

Air America Pilot... Almost

[Air America](#) was the covert air carrier employed by the [CIA](#) to insert US forces into places they weren't supposed to go. There are movies, books and countless conspiracy theories about Air America. One interesting thing about them is that they were going to hire Mike Dillon to fly for them. Well, that is until Mike's wife Carol accepted another job for him. While Mike was out [TWA](#) called his home, Carol answered, and when she heard that they wanted to give Mike a job flying commercial airliners she wholeheartedly accepted the job on his behalf.

Trans World Airlines (TWA) was one of the big four domestic airlines in America. Owned at one time by [Howard Hughes](#) the airline was known for pioneering the in-flight movie, innovative airport designs, and being the first to fly an all jet fleet. Mike Dillon flew for TWA for 13 years.

During what Mike described as "long, boring, commercial flights" he worked on ideas for enhancing and improving reloading machines. It was during these times that Mike developed ideas that lead him to begin building his own reloading machines. Mike and Carol worked together assembling these early machines in their homes garage. In 1977 he began Dillon Precision. Within 10 years Dillon Precision had become the worlds largest ammunition reloading machine company.

The photo below is of a Boeing 707 which Mike is piloting for TWA.

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Not one to stay bored for too long Mike also worked as an [aerial firefighter](#) spreading retardant to prevent forest fires. Below we have an image of a [B-26](#) dropping retardant. Mike isn't flying that plane but the photo, by Nyle Leatham, is part of his personal archives. Mike worked with those firefighters out of Safford Arizona.

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Next we have a great photo of Mike leaning against the front wheel of a [TBM Avenger](#) that he did fly while fighting fires. In the background you'll see the B-26 from the previous photo. It may not be the exotic adventure that Air America offered but Mike looks right at home.

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