# History flies into town

## Wings of Freedom Tour stops at Downtown Greenville Airport

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A bit of history will come gliding into Greenville today when the Wings of Freedom Tour makes a three-day stop at Greenville Downtown Airport.

But this is no small bit of history; it's two massive World War II bombers and an accompanying fighter plane.

"By experiencing something like this, it brings folks closer to this history, gives folks a better sense of appreciation of what it must have been like," said Hunter Chaney, director of marketing for the Collings Foundation, which stages the Wings of Freedom Tour to encourage Americans to learn more about their heritage and history through direct partici-

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**YOU CAN GO**

- What: Wings of Freedom Tour
- When: 2-4:30 p.m. today, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, and 9 a.m.-noon Wednesday
- Where: Greenville Downtown Airport
- Cost: $12 for adults, $6 for children under 12; no charge for World War II veterans
- For more: 800-568-8924 or www.collingsfoundation.org



The B-24 Liberator is among World War II planes flying into Downtown Greenville Airport today for a three-day show.



Those who go for a flight in a B-17 can sit in the bombardier's position.

## FLY

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Landing on the tarmac this afternoon will be two heavy bombers — the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberator. Arriving along with them is a P-51 Mustang, a fighter plane that accompanied bombers to their targets and back to provide protection.

Bomber crews, Chaney said, called these planes their "little friends."

"These bombers were critically important to winning World War II," he said. "To fly in them and to tour through them, you're in a time capsule."

The B-24 and P-51 planes are the only ones of their type remaining in flying condition, Chaney said. The B-17 is one of 11 in the world still flying. All three have been restored to their original configurations.

"What folks see, what they touch and smell, is what an air crewman would have seen 65 years ago. It is a startling and unique experience in history," he said.

Tours through the aircraft will be available today through Wednesday. What will strike visitors first when they peek inside?

"They're not at all comfortable or spacious," Chaney said. "They're made for basically doing two things — dropping bombs and spraying a lot of lead at whatever it is that's trying to stop them."

For those whose feet itch to leave the ground, the Wings of Freedom Tour offers flights in all three planes. A half-hour flight in either bomber is $425. Whip through the skies in the Mustang for $2,200 for 30 minutes or $3,200 for an hour. For information or to make reservations, call 1-800-568-8924 or visit www.collingsfoundation.org.

Just want to see the giant beasts airborne? The best times to catch them taking off or landing will be around 1:30 p.m. today; 4:30 p.m. today or Tuesday; or 11:30 a.m. Wednesday.