraft back then and even today.



Keep smiling.

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