

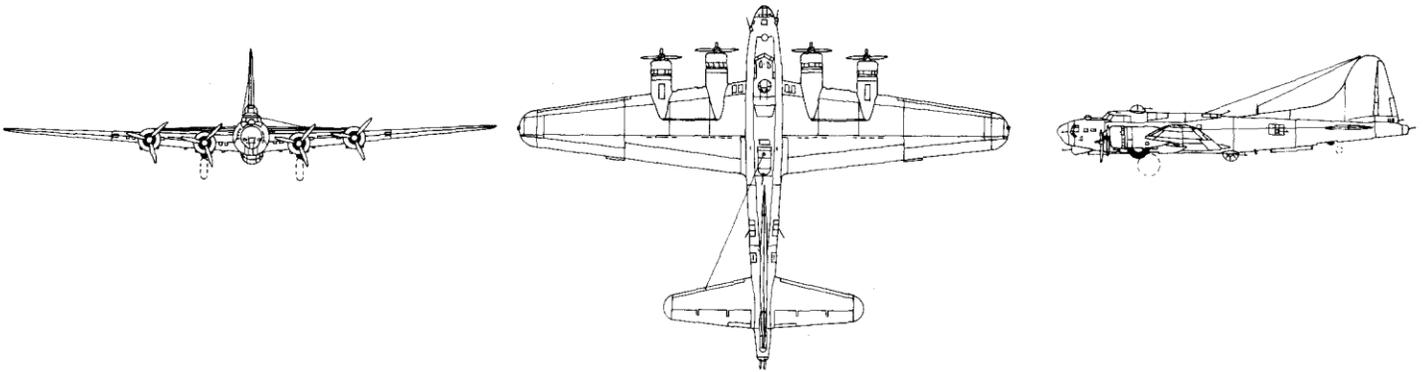
BOEING B-17 FLYING FORTRESS

The Heavy Bomber that Inspired Generations



Specifications

Wingspan	103 feet, 9.3 inches	Max Speed	250 mph
Length	74 feet, 9 inches	Service Ceiling	35,000 ft
Height	19 feet, 1 inch	Range	2,400 miles
Empty weight	36,135 pounds	Armament	13 M2 .50 cal. Browning Machine Guns
Max. weight	72,000 pounds	Crew	10
Powerplants	Four 1200 hp Wright R-1820-97 Engines		



Background

The most widely recognized and revered aircraft type of World War II, the B-17 Flying Fortress, takes to the skies again. The B-17G (Serial # 44-83575) has been returned to its wartime configuration under the auspices of the nonprofit Collings Foundation of Stow, MA and given the name "Nine-O-Nine".

The Collings Foundation's Flying Fortress was built at Long Beach, CA by the Douglas Aircraft Company and accepted on April 7, 1945. Although she was too late for combat, #44-83575 did serve as part of the Air/Sea 1st Rescue Squadron and later in the Military Air Transport Service.

In April 1952, #44-83575 was instrumented and subjected to the effects of three different nuclear explosions. After a thirteen-year "cool down" period, #44-83575 was sold as part of an 800-ton scrap pile and Aircraft Specialties Company began the restoration of the aircraft.

Damaged skin was fabricated and replaced on site; engines and props were stripped, cleaned, repaired, and tested; four thousand feet of new control cable was installed; all electrical wiring and instrumentation was replaced. As she neared completion, the jeers and laughter of those who said she would never fly again faded as the sounds of four 1200 HP Wright-Cyclone engines echoed across the desert and "Yucca Lady" rose as the phoenix and climbed into the sky.

For twenty years, without a major problem or incident, #44-83575 served as a fire bomber dropping water and borate on forest fires. She was sold in January 1986 to the Collings Foundation. Restored back to her original wartime configuration by Tom Reilly Vintage Aircraft, she represented one of the finest B-17 restorations and won several awards.

In August 1987, while performing at an airshow in western Pennsylvania, "Nine-O-Nine" was caught by a severe crosswind moments after touchdown. The right wing suddenly lifted in the air, finally coming down at the end of the runway. Despite the efforts of her crew, she rolled off the runway, crashed through a chain link fence, sheared off a power pole and roared down a 100-foot ravine to a thundering stop. The landing gear sheared off, the chin turret was smashed and pushed into the nose; the Plexiglas nose was shattered; bomb bay doors, fuselage, ball turret, wing and nacelles all took a tremendous beating. Engines and propellers were also torn from their mounts. Fortunately, there were no fatalities to the crew or riders.

For a second time, this B-17 "rose from the ashes". With nacelles from the famed B-17 "Shoo Shoo Baby", thousands of volunteer hours, support from the folks of Beaver Falls, PA, and donations from individuals and corporations, she was made whole again to carry on the proud and rugged heritage of the B-17.

Since the crash at Beaver Falls, the B-17 has succeeded in visiting over 2,800 tour stops. This means that millions, who would otherwise never seen the Flying Fortress, have been able to experience first hand the plane that helped change the history of the world fifty years ago.

The Collings Foundation B-17 was named "Nine-O-Nine" in honor of a 91st Bomb Group, 323rd Squadron plane of the same name which completed 140 missions without an abort or loss of a crewman.

The original "Nine-O-Nine" was assigned to combat on February 25, 1944. By April 1945, she had made eighteen trips to Berlin, dropped 562,000 pounds of bombs, and flown 1,129 hours. She had twenty-one engine changes, four wing panel changes, fifteen main gas tank changes, and 18 Tokyo tank changes (long-range fuel tanks). She also suffered from considerable flak damage.

After European hostilities ceased, "Nine-O-Nine", with her six hundred patched holes, flew back to the United States. While the rigors of war never stopped the historic "Nine-O-Nine", she succumbed at last to the scrappers guillotine, along with thousands of other proud aircraft.

The B-17 flies as part of the Wings of Freedom Tour, visiting over 110 cities nationwide annually with the B-24 Liberator and P-51 Mustang. To accomplish this, the Collings Foundation relies solely on contributions and donations to cover the operating cost of over four thousand dollars per flying hour. These contributions ensure the future of the aircraft and keep "Nine-O-Nine" flying, as a symbol of American patriotism and as a learning tool for our future generations to learn more about World War II and aviation history.

For More Information:

The Collings Foundation

P.O. Box 248

Stow, MA 01775

Tel: 978.562.9182

Fax: 978.568.8231

Email: info@collingsfoundation.org

Website: www.collingsfoundation.org