

Suncoast Air Center
Certificate of Recognition

The Collings Foundation is a non-profit, Educational Foundation (501c3), founded in 1979. The purpose of the Foundation is to organize and support “living history” events and the preservation, exhibition and interaction of historical artifacts that enable Americans to learn more about their heritage through direct participation. The original focus of the Foundation were transportation-related events such as antique car rallies, hill climbs, carriage and sleigh rides, and a winter ice-cutting festival in the Stow, MA area. During the mid-eighties, these activities were broadened to include aviation-related events such as air shows, barnstorming, historical reunions, and joint museum displays on a nationwide level.

Since 1989, a major focus of the Foundation has been the “Wings of Freedom Tour” of WWII aircraft. This tour displays two fully restored WWII bomber aircraft: a B-24 Liberator and a B-17 Flying Fortress, as well as, a WWII P-51C Mustang dual-control fighter aircraft.

The “Wings of Freedom Tour” has two goals: to honor the sacrifices made by our veterans, which allow us to enjoy our freedom; and to educate visitors, especially younger Americans, about our national history and heritage. The Foundation encourages people to tour the planes, talk to the veterans who come to visit the aircraft, and participate in a “flight experience”. Celebrating 26 years, the tour has made more than 3,000 visits to airports across the United States and Alaska. While the exact number of visitors is difficult to gauge, it is estimated that over 3.5 million people see these fully restored historic aircraft annually.

The “Wings of Freedom Tour” has made Venice a stop for almost 20 years and Collings Foundation officials have said that Venice is their most successful stop in Florida. This is made possible by the fact that Suncoast Air Center has been gracious enough to host the event for the eight years that they have been in business on the Airport. During the Collings Foundation visits, Suncoast allows the bombers to park on and operate from their ramp. This takes up quite a bit of ramp space and costs Suncoast a lot in terms of overtime staffing and a certain amount of lost business. However Suncoast, as the largest business on the airport, continues to serve the needs of the general aviation community coming into Venice and continues to host the event because it is in their words “good for the Airport and the City”.

It is with sincere appreciation that the City would like to present this certificate to Suncoast Air Center in recognition for all that they do to make this annual event such a large success.

February 20, 2018