

THE ALAMO LIAISON SQUADRON PRESENTS:

US LIAISON AIRCRAFT OF WWII

What are "Liaison" aircraft?

Liaison refers to a category of aircraft used by the US Army Air Forces during the Second World War. Some of the aircraft that fell under the "liaison" category were originally under the army's "Observation" designation before being re-labeled as liaison aircraft.

What did "Liaison" aircraft do?

Liaison aircraft served in a variety of roles including, but not limited to: Artillery observation, reconnaissance, aerial photography, medical evacuation, search and rescue, primary flight training, pilot proficiency, supply, and mail runs. Their pilots were heroic individuals who were often asked to fly these unarmed aircraft over the front lines well within range of enemy guns.

US combat liaison aircraft of World War Two:



Consolidated Vultee (Stinson) L-1 Vigilant

STINSON L-1 VIGILANT

The Stinson L-1 Vigilant was used throughout the world, seeing service in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Alaska. Its primary missions included supply, transportation, and medical evacuation jobs. The L-1 / O-49 was the largest "L-bird" used in World War Two. It was heavier and harder to service than the other "L-birds" and, as a result, was gradually phased out for the lighter aircraft that could be handled more easily by ground crews.



Aeronca L-3 "Grasshopper"

AERONCA L-3 GRASSHOPPER

The Aeronca L-3 Grasshopper was primarily used for stateside training purposes, but also saw service in North Africa, Italy, New Guinea, and the Philippine Islands. It was mostly used for artillery spotting missions with army units and also served with the Free French forces. Aeronca L-16s and the popular, enduring 7AC "Champ" are related aircraft with a common lineage.



Piper L-4 "Grasshopper"

PIPER L-4 CUB

The Piper L-4 Cub was a derivative of the famous J-3 Cub and was the US Army's favorite liaison aircraft. Numerous L-4s served in all major theaters transporting personnel, artillery spotting, delivering supplies, and serving all kinds of other so-called "minor" missions. It was the most widely produced "L-bird" of the war and could be operated from the roughest of conditions with relative ease.



Consolidated Vultee (Stinson) L-5 Sentinel

STINSON L-5 SENTINEL

The Stinson L-5 Sentinel was the US Army Air Force's favorite "L-bird" because it was faster than the other aircraft and could carry larger loads. It served in the artillery observation, communications, and transportation roles and earned its keep in the supply and medevac missions. Most US Army Air Force "Liaison Squadrons" used the L-5. The Stinson L-5 was built like a tank and was very versatile in the field.

THE "LIAISON PILOTS"

US liaison pilots were a special group of men. They were un-appreciated by almost everyone - except for the infantry and artillery units they operated with, the stranded soldiers they supplied with food, supplies, and ammunition, or the wounded soldier in desperate need of evacuation. Some of the Liaison pilots, often those chosen to lead the Liaison Squadrons, were regular US Army Air Force pilots. However, many of them were enlisted men trained to fly at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, or any of a number of other bases. They did not enjoy the same benefits as other US combat pilots, but were exposed to every bit as much danger. While the famous bomber and fighter pilots often slept in their beds in relative safety, the Liaison pilots often slept in tents right with the front line troops. Their aircraft were unarmed, primarily constructed of metal tubes, wood, and fabric. They operated at low speeds, low altitudes, and right over the front lines. The Alamo Liaison Squadron is dedicated to remembering these forgotten heroes.



ABOUT THE ALAMO LIAISON SQUADRON

In 1981 Bill Stratton, Hardy Cannon, and a group of men in San Antonio, Texas formed the "Alamo Liaison Group" (ALG). Under the tutelage of Cannon, a Master Mechanic, the ALG in 1982 completed restoration of a 1941 Stinson L-1, a 1941 Taylorcraft L-2, a 1942 Aeronca L-3B, a Piper L-4, a 1942 Stinson L-5, and a 1942 Interstate (L-8) S-1A. Throughout the years a number of other "L-birds" have operated in the squadron.

The ALG now operates under the name Alamo Liaison Squadron (ALS). Many of its members are professional San Antonio businessmen, pilots, and mechanics.

The organization is a fully qualified 501(c)3 corporation which derives its funding from member dues and contributions for aircraft maintenance, contributions from organizers of the events supported, and contributions from the general public, old airplane buffs, and visitors to Cannon Field. The contributions, which are all tax deductible, have come in many forms... as flyable or restorable aircraft, parts, and cash.

The ALS appears at airshows, parades, fairs, and other public gatherings to further our mission of keeping the memory alive of those forgotten heroes, the "Liaison Pilots." The Texas Historic Commission has designated the Alamo Liaison Squadron as a bona fide flying historical museum. The group seeks to perpetuate their memory in the hearts of the American people and the spirit in which these airplanes were flown in the defense of our country.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL "BLUEBONNET PICNIC" FLY-IN

The Alamo Liaison Squadron hosts an annual fly-in, picnic, and fundraiser in the spring. There is no charge for admission and there will be activities and entertainment for all. Traditionally we have flying contests, "L-bird" combat simulations, good food, and a great crowd. The Alamo Liaison Squadron hosts this event at beautiful Cannon Field, our home base, a grass strip located at the southwest corner of Loop 1604 and Applewhite Road just south of the Toyota plant.

Be sure to check out our website for updates and information about other upcoming events.

WWW.ALS-CANNONFIELD.COM