



NEWS RELEASE

Flight of Honor: Commemorating the 8th Air Force in Normandy

2025-06-10

Normandy recently welcomed the first-ever monument dedicated solely to the 8th Air Force. The sculptures, crafted in Boise, Idaho, crossed the trans-Atlantic in time for a dedication ceremony in France. The journey is a story of partnership and purpose. American Airlines Cargo proudly donated the air transportation needed to ensure the safe and timely arrival for the official unveiling.

The tribute includes four life-sized bronze sculptures representing iconic members of the unit: Staff Sgt. Maynard Smith, Col. Robert Rosenthal, Gen. James Doolittle and Col. Donald Blakeslee. These heroes were chosen for their extraordinary service and courage.

Last year, nearly 70 World War II veterans embarked on the journey of a lifetime to Normandy, France, thanks to American. Among them were the brave airmen from the 8th Air Force, the largest air unit in history and a vital force in securing Allied victory in Europe. They stood once more on the shores they helped liberate, this time as honored guests in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

Now, American is honored to help continue their legacy by again supporting a piece of history taking flight.

“When American’s Military and Veteran’s Initiatives team approached the Cargo team about transporting these four commemorative statues from Boise to Normandy, we knew immediately that this mission would be significant,” said Eric Mathieu, Director of Cargo Customer Experience. “Born and raised in France, now living in the U.S. as an American citizen, I felt incredibly fortunate to work for American and support an opportunity that so beautifully connects both nations.”



To further honor this legacy, American flew a World War II veteran to France for the ceremony and the 81st D-Day anniversary. This opportunity may be a final return to the beaches of Europe in remembrance of this historical moment that helped shape the future.

From providing a WWII hero with this meaningful experience to ensuring the monument was delivered with the utmost care, American is proud to support this mission and honor those who sacrificed so much during WWII.