

**A VISUAL HISTORY OF AIR FORCE ONE**  
**PRESIDENTIAL AIR TRAVEL OVER THE PAST 100 YEARS**

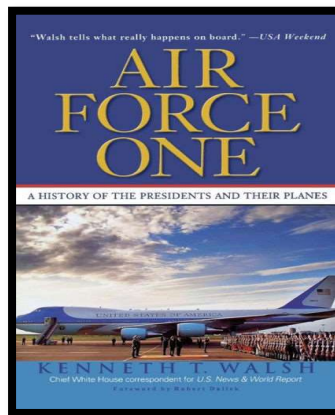
**322**



AIR FORCE ONE SEAL



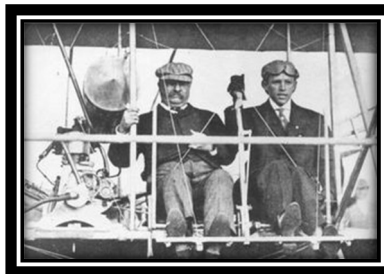
May 25, 2016



**A HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR PLANES**

**Air Force One isn't a specific plane, it's the air traffic control designation given to any Air Force aircraft with the President of the United States on board.** The designation was first used when an Eastern Airlines commercial flight entered the same airspace as a plane carrying President Eisenhower, and both planes had the same call sign.

Air Force One has been the designation for the president ever since but the history of Presidents on planes goes back a lot further than that.



*Theodore Roosevelt and pilot Arch Hoxsey before their flight, St. Louis, October 11, 1910.*

**Theodore Roosevelt (who else?) was the first president to fly in an aircraft. Or ex-president, rather.**

Roosevelt had already left office by the time he took to the skies in this Wright Flier—the very first heavier-than-air powered aircraft—on October 11, 1910. Archibald Hoxsey, who worked for the Wright brothers, had the honor of piloting the former president.

### THE PRESIDENT NEEDS A PLANE



*A U.S. Coast Guard Douglas RD-2 in June 1932.*

The Douglas Dolphin was the first aircraft specifically designated as a transport for the president. One of these amphibious planes was modified for President Franklin D. Roosevelt and designated RD-2 by the U.S. Navy. It remained at the ready from 1933 to 1939, though there is no evidence FDR flew in the plane.

### FDR GOES TO EUROPE



*A Boeing 314 Clipper in flight circa 1945.*

Still, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the first sitting president to fly. In 1943, a Boeing 314 Clipper flying boat named the Dixie Clipper carried him 5,500 miles in three legs to attend the Casablanca Conference where he met with Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle to discuss the next phase of World War II.



*President Franklin D. Roosevelt (right) sits next to Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, as they are en route, by plane, from Trinidad to Miami celebrating Roosevelt's 61st birthday, in late January 1943.*

Air travel was the preferred method of transatlantic transportation due to the ongoing threat of German submarines during the Battle of the Atlantic. It was at the Casablanca Conference that the Allies declared they would accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers.

## THE SACRED COW



*President Franklin D. Roosevelt's C-54 Skymaster aircraft, nicknamed the Sacred Cow.*

Toward the end of the War, the Secret Service outfitted a C-54 Skymaster for transporting the ailing FDR. Nicknamed the *Sacred Cow*, the C-54 had a radio telephone, a sleeping area, and even a retractable lift to hoist Roosevelt and his wheelchair into the plane. **President Roosevelt flew on the modified aircraft only once before his death.** The *Sacred Cow* transported him to the Yalta Conference in February 1945.

## THE INDEPENDENCE



*President Harry S. Truman's Douglas VC-118 Independence in flight, circa 1947.*

Harry S. Truman flew aboard the *Sacred Cow* after Roosevelt's death in April 1945—he was on the plane when he signed the National Security Act of 1947, which established the office of Secretary of Defense and created the U.S. Air Force as a distinct branch of the military (it was formerly the U.S. Army Air Forces).

Later that year, Truman replaced the *Sacred Cow* with a C-118 Liftmaster he named *Independence* after his hometown in Missouri. This was the first presidential transport aircraft with a unique exterior—the nose of the aircraft was painted with a bald eagle's head.



*President Harry S. Truman was on the steps of the Sacred Cow in Brussels on his way to Berlin, on July 17, 1945.*

### AIR FORCE ONE BECOMES THE PRESIDENTS PLANE

In 1953, Eastern Airlines commercial flight 8610 flew into the same airspace as a plane carrying President Dwight D. Eisenhower with the call sign Air Force 8610. To avoid future confusion, the Air Force established the unique air traffic control designation "Air Force One" for any aircraft carrying the President of the United States.

President Eisenhower introduced four propeller-driven aircraft to serve as presidential transports: two Lockheed C-121 Constellations nicknamed Columbine II and III, and two Aero Commander aircraft, the smallest planes to ever serve as Air Force One. The first official flight of Air Force One carried President Eisenhower in 1959.



*President Dwight D. Eisenhower waved to the crowd before entering Air Force One.*



*Columbine II, a Lockheed C-121 Constellation, took off from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base en route to receive restoration work in October 1990.*

### FIRST PRESIDENTIAL JET



*One of President Eisenhower's jet planes, a Boeing VC-137.*

Toward the end of the Eisenhower Administration, the Air Force decided that prop planes were just not going to cut it for the president anymore. Air Force One would henceforth be a jet aircraft.

SAM (Special Air Missions) 970, a Boeing 707, replaced President Eisenhower's C-121 Constellations in 1959. SAM 971 and 972 were added to the fleet shortly after.



*President Eisenhower being greeted by King Zahir of Afghanistan*

The VC-137, took Eisenhower on his 22,000-mile "Flight to Peace" goodwill tour when he visited 11 Asian nations over 19 days in December 1959. The jet made the trip in half the time that the Columbine aircraft would have.



*President Kennedy's SAM 970*



*SAM 26000, a Boeing VC-137C, at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.*

John F. Kennedy traveled in SAM 970, 971, and 972 on multiple occasions, but in October 1962, the U.S. Air Force purchased a long-range 707, the Boeing C-137 Stratoliner, to become the new presidential transport aircraft: SAM 26000. President Kennedy famously had the red and gold livery of the plane changed because he thought it looked too regal. The plane used a more modest polished aluminum design with blue and white instead, and aircraft designated for presidential use have mimicked the look ever since.





*President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jackie Kennedy greeting a crowd at Dallas Love Field, with Air Force One in the background, just hours before JFK's assassination, November 22, 1963.*

The most famous moment aboard SAM 26000 was Lyndon B. Johnson taking the oath of office after the assassination of President Kennedy, an event captured in this iconic photo.



*In the aftermath of the assassination of President Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson took the oath of office aboard Air Force One to become the 36th President of the United States.*

President Johnson used the plane for a trip to South Vietnam during the war, and President Nixon flew on SAM 26000 during his historic trip to China in 1972—the first time a U.S. president ever visited the People's Republic. SAM 26000 stayed in service until the Clinton administration, though the plane was replaced as the primary presidential aircraft by another VC-137, SAM 27000, in 1972 during the Nixon administration.



*Air Force One, carrying President Nixon, lands in Beijing with a Chinese Army honor guard to greet the president on February 21, 1972.*

In 1974, when Air Force One was flying President Nixon into Syria, two Syrian MiG fighter jets flew up to act as escorts. However, no one informed the pilot of Air Force One, and he immediately took evasive maneuvers including a dive that sent staffers on the aircraft sprawling. The U.S. Air Force alerted the pilot of Air Force One that the MiGs were escorts and not hostile interceptors shortly after the encounter.

Nixon boarded SAM 27000 shortly after resigning from the presidency. The pilot of the aircraft at the time, Colonel Ralph Albertazzie, was forced to contact air traffic control to report that the call sign for the plane had changed from Air Force One to SAM 27000, as Gerald Ford was sworn in as president with Nixon still in flight. According to the New York Times, Albertazzie radioed in while flying over Jefferson County, Missouri: "Kansas City, this was Air Force One. Will you change our call sign to SAM 27000?" Air traffic control responded: "Roger, SAM 27000. Good luck to the president."



*President Ronald Reagan throws a football toward the press on January 11, 1988, as he boards Air Force One in Cleveland, Ohio, to return to Washington DC.*

**SAM 27000 flew every subsequent President of the United States except for Barack Obama.** On August 29, 2001, it flew George W. Bush from San Antonio to Waco, Texas, for its final flight. The aircraft carrying the United States President isn't *always* referred to as Air Force One—specifically when it is not an aircraft operated by the Air Force. President Nixon is the only president to have flown on Executive One, the designation for a regularly scheduled civilian flight that has a sitting president on board. Nixon and his family flew on a United Airlines DC-10 from Washington Dulles International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport in December 1973 to "set an example for the rest of the nation during the current energy crisis," according to the administration.

#### **EXECUTIVE ONE, MARINE ONE, ARMY ONE AND NAVY ONE**



*President Gerald Ford, Senator Robert Dole, and Elizabeth Dole disembarked Marine One to attend a campaign rally in Kansas in 1976.*

Other branches of the armed forces get to transport the president from time to time as well. Helicopters operated by the U.S. Marine Corps receive the designation Marine One when they carry the POTUS. The Army assisted with helicopter transport for the president before 1976, using the rarely seen designation Army One. A Bell UH-13J Sioux was the first helicopter used to transport a sitting president when it flew President Eisenhower to his summer home in Pennsylvania in 1957.



*A U.S. Navy Lockheed S-3B Viking carrying President George W. Bush in the co-pilot seat lands aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003.*

The Navy first had the honor of flying the president, and of using the call sign Navy One, in May 2003. An S-3B Viking operated by the "Blue Wolves" of the VS-35 carrier squadron flew President George W. Bush to the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* off the coast of California, making him the first president to land on an aircraft carrier in a plane, requiring an arrested landing.

In a unique operation carried out in March 2000, President Clinton flew to Pakistan aboard an unmarked Gulfstream III that was not designated Air Force One. A C-17 Globemaster III used the call sign Air Force One, without the president on board, as it flew the same route a few minutes behind the Gulfstream III to act as a decoy.

#### THE BOEING 747



*SAM 28000, one of the two Boeing 747s used as Air Force One flew over Mount Rushmore in February 2001.*

The Air Force decided the president needed new planes to replace the aging 707s during the Reagan Administration, though the pair of 747s that replaced SAM 26000 and 27000 were not ready for service until George H. W. Bush took office. Production of the first Boeing 747-200B to serve as Air Force One was delayed so additional work could be done to protect the aircraft from the effects of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), either from a nuclear blast or as a direct attack on the plane's electronics.

The VC-25s—two 747s modified by the military for presidential transport—contain secure telephone and computer communications systems so the president can continue to conduct operations while in flight. The aircraft also has an office for the president, a conference room, and private quarters for the president and the first lady.





*President Barack Obama talks with his staff in the conference room of Air Force One during a flight from Prague, Czech Republic, en route to Ankara, Turkey, on April 5, 2009.*

Immediately after the attacks of 9/11, George W. Bush boarded SAM 28000 and took off from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport in Florida. An airliner neared Air Force One shortly after takeoff and ominously failed to respond to air traffic control's attempts to radio the plane (it turns out the plane's transponder was mistakenly switched off). Colonel Mark Tillman, the senior pilot of Air Force One at the time, took no chances and flew his aircraft over the Gulf of Mexico, requesting "fighters on the wing." The airliner did not follow Air Force One

The two VC-25s remain the primary aircraft for presidential transport to this day.

**The Air Force announced in January 2015 that the Boeing 747-8 will serve as the next presidential aircraft.** The new aircraft will have defenses against electromagnetic pulses, in-air refueling capabilities, and likely a sophisticated onboard missile defense system. It could be some time before the aircraft are ready to fly the president, however, and the VC-25s, though aging, will likely see plenty more use.

#### AIR FORCE ONE TODAY



Today, this name refers to one of two highly customized Boeing 747-200B series aircraft, which carry the tail **codes 28000 and 29000**. The Air Force designation for the aircraft is VC-25A. Air Force One is one of the most recognizable symbols of the presidency, spawning countless references not just in American culture but across the world. Emblazoned with the words "United States of America," the American flag, and the Seal of the President of the United States, it is an undeniable presence wherever it flies.

Capable of refueling midair, Air Force One has unlimited range and can carry the President wherever he needs to travel. The onboard electronics are hardened to protect against an electromagnetic pulse, and Air Force One is equipped with advanced secure communications equipment, allowing the aircraft to function as a mobile command center in the event of an attack on the United States.

Inside, the President and his travel companions enjoy **4,000 square feet of floor space** on three levels, including an extensive suite for the President that features a large office, lavatory, and conference room. **Air Force One includes a medical suite that can function as an operating room, and a doctor is permanently on board. The plane's two food preparation galleys can feed 100 people at a time.**

Air Force One also has quarters for those who accompany the President, including senior advisors, Secret Service officers, traveling press, and other guests. Several cargo planes typically fly ahead of Air Force One to provide the President with services needed in remote locations.

Air Force One is maintained and operated by the Presidential Airlift Group, part of the White House Military Office. The Airlift Group was founded in 1944 as the Presidential Pilot Office at the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. For the next 15 years, various propeller-driven aircraft served the President, until President Dwight D. Eisenhower flew to Europe aboard VC-137A, a Boeing 707 Stratoliner, in August 1959.

**In 1962, President John F. Kennedy became the first President to fly in a jet specifically built for presidential use** - a modified Boeing 707. Over the years, several other jet aircraft have been used, with the first of the current aircraft being delivered in 1990 during the administration of President George H. W. Bush.

#### **TRUMP UNVEILS NEW AIR FORCE ONE DESIGN PLANS**



**PROPOSED NEW AIR FORCE ONE  
OPERATIONAL TARGET DATE: 2024**



US President Donald Trump has revealed the renderings of the redesign of the presidential aircraft fleet, known as Air Force One.

The new design, which Mr. Trump showed in an ABC interview, trades in the iconic baby blue and white exterior for more patriotic colors.

"There's your new Air Force One," he said, holding up the drawings of the red, white, and blue planes.

The revamp would be the first since President John F Kennedy was in office.

Critics note a similarity between Mr Trump's private jet and the new aircraft design, which Mr Trump first announced last year.

The presidential fleet includes two identical jets, and whichever one the president is aboard is given the signal name Air Force One.

The current Boeing 747s have been in use for nearly three decades. The 4,000 sq/ft (1,220 sq/m) aircraft features three floors, armored windows, medical offices, and a kitchen that can feed 100 people at a time.

The two planes will also be Boeing 747s, which Mr Trump said he negotiated for a price tag of \$3.9bn (£3.1bn). They are due to be delivered in 2024 and may not be put into rotation until after Mr Trump leaves office.

Mr. Trump claims the new jets are much bigger and have "a much bigger wingspan" than the current models.

"I'm doing that for other presidents, not for me," he told ABC News host George Stephanopoulos.

The first Air Force One Jet, which was used by President Dwight Eisenhower starting in 1959, had a red and gold design.

President John F Kennedy changed the colors to baby blue and white, which is still used today.

Russia, China, and France also have presidential planes that are painted red, white, and blue.

#### AN ICON THAT ENDURES

By... Tara McKelvey, BBC Whitehouse Reporter

For decades, Air Force One has shuttled presidents abroad and at the same time acted as a sleek, elegant symbol of US political power. Mr Trump wanted to shake things up after his election, though, and tried to take control of the way that Air Force One was managed.

For aviation experts such as Richard Aboulafia, an analyst with the Teal Group in Fairfax, Virginia, this was a "terrifying" prospect. The president had no professional experience in aviation, and Mr Aboulafia thought that anything could happen.

Now Mr Trump has made his big announcement about a redesign: he says he wants to change the colors of Air Force One - from robin's-egg blue to red, white and blue (in a darker hue).

Some lawmakers are upset about the proposed color scheme. But aviation experts say they are glad the president is talking only about alterations in color and not about changes in its security mechanisms.

Aviation experts are not fazed by the possibility that Air Force One will be painted dark blue instead of light blue, pointing out that its essential character - its ability to transport the president safely - will stay the same. This means, as Mr. Aboulafia says, that Air Force One will remain a symbol of "the permanence and durability and survivability of a political system - regardless of who's at the helm".

#### CONGRESSIONAL TURBULENCE

The reveal comes after the House of Representatives Armed Service Committee considered an amendment to the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act that would require congressional approval for Mr Trump's planned changes to Air Force One's exterior and interior design.

Congressman Joe Courtney, a Democrat from Connecticut, introduced the legislation and argued it was an economic measure.

"Additional paint can add weight to the plane, additional fixtures inside can also add to the cost and delays to the delivery of the plane," he said on Wednesday.

Alabama Republican Bradley Byrne objected, saying the bill "looks like an attempt to just poke at the president".

It is unclear if Mr Courtney's proposed amendment will be included in the final version of the bill, which still needs approval from the full House.

#### NO POD

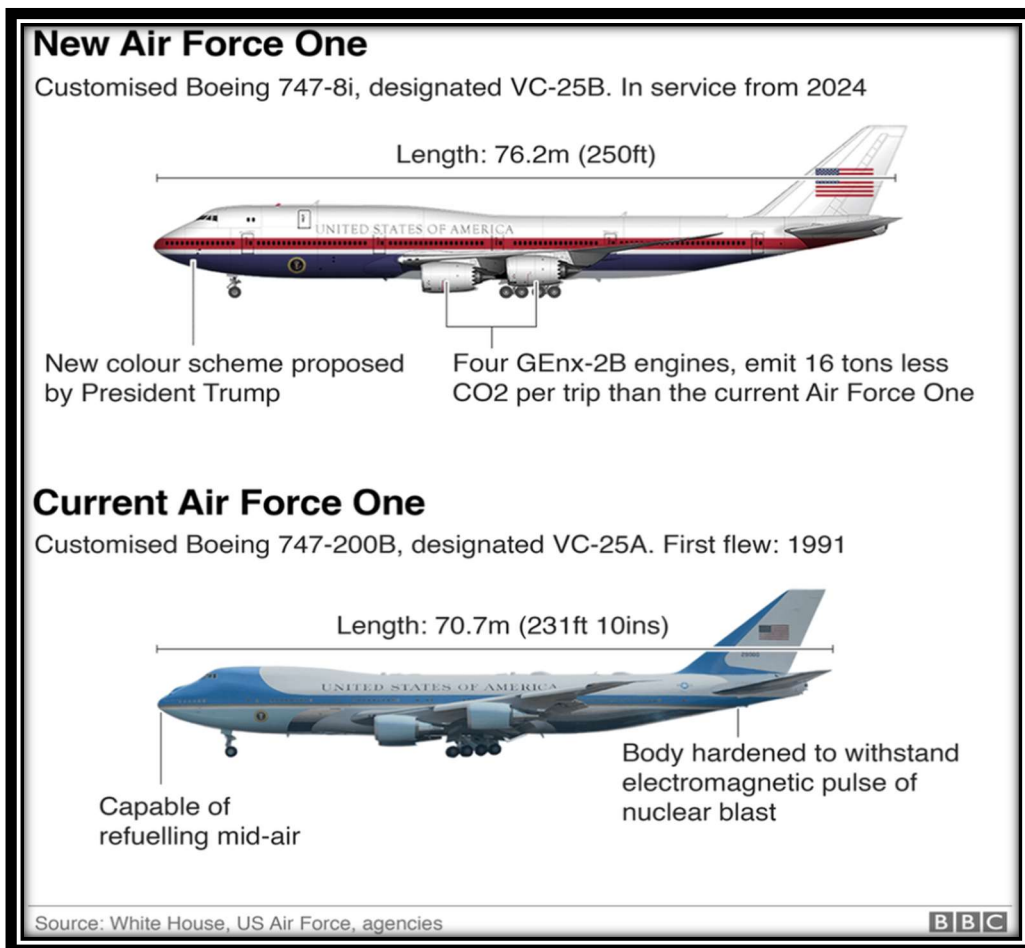
Asked by the interviewer if there was an emergency escape "pod" on board like in the Harrison Ford film Air Force One, Mr. Trump seemed puzzled.

"The famous pod that flies out of the back?" said Mr. Stephanopoulos after Mr Trump answered that he had seen the movie.

"Oh, I see," Mr Trump laughed. "But, yeah. No."

"There are a couple of secrets," he said, adding: "You know what, there are a couple of secrets I don't think we're supposed to be talking about."

***The proposed plans for the new AF One and the one it will replace.***



## NEW AIR FORCE ONE WILL REQUIRE A NEW \$250 MILLION HANGAR



*The Air Force One hangar seen here at Joint Base Andrews in Prince George's County needs to be replaced because it isn't big enough to accommodate the new modified Boeing 747-8.*

### KEY STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- President Donald Trump reached a deal in February with Boeing for two planes at \$3.9 billion.
- A new hangar is needed because the current facility isn't big enough to accommodate the new planes, which operate as a flying White House.
- The new hangar is designed to “evoke a sense of flight and stateliness through its use of materials, massing, and embellishments.”

It's not getting as much notice as the nearly \$4 billion program to develop and produce a new Air Force One, **but the Pentagon needs a contractor to build a \$250 million home for the new plane.**

A new hangar is needed because the current facility at Joint Base Andrews in Prince George's County isn't big enough to accommodate the modified Boeing 747-8, which must operate as a flying White House with 4,000 square feet of interior floor space, advanced communications systems and the ability to withstand not just a garden-variety attack but a nuclear blast.

President Trump reached a deal in February with Boeing (NYSE: BA) for two planes for \$3.9 billion.

The facility that will house the new Air Force One, while not (yet) subject to presidential tweets and cost criticisms, is a complex undertaking comprising 366,000 square feet for a two-bay general maintenance hangar, with a maximum height of 115 feet, a length of 660 feet, and a width of 575 feet. There are also roughly 60,000 square feet slated for administrative space and about 70,000 square feet of warehouse support areas.

The project, according to documents filed with the National Capital Planning Commission, **includes an aircraft access taxiway/parking apron, associated lighting, engine run-up pads, a hydrant refueling system with storage tanks, a surface parking lot with 217 employee spaces, access roads, perimeter security fencing, and landscaping.**

The new hangar is designed to “evoke a sense of flight and stateliness through its use of materials, massing, and embellishments,” according to the documents, and covers 100 acres, with 50 acres enclosed within the new facility's perimeter security fence line.



The NCPC, the federal government's planning agency for the National Capital Region, has already approved the preliminary site and building plans for the new hangar.

It's unclear when the hangar needs to be finished, though presumably, that would be anywhere from 2021 – when President Trump wants the new planes delivered – to 2024, the original timeline for delivery.

***The two 747s are in California now, CNN reported, and Boeing will be done upgrading the planes by 2021, but Air Force testing requirements could take an additional three years.***

The joint venture of architecture and engineering firms Frankfurt Short Bruza Associates (FSB) and Pond received a contract from the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Washington to design the hangar.

FSB will provide architect and engineer of record services for the aviation facility, while Pond will provide engineer of record services for all site, infrastructure, and fuel systems.

**NOTE:** ***The Pentagon has officially approved a new schedule for the next-generation Air Force One planes, with the government now projecting that Boeing will deliver the first new VC-25B aircraft by September 2026 at the earliest — a full two years behind its originally scheduled date.***

### **ORIGINAL AIR FORCE ONE RESTORED TO FLY AGAIN**

**LOST FOR DECADES THE ORIGINAL AIR FORCE ONE FINDS A PERMANENT HOME**  
**THE ONLY AIR FORCE ONE NOT ON DISPLAY**



It may seem hard to believe but there was once a time when the President of the United States did not have a personal aircraft included with the job. That all changed when in 1953 with the introduction of the first Air Force One a plane known as *Columbine II*. ***Now after being lost for decades, the original Presidential plane is back in action with a new life.***

The original Air Force One served President Eisenhower flying him over 50,000 miles while he was in office. After a few years, it was retired from the service of the President and was used as a crop duster. As the years went by Columbine II went into the boneyard and began to rust away but was discovered in 1989.



A few years ago Columbine II was nearly sold for scrap but through the efforts of the Smithsonian Institute as well as Dynamic Aviation and went through a major restoration process.

Now that the original Air Force One has been fixed up, it has flown to her permanent home in Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. After a rough patch, it is nice to see the original Air Force One getting the respect and admiration she deserves



Reclaiming and renovating vintage aircraft requires dedication, innovation, and perseverance.

That's the case when it comes to the restoration of Columbine II, a Lockheed VC-121A Constellation that this week flew cross-country to where it will be displayed. Considering this aircraft fading toward boneyard status, the fact that it could fly itself such a distance is a great accomplishment.

Karl Stoltzfus, founder of Dynamic Aviation, discovered "Connie" and made the decision the plane could be saved and made airworthy. Thanks to help from engineers and local volunteers in Arizona along with a group of workers led by Scott Glover from the Mid America Flight Museum in Mount Pleasant, Texas.

The Columbine II was the first aircraft to fly with the call sign Air Force One as it served to transport President Dwight D. Eisenhower after he took office in 1950. It is the only civilian-owned aircraft that was once part of the presidential fleet.

The Lockheed C-121 was the military version of the company's Constellation, which was built for civilian aviation. The four-engine plane with the unique "triple tail" design was the signature aircraft for TWA as civilian travel increased after World War II.

Wednesday, after a stop in Texas, Columbine II completed its journey from Arizona and landed at its new home at Dynamic Aviation in Bridgewater, Va.



*The Columbine stopped in Mount Pleasant, Texas on March 21, 2016, on its way to restoration.*

**COPY AND PASTE THE BELOW LINK INTO YOUR BROWSER TO VIEW THIS PLANE IN THE AIR**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=69&v=KFyq85TliUA&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=69&v=KFyq85TliUA&feature=emb_logo)**



Columbine II spread her elegant and graceful wings climbing back into the sky once again. A big thank you to the team at Dynamic Aviation for bringing her back to life, as well as Kevin for capturing her take-off.

**MISCELLANEOUS VIDEOS OF THE ORIGINAL AF ONE**  
**TO VIEW: Copy and paste the link into your browser.**

**FINDING THE PLANE (4:24)**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK5dck1qLaE>**

**WARM UP AND TAKE OFF (11:42)**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_A-jgZFyZ-A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_A-jgZFyZ-A)**

**ORIGINAL AF ONE FLIES AGAIN (40:50)**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Je7sTk1oQMs>**

## PICTURES OF THE RESTORED AIRCRAFT



### DISCLAIMER

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HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM WHAT APPEARS TO BE AUTHENTIC WEBSITES  
I CANNOT ENSURE THAT ALL THE DATA IN THIS ARTICLE IS ACCURATE AND CORRECT.