

Hangar Digest

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APRIL 2003

From The Editor:

In this issue I have begun the series “Airlifts Remembered”, those sometimes long forgotten and little known tactical and humanitarian airlifts that may have gone unnoticed at the time and ended with little fanfare. However, as years passed, some now are recognized as having had a significant impact on foreign affairs and in some instances even altering the political and physical boundaries of some countries. To kick-off this series, I have chosen the Congo Airlift of 1960 to '64 which certainly aided in effecting one or more of these results.



The City of Dover, Kent County Tourism, the AMC Museum and Dover Air Force Base will be hosting the “Salute to Troop Carrier” reunion, honoring the World War II airlift veterans. Read more on this in “From the Director”.

Several recipients of the Hangar Digest have been dropped from our mailing list by failing to renew their memberships or not responding to the membership application included in gratis copies. When you receive notice that your membership is due to expire, please don't hesitate to send in your tax deductible contribution that benefits our many ongoing educational, aircraft restoration and preservations programs. We appreciate all financial support, whether large or small.

Harry E. Heist, Editor

From the Director

Good News—the contractor has broken ground for the first phase of our expanded aircraft parking area. The timing is crucial as we are losing some of our existing ramp space to the new base perimeter road. As soon as the new pad is completed we will have room to park the KC-97, C-121 and the C-124. It will be tight but adequate. Our future plans call for paving an additional area on the far side of the existing ramp. One option is to cover that area with pierced steel (Continued on the following page)

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LOOKING BACK

The new huge C-133 Cargomaster turbo-prop transport is due to replace the C-74 Globemaster I when it becomes available.

Deliveries of the C-133 to the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) are expected in the fall of 1956.

The MATS C-74s will be turned over to the Air Material Command for extensive modernization including the installation of communications, navigation equipment and engine analyzers.

Source: The MATS Flyer, September 1955.

From The Director (Cont.)

planking “PSP” that would be laid over a gravel base. This would be appropriate especially for our Vietnam era aircraft as numerous aircraft facilities in Southeast Asia were constructed using the same material.

The museum’s fence is going up! It will eventually be over a mile long and enclose the museum complex. For now only those sections of the fence not interfering with the road’s construction are being installed.

We were fortunate to have SSgt. Tom Sylvester of the 512th Airlift Wing with us for the past month or so working on the C-121 “Connie”. Tom is “in-training” as a sheet metal technician. Until he was recently activated he made new fuselage stiffeners to replace those that were damaged during the aircraft’s move from Pennsylvania to Dover. Most of the cargo compartment’s decking must be replaced and Tom was hard at work removing the ruined pieces and making patterns for the new.

You may remember that we have had a 1956 International Harvester fire truck at the museum for over ten years. During most of that time it has been parked outside, exposed to the elements, so it was long over due for a paint job. The local Maaco shop did an excellent job of returning it to its original paint scheme. As soon as we place the correct 1950s vintage markings on it we will put it in its new home — inside of the C-133. We will be accomplishing three things: keeping it out of the weather, placing ballast on the aircraft and giving our visitors a true perspective of the cavernous interior of the C-133.

Sometime this year the AH-1 and the OH-58 helicopters will be leaving. They were not really part of the museum’s collection as they were loadmaster training aids and haven’t been used for that purpose in several years. They do not fit our mission and were beginning to look rather bedraggled. Since we have no reason to spend the funds to preserve them; it is time to find them a new home.

Worldwide Aircraft has done some preliminary work on the preparation of the C-124. If schedules permit, we should see some fuselage parts arriving later this summer.

Bill Hardie has renovated the museum’s store. He has installed new slat-wall fixtures that better highlight his inventory. New items have also been added, stop by and check out his selection.

Bethany Hacker, our publicist, has overhauled our web site. You will find that it is now easier to navigate and has a fresher look. E-mail Bethany if you have any comments or suggestions. Log on to: www.amcmuseum.org.

Don’t forget the National Troop Carrier Reunion “Salute to Troop Carrier” to be held here in Dover from the 27th through the 30th of April 2003. If you desire to participate, check out our web site for the schedule of events and the registration form. I am pleased to announce that celebrated author and historian Walter Boyne will serve as panel moderator for the D-Day seminar.

Aim High by: Jim Leech

My article for this issue is more on the personal side but I trust you will find it entertaining. It all started last fall when my youngest son Jonathan made a decision that makes me proud. With one year of college behind him, Jon recognized that he didn’t have much direction in his life. College seemed the natural course to take following high school but it didn’t fit as well as he wanted. So he took a look at his situation, aimed high, and joined the Air Force!

Jon entered into the delayed enlistment program in September. He wanted the computer field and since we all know that the military offers “NO” guarantees, he decided to steer in that direction anyway. His reporting date for basic training was 5 February, almost six months away. I thought it a bit long to wait for a young energetic person like Jon; so, I used what little influence I’d like to think that I possess and made a few inquiries to the personnel center at Randolph AFB. The next thing I know, the head man at the recruiting center not only answered my e-mail but called Jon and talked to him for about 20 minutes. In the course of that phone call, the good colonel was able to move Jon’s reporting date up to December 29th and secure a “guaranteed” slot in the career field of his choice. That’s the background now here’s the story.....

(Continued on the following page)

Aim High (Cont.)

He departed Dover for the recruiter's office on the afternoon of the 29th, destination Baltimore and the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). There he and many other inductees were to spend the night and finish their processing the following day and ship out that afternoon. He called me from BWI on Monday afternoon to inform me that his group, (they placed him in charge of a portion of the basic bound group), was all present and accounted for and was going to board a plane for Dallas at 4:30 that afternoon. At 6 pm Jon called. After sitting on the plane for almost 20 minutes, the flight attendant announced that "everyone has to disembark." Reason, the pilot failed to show up for the flight! Jon told me that a "big cheese" inductee who had been anointed overseer of the entire group was in a long line trying to make arrangements for another flight. I asked Jon what the MEPS people there were doing and he told me that they dropped the group off and left. I asked him if he or anyone else called the center for assistance and he said that he called and was told to make any arrangements that they could as they were now on their own. My, how times have changed! Jon didn't wait for the "cheese". I gave him the 800 number for the airlines and he coordinated another flight for 10 pm that night for Dallas and a connecting flight to San Antonio the next day. He also told me that he arranged for hotel rooms in Dallas reminding the airline that it was "ON THEM" since they were the reason their initial flight had to be cancelled. On to Dallas.

Tuesday morning... Jon called me from the airport in San Antonio. Late Monday night they had all arrived in Dallas and the shuttles carted them off to the Embassy Suites, courtesy the airline. Jon left wake-up calls for all the rooms in order to make the connecting flight to San Antonio. The "cheese" exercised his power and decided to hold all of the tickets for the entire group and since Jon wasn't quite ready to buck authority, he went along. Jon couldn't believe it when he woke up only to find that his room was the only one NOT to receive a wake-up call. Everyone else was already at the airport boarding the airplane. Jon got the hotel to rush him and his roommate to the airport but they had missed the flight. They later found out that the group tried in vain to convince the big boss to wait but rank rules and he made the decision to leave them behind—but not their tickets. Jon arrived at the airport in time to watch their plane depart the terminal. He asked the gate attendant if it was possible to have the plane return to the gate so they could board and he was told no! However, the airline stepped up to the plate and immediately got Jon and his new friend on another plane and they arrived in San Antonio very shortly after the main group.

Basic training went well for Jon and by print time he'll be almost finished with tech school at Keesler AFB. Whoever said that you can't get there from here obviously didn't have my son for a travel partner. AIM HIGH!

Meet Museum Volunteer Dick Caldwell



Dick is the museum's education specialist and has logged over 3,000 volunteer hours in the past five years.

He is responsible for designing tour packages for school groups, he has edited the manual used by the tour guides, has completed various research projects and is instrumental in exhibit design and construction. He also doubles as a tour guide and guest speaker for various service organizations. He is an Army veteran of the Korean War.

He and his wife Janice, the museum's volunteer coordinator, reside in Milford, Delaware where he began his 36-year teaching career ending with a 20-year stint as Director of Teacher Training at Delaware State College.

His free time is dedicated to the First State Harmonizers Barbershop Chorus and to his local fire company as chaplain, fire policeman and archivist.

Airlifts Remembered: The Congo Airlift (Jul 1960-Jan 1964)

THE BACKGROUND: In 1960 the Belgian Congo was a colony in West Central Africa belonging to Belgium and surrounded by Angola, the Middle Congo and the Central African Republic (both originally part of French Equatorial Africa), the Sudan, Uganda, Ruanda-Urundi, Tanganyika, Rhodesia and the Atlantic Ocean. The government was by a Governor General, the capitol was Leopoldville and the colony's area was 942,000 square miles with a population of 14 million.

In the 1950s, many of the colony's black inhabitants began calling for independence. In 1957 Belgium allowed them to elect their own representatives to local government councils but their demand for independence continued. In 1959 rioting broke out against the Belgian rule and on June 30, 1960 Belgium granted the colony independence. The new country was called Congo.

In Congo's first general elections, held about a month before independence, nine parties won seats in the national legislature. No one party had a majority. This splitting of the votes weakened the power and unity of the Congo's government. In compromise on the eve of independence, two opposing leaders agreed to share power; Joseph Kasavubu became president and Patrice Lumumba became Prime Minister. Joseph Desire Mobutu was named Secretary of State for National Defense.

Civil disorder broke out following independence. Belgian officers still held power in the Congo's Army and many Belgians retained important posts in the government. Five days after independence, Congolese Army troops near Leopoldville revolted against their Belgian officers. The revolt quickly spread throughout the country causing most Belgian government workers to flee.

The Belgians, however, maintained their bases in the south in order to protect their considerable financial interests in the Katanga Province where the British, French and South Africans also had substantial holdings. A Congolese Army (ANC) revolt in Elizabethville, the province's capitol, was put down by the Belgians on July 9th. On the 10th, at the request of the province's leader Moise Tshombe, a Belgian parachute company was dropped into the province to restore order. On the following day, with the full support of the Belgian government, Tshombe announced the secession of Katanga from the Congo and began to hire white mercenaries to lead his militia. Patrice Lumumba recognized his inability to control events and sought help from the United Nations. On July 14th the United Nations Security Council authorized UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold to send a military force to the Congo. The United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain would provide the airlift.

Less than 48 hours later, the United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE) and the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) started what would become the largest airlift since the Berlin blockade. Even today, this airlift first called Operation "Safari" and Later Operation "New Tape" still stands as one of the United State Air Force's greatest peacetime accomplishments.

THE AIRLIFT: Africa is a land of sharp physical contrasts. Aircrews found themselves in harsh unfamiliar environments from the Ethiopian highlands, where major airfields usually were located at 7,000 foot altitudes, to the immense Sahara Desert with sandstorms and runway temperatures of 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Sabena Airlines of Belgium operated an extensive air network in the Congo; however, the overall African airlift route system stretching from Tripoli, Libya in the north to Dakar, Senegal in the west and Dar Es Salaam, Tanganyika in the east presented the USAF with numerous difficulties. The most serious of which concerned navigational aids.

Many flight legs were more than 1,500 miles long. Maps initially supplied to the aircrews showed mountains where there were no mountains and marked others in the wrong places. Apart from flying into unknown territory, the USAF crews usually had to operate only with the assistance of radio beacons which were frequently off the air. Celestial navigation over the Sahara was hampered due to blowing sand reaching the aircraft's flight level. Air to ground radio service was generally substandard and to make matters worse, tower

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Airlifts Remembered (Cont.)

and approach facilities were available during daylight hours only.

Unlike the Berlin Airlift, Operation New Tape required C-124 Globemaster and C-130 Hercules' launches from several points throughout the world into numerous terminals within Africa. UN soldiers from countries including Sweden, Ireland, Ethiopia, India, Morocco and Pakistan had to be transported quickly and safely to the African heartland.

Many of these troops were unfamiliar with modern air transport and most were leaving home for the first time. Apart from the language barrier, almost all of them presented racial and cultural problems sometimes outpaced by US Air Force policy and planning which was normally available for airlift support operations. Sanitary conditions became a matter of grave concern. UN soldiers from the African countries were entirely unfamiliar with in-flight lavatory conveniences. Disinfecting the aircraft at the end of a long flight became the unpleasant task performed by the aircrew.

To better illustrate Operation New Tape, lets go through a typical C-124 Globemaster mission to the Congo—Trip Number 227:

This particular mission involved the airlift of Pakistani troops and their equipment from Karachi to Leopoldville. First it was necessary to obtain diplomatic clearance to over-fly and transient various countries en-route. A support team was deployed to Karachi which, with teams already in place at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; Khartoum, Sudan and Leopoldville, handled the ground support function for the mission. The plan called for the aircraft to depart Chateauroux Air Base, France as to arrive at Karachi at a specific time to meet the UN requirements. Leaving Chateauroux, the crew flew for 14 hours direct to Dhahran where they crew rested for 15 hours. The next leg, 9 hours duration, took them to Karachi. The Pakistani troops, wearing berets and field packs, boarded the airplane with carbines and automatic weapons and with gear necessary for the long stay they would have in the Congo. After a three hour ground time, Trip Number 227 was again airborne with its contingent of passengers heading back to Dhahran for crew rest and aircraft servicing.

The next segment of the flight, Dhahran to Khartoum, took seven hours. At Khartoum the plane spent minimum ground time for inspection and servicing. Nine hours after leaving Khartoum the airplane arrived at Leopoldville where the Pakistani troops and their gear were offloaded.

The crew spent its crew rest at Lovanium University in Leopoldville in dormitories vacated by the Belgian students and professors when they fled the country following its independence.

With Leopoldville now behind them their next stop is Kano, Nigeria for a minimum ground time refueling stop. The town of Kano is hundreds of years old and is surrounded by a wall 40 feet thick and in some places 50 feet high. Kano had always been a big trading center and a junction point for the old caravan routes.

After twelve more hours in the air, with a refueling stop at Wheelus Air Base in Libya, the crew was back in Chateauroux having traveled more than 13,000 miles and logging 57 flying hours with an elapsed time of six days. Congo Trip Number 227 was now over.

The positioning of the initial cadres of UN troops and equipment was accomplished by September 1960 and operations decreased. During the next year the Congo Airlift was handled almost solely by the 15th, 20th and 31st Air Transport Squadrons of the 1607th Air Transport Wing (Dover AFB), assigned temporary duty with the Provisional Squadron at Chateauroux, France. In September 1961, operational control reverted back to MATS and USAFE and the provisional squadron was disbanded. All aircraft would now be scheduled from their home bases and the first such mission departed Dover on October 12, 1961.

Virtually all airlift was provided by the C-124 up until the end of 1961, when the Naval Transport Wing at McGuire AFB, New Jersey entered the operation with their C-118s. Other aircraft types entered New Tape as requirements dictated and facilities became available. On January 10, 1962, a cargo mission requirement sent
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Airlifts Remembered (Cont.)

five C-133 Cargomasters to Stockholm, Sweden and then on to Leopoldville.

In 1962, the UN requested the use of the C-135 Stratolifter jet aircraft to be used in troop rotation. On October 10, 1962 a MATS C-135 departed Stockholm on its first Congo airlift mission. The flight stopped at Wheelus Air Base on the south bound leg; future stops were found to be unnecessary due to the aircraft's extended range. Several days and up to 30 hours of flying time were cut off of this 5,000 mile trip. One C-135 returned to McGuire AFB nonstop from Leopoldville setting a new un-refueled distance record.

There was a marked increase in MATS activities in April 1963 with a general reduction of UN forces in the Congo. Eighty eight MATS aircraft were involved with the C-130Es being used for the first time in the operation. These C-130s and the C-135s were used for the long distance flights whereas the C-124s shuttled troops and equipment to the on-load stations.

In late December 1963 MATS crews began the roll-up of Operation New Tape. On January 3, 1964, a C-135 departed Leopoldville and onboard were Indian troops returning to Bombay. This mission concluded 3½ years of MATS' participation in Operation New Tape.

EPILOGUE: During the airlift, MATS transports flew 2,310 missions, airlifting 63,884 personnel plus 37,202,000 pounds of cargo from 33 different countries. In so doing, the aircraft and crews covered 25½ million miles along some of the world's most isolated air routes.

Sources: *The AMC Museum; 436th Airlift Wing; Airman Magazine, Jan 1961; Airlift, Summer 1987; Air University Quarterly Review, Summer 1961; The MATS Flyer, Jan 1965.*

Abandoning the Congo by: Col. David M. "Mike" Sibbald, USAFR (Ret)

In 1963 the UN, giving up on what it correctly perceived to be a bad job, decided to remove all of its foreign peace-keepers from the former Belgian Congo. We were invited to participate. Upon receiving the call, our smoothly functioning, highly coordinated and totally standardized segment of Dover's aerospace team climbed into our C-124 and leapt into the air and headed for the Heart of Darkness.

Our mission was to establish ourselves in Entebbe, Uganda (pre Idi Amin) and then airlift the Ethiopian troops from Stanleyville, Congo back to Addis Ababa. No one knew how many troops there were in S'ville so we planned to fly a full load each day until S'ville was evacuated. From Dover it took us five days to get there via Goose Bay, Newfoundland, Mildenhall AB, England, Wheelus AB, Libya and Khartoum the Sudan. Needless to say, on crew resting at Wheelus we stocked up on the essentials: cigarettes, assorted beverages, Oreos and the old MATS standby, the Beanie-Weenie. Whatever the Dark Continent held for us, we were assured of a balanced diet.

In Entebbe we were billeted in the Lake Victoria Hotel, a class act right on the shores of the famous lake (and source of the Nile for you Jeopardy fans). Up and about at the crack of dawn, we'd rumble over to S'ville, fill the airplane with Ethiopians and head for Addis. If we did everything right, we'd discharge the Ethiopians and make it back to Entebbe in time for afternoon tea on the verandah. Very civilized we were. Flying under visual flight rules (Air Traffic Control was essentially non-existent) we saw some of the most spectacular scenery our planet affords. A crucial navigational beacon, Lake Awasu between S'ville and Addis, was never on the air. We'd requested its activation coming thru Wheelus and every day as we left Entebbe we'd ask again. No joy. Finally we located the village and spotted the antenna and the shack which housed the generator. We enthusiastically buzzed the village and even dropped a note. Fat chance. It finally came on the air the day we left for home and we later learned that to turn it on a soldier was dispatched from Addis on a 9-day trek mounted on a donkey.

(Continued on the following page)

Abandoning the Congo (Cont.)

One day the weather went sour on us and we had to fly under instrument flight rules. That was then we discovered the minimum enroute altitude, not to collide with the scenery, was 16,000 feet. We wondered about the genius of the individual who sent an un-pressurized Old Shaky to haul passengers at 16,000 feet. In clear violation of Air Force regulations, we went anyway. The flight engineer pushed up the throttles on those big engines and up she went. The crew was on oxygen of course but all the guys in the back went to sleep for an hour and woke up with a headache. We were running late that day and while we were working the tower, maneuvering for landing and in the clouds, the clock struck 5PM and the locals turned off the tower and the approach beacon and they all went home. That's what they did every day. Why do it differently today? We continued our approach by guess and by Gadfry as the radio compass needles spun aimlessly. We broke out at about 1,000 feet and landed.

Several times we got stuck with weather or maintenance problems and spent the night in S'ville or Addis. We slept in the airplane at both places but made it downtown once in Addis. We saw Haile Selassie's palace with lions loose in the garden. After the sun went down the airfield was infested with bad-looking laughing hyenas so we'd button up tightly before hitting the sack.

We made a total of four airlift missions and when we'd removed everyone, including the Indian tower operators, we headed home. At Wheelus the flaps failed to extend and we had a three-day delay and a test hop before pressing on. We arrived at Mildenhall, England having exceeded our flying time limits. The MATS duty officer offered to get us a waiver so we could press on. We all collapsed in hysterical laughter and when we recovered headed for London.

Some interesting numbers/facts: ●It took five days to get into position and we were in-country for 20 days and moved 400 troops. ●It took 11 days to get home due to maintenance and excessive flying hours. ●We wore civvies so no one would know we were Americans (of course the airplane had the Stars & Stripes on the tail and "U.S. Air Force" in three foot letters on the nose). ●We were totally out of touch with the MATS tracking system (which wasn't that hot anyway) and we were not once able to raise any military high frequency (HF) station. ●Every few days the U.S. Embassy would send a minion out to check on us. "MATS says you guys are in big trouble and wants to know what you are doing." We gave him our movement reports and said send them to MATS. Did they ever get there?

Years later when I was an Air Force Reserve and TWA pilot, I was summoned to the Dover Airlift Command Post late one night where some guys claiming to be from the Defense Intelligence Agency swore me to secrecy and quizzed me about the layout of the Entebbe passenger terminal. Twenty hours later Israeli Commandos stormed the terminal where passengers from a hijacked EL AL plane were being held. I'm still waiting for that Israeli medal.

Col. Sibbald was editor of the MAC Flyer from 1966 to 1967.

Not all Congo missions are fondly remembered as that of Colonel Sibbald's. On August 27, 1960 a C-124 crew from Dover AFB landed at Stanleyville. Prior to the landing, the crew had been warned that a huge crowd had gathered in preparation of a visit by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The landing and taxi in were uneventful and the aircraft commander and navigator proceeded to file a flight plan for the next leg of their flight. After the aircraft was unloaded, a few Congolese soldiers asked the crew if they could look around the aircraft and permission was granted. A short while later the soldiers ordered the crew members off of the airplane at gun point. Once outside the aircraft the soldiers and the civilians, already restless after a three hour wait for Lumumba, pounced on the defenseless men kicking and beating them with rifle butts and clubs. Some of the crew were taken to a prison compound at gun point and later were released. All crew members were eventually hospitalized. As a result of their wounds and their courage all received the Air Force Commendation Medal and three received the Purple Heart.

Congo Crew Sets Flying Hour Mark

During the 3½ years of Operation New Tape, MATS crews logged in excess of 100,000 flying hours. Due to the initial requirement to move large numbers of troops and equipment from various locations, flying hours were established quickly. The first 20,000 hour mark was accomplished six months into the airlift, on 15 January 1961, by a C-124 Globemaster flight from the Congo to Dublin, Ireland. The crew was returning members of the 32nd Irish Infantry Battalion from a six month stay in Kamina. Upon their return to France they received a personal “well done” from the MATS vice commander at Chateauroux. All the crew were members of the 15th Air Transport Squadron assigned to Dover AFB, Delaware.



Photo courtesy of Donald Wolpert

The Irish Times of 16 January 1961 reported: *More than 400 men arrived home yesterday. An excited crowd of thousands of relatives, friends and members of the general public lined the balconies at Dublin Airport and other vantage points as the first of the large orange, black and silver Globemasters circled the airport and touched down shortly before 3 pm. From lunchtime onwards thousands of cars converged on the airport and people arriving at 2.15 pm could see one of the now familiar troop carriers circling the airport. However, it did not land until the pre-arranged time so that sight-seers would not be disappointed. The newspaper further reported: While the jaws of the giant plane slowly opened, ramps were lowered. Out came the tan men, carrying an assortment of souvenirs such as elephant tusks and bows and arrows.*

Pictured right to left: Lt. Merlin Smith, Lt. Donald Wolpert, Lt. William Brown, Capt. Thomas Dietrich, Lt. Brian O'Leary, Sgt. Leon Wise, Sgt. William Harper, Amn. Thomas Davis and Maj. Gen. Raymond Reeves.

A special thanks to Mr. R. Flynn of Dublin for the Irish Times report.

A Couple of Congo Moments from the Editor

When the MATS aircrews became participants in the airlift, the Belgian civilians were still fleeing the country with little more than what they had on their backs. I remember our first crew rest in Leopoldville where we were put up in a vacated private villa which was owned by a Belgian family. Their Volkswagen was parked in the carport, there were dirty dishes in the kitchen sink, the refrigerator had food and drink in it and the one thing that still stands out in my mind was a crib in a child's bedroom that still contained the rumpled bed linens and toys. We stayed in the villa overnight sleeping on the sofa and chairs and enjoying a cold Gulder Biere from the absent host's refrigerator.

and

In 1959, Senegal and the French Sudan formed the Federation of Mali. In 1960 Senegal seceded from the Federation and our crew was in Dakar, the capital, the day this took place. At Dakar we slept in the airplane, like many Congo stops along the way, and we were wakened to find that our airplane was surrounded and protected by armed Senegalese troops. As a result of the secession all communications had been cut-off to the American Embassy and we had the only radios that could transmit out of the country to inform the U.S. of the situation. After the Embassy established contact we were then cleared to go on our way.

“The Hall of Heroes”

On August 15, 1944 the invasion of France began. Sergeant James O’Connor led his platoon through entrenched positions to clear enemy resistance. When he was seriously wounded by a mine, he refused treatment and instead carried his platoon across several thousand yards of mine saturated beach and through intense fire from mortars, flak guns, machine guns and snipers. He was again hit but yet continued to lead his platoon through enemy concentrations. A machine gun opened up hitting him in both legs, totally immobilizing him. From his prone position he continued to lead his unit until they achieved their objective. For his heroic actions he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman.

During his meeting with the President, Germany had just surrendered. President Truman is said to have said “You know why they surrendered? Because I threatened to send Jim O’Connor back to Europe.”

Sergeant O’Connor, who died in 1994, was one of Delaware’s fourteen Medal of Honor recipients. He was recently recognized at the AMC Museum with a gathering of about fifty family members and friends. The museum’s collection includes his dog tags, MOH certificate and his key to the City of Wilmington, Del.

Dover Air Force Base will soon name fourteen entry control points after Delaware’s Medal of Honor recipients—including Sergeant O’Connor.

Photo: Sgt. O’Connor (left) being congratulated by Lt.Gen. Alexander Patch, Commander 7th Army.



Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: Douglas C-54 “Skymaster”

Responding to the request of five major US airlines, Douglas designed and built the large 52-passenger DC-4, which made its first flight on 7 June 1938. This aircraft was not put into production; instead, a smaller version was ordered by American, Eastern and United Air Lines. This too bore the designation DC-4. This new aircraft flew for the first time on 14 February 1942, by which time the US was at war and all 24 aircraft, built to date, were taken over by the armed forces and given the designation the C-54A Skymaster.

A total of 207 C-54As were built, followed by the increased-capacity C-54B, similar C-54Ds, C-54Es and C-54Gs. Nine hundred and fifty-two Skymasters were produced for the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) and 211 for the US Navy which were designated the R5D.

Used in all theatres of the war, none achieved a more impressive record than those operated by the USAAF’s Air Transport Command (ATC). Assigned to ATC, the C-54 established the first regular transport service across the North Atlantic averaging, at one time, 20 double-crossings per day.

During Operation Vittles, commonly known as the Berlin Airlift, nearly every C-54 in the inventory flew round-the-clock missions carrying food, flour, coal and other essentials into the besieged city.

The museum’s C-54 began its life as a C-54E and was delivered to the USAAF on 30 January 1945. The aircraft initially flew with the Pacific Division of the Air Transport Command. In 1948 it was designated a C-54M, one of 38 E-models to be modified to carry coal during the Berlin Airlift. Later, it changed hands frequently, until dropped from the Air Force inventory in September 1973. This aircraft is the last remaining C-54 model “M”.

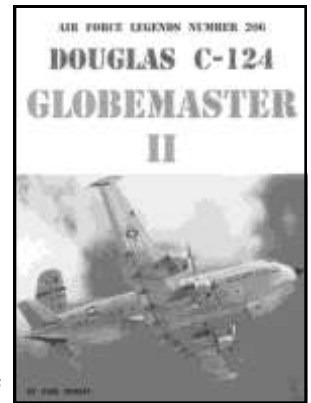


Recommended Reading: Douglas C-124 Globemaster II

In this comprehensive volume the author, Earl Berlin, tells the story of the C-74 Globemaster I and its evolution into the C-124 Globemaster II. Seventy-two of the book's 154 pages are devoted to the assignment history of the C-124 in different units and commands of the Air Force including the Reserves and the Air National Guard. Sixty pages are devoted to in-depth technical descriptions of the aircraft. Most pages include detailed photographs. If you want to know more about the C-124 or refresh your service remembrance of the aircraft this book is for you.

Officially the C-124 was the Globemaster II but the name had no appeal to its aircrews so it became "Old Shaky" and as time passed the name has more often than not been uttered with a kind of reverence.

This book is available from the museum's gift shop and can be purchased for \$28.00 including shipping and handling, payable by personal check, VISA or MasterCard.



A Book in Every Pocket by: Deborah Sellars

Serving overseas during World War II usually meant giving up many of the comforts of home.

The Council on Books in Wartime enlisted the aid of American publishers in printing these free, fit-in-the-pocket, paperback books. From 1943 to 1947 more than 120 million copies of more than 1,300 titles found their way into the hands of thousands of armed services personnel far from home.

If your taste in reading was westerns, mysteries, adventure, poetry, classics, humor, biographies or almost any other genre, chances were you'd find something you liked in an Armed Services Edition. Most of the books were printed unabridged but some like Wilkie Collin's *The Moonstone* and Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* were condensed.

The AMC Museum is pleased to have 28 of these little books in its collection. If you'd like to learn more, try this website on a special exhibit held at the University of Virginia in 1996: <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/speccol/exhibits/ase/> or type "Armed Services Editions" into <http://www.google.com>.



Jimmy Doolittle Raider Reunion 2003

- From April 16-18, 2003 — the public is invited to the San Francisco Bay area to participate in the 61st Reunion of the Jimmy Doolittle Raiders. The cities of Fairfield and Vacaville, California will join the Doolittle Museum Foundation and Travis AFB in offering a wide array of activities for the whole family.
- Among the planned events are a patriotic parade in Fairfield with a B-25 fly-by, social hours with the Raiders, a gala dinner at the Fairfield Hilton with celebrity speakers, a barbecue, flight festival and an Air Force Salute.
- For more information, visit: www.jimmydoolittlereunion.com or call (707) 424-5051.

“Name the Plane”

The airplane that I asked you to identify in January’s issue of the Hangar Digest is the Douglas C-74 Globemaster I.

When the United States entered World War II, the Army Air Forces had just begun taking delivery of the Douglas C-47 twin-engine transport. While it proved to be reliable workhorse, it lacked the payload and the range required for worldwide logistic support. Using the design of the DC-4 (C-54), then entering production, Douglas expanded this design in an attempt to produce a large “no frills” four engine transport with full transoceanic range. This aircraft was designated the C-74 Globemaster I. The initial contract covered a total of fifty aircraft. However, the C-74’s production was delayed due to the higher priority the Army Air Forces had placed on building the Douglas A-26 Invader and the first C-74 did not fly until September 1945. Due to the mass cancellation of military aircraft contracts following the war, production of the C-74 was terminated with the delivery of the fourteenth and final aircraft.



At the time of its first flight the C-74 was the largest transport landplane yet produced in quantity. It had a maximum range of 7,250 miles, sufficient to circumnavigate the globe with only two stops. Initially it was characterized by the use of separate bubble canopies over the pilot’s cockpit but this arrangement impaired pilot communication and a conventional canopy and windshield were installed. The capacious fuselage could accommodate 125 troops or up to 48,150 pounds of cargo. Loading and unloading operations were facilitated by two onboard traveling cranes together with a self-contained elevator.

Service use of the aircraft was relatively limited as the USAF adopted the C-124 Globemaster II — the first of which was obtained by modifying the fifth C-74 — as its main heavy logistic cargo transport.

All of the readers submitting an entry (the most to date) correctly identified the aircraft as the C-74. Our randomly selected winner of the “Name the Plane” contest is Mr. Jack McKillop of Edison, New Jersey and he will receive the book “Douglas C-124 Globemaster II”. Congratulations!

This time I ask you to identify the airplane depicted below including the manufacturer, mission, design and series (if applicable); i.e., Boeing B-17G. Please send your entry either by letter, e-mail, fax or post card to any of the addresses listed on the last page. **Please do not leave your entry by phone.** I will designate each correct response with a number ID from which I will randomly select one winner. Please send your entry as soon as possible and please include a return address. The winner will receive a book selection from the museum’s gift shop. Good luck and thank you for your participation!!

(Museum staff and volunteers are not eligible)



Around the Bases: Dover AFB, Delaware

Military aviation arrived in Delaware in the foreshadow of World War II. While many isolationists throughout the country resisted the military buildup it became apparent, by 1939, the United States could no longer remain neutral. In an attempt to lay the framework for a coastal defense network, without upsetting the isolationists, the Civilian Aviation Administration (CAA) offered state and local governments financial aid in building municipal airports. With the only stipulation being that construction sites be on government-owned land, the CAA fully funded the construction of airfields.

Despite the extremely lucrative nature of the deal, Delaware officials declined the offer to build one airfield in each of the state's three counties. Citing concerns of financially supporting the three airports, the state passed the offer down to the county governments. New Castle and Sussex Counties both voted in favor of the deal but Kent County declined and passed the offer to Dover, the state's capitol. After much discussion, the City of Dover agreed and later purchased 587 acres at a cost of \$35,000 as the new airfield's site. This proved the best investment in the City of Dover's history since Dover Air Force Base eventually grew to be Delaware's third largest industry.

Construction began on Dover Municipal Airport's three hard-surface runways and one hangar foundation in March 1941. Funding flowed very slowly and resulted in a snail's pace of construction. That all changed with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Ten days after the surprise attack, the Army Air Corps leased the newly-completed Dover Municipal Air Field and assigned it three missions. The first began in early 1942 when three bomber squadrons arrived and flew antisubmarine patrols from the former civilian airdrome. Following a 1943 construction project that lengthened the runway to 7,000 feet, seven P-47 fighter squadrons arrived and trained for their eventual involvement in the European Theater. In 1944 the Air Technical Service Command conducted classified air-launched rocket tests. The information collected during these experiments resulted in the use of rockets in combat operations.

The years following the Allied victory presented an uncertain future for Dover Army Air Base. The installation served as a pre-separation processing center for a short time and in 1946 became a standby base. In 1950 the first of three fighter-interceptor squadrons arrived making Dover AFB an Air Defense Command base. Two years later the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) assumed control of the base and laid the framework for Dover AFB's current mission.

With the change in mission came a massive construction effort that readied the base for the 1607th Air Transport Wing (ATW) and its 6,500 additional personnel. The effort included the completion of an air freight terminal, base hospital, 1,250 Capehart housing units and various other facilities. During its decade long stay in Delaware, the 1607th ATW operated C-54 Skymasters, C-124 Globemasters, C-133 Cargomasters and C-141 Starlifters. These aircraft provided humanitarian airlift after the 1960 earthquake in Chile, the Congo Airlift, played a role in the Cuban Missile Crisis and supported America's increasing role in Vietnam.

On January 1, 1966 MATS was redesignated the Military Airlift Command (MAC). In conjunction with the reorganization, the 1607th ATW inactivated and the 436th Military Airlift Wing (MAW) activated and assumed the mission at Dover. The new 436th MAW soon began the transition into the

(Continued on the following page)



Around The Bases: Dover AFB, Delaware (Cont.)

jet age when it replaced the C-124 Globemaster with the C-141 Starlifter. In 1971 the wing activated the 9th Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) when it began receiving the C-5 Galaxy and in turn phased out the C-133 Cargomaster. Two years later the wing traded its C-141 aircraft for Charleston AFB's C-5 equipped 3rd Military Airlift Squadron. This move made the 436th MAW the only all C-5 equipped wing in the Air Force.

Since equipped with one of the world's largest transport aircraft, Dover has provided critical airlift support throughout the world. Some of the more memorable flights include Operation Nickel Grass which provided massive, rapid airlift in support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the evacuation of Americans from Iran in 1978 and the airlift of supplies and French Legionnaires to Zaire during a revolution that same year. In 1989 Dover's aircrews flew seven missions in support of the Exxon Valdez clean-up and began the massive Desert Shield/Storm airlift a year later.

Following the Gulf War the Air Force reorganized and the Military Airlift Command was replaced by the Air Mobility Command (AMC). In conjunction with the reorganization, the 436th Military Airlift Wing was redesignated the 436th Airlift Wing. Since then, the Eagle Wing has provided humanitarian airlift in time of disaster and military airlift when United States' forces were needed around the globe. The addition of the wing's airdrop mission in 1995 provided the Air Force with another option in time of crisis and another step in the evolution of Dover AFB. Examples of the wing's involvement include: the airlifting of troops, equipment and humanitarian items to Somalia in 1992 (Operation RESTORE HOPE), Rwanda in 1994 (Operation SUPPORT HOPE), and Haiti (Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY), also in 1994. The wing also deployed aircraft and personnel to Europe from November 1995 to February 1996 in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia.

More recently, the wing supported Operations DESERT THUNDER I and II from November 1997 to April 1998, as well as DESERT FOX in December 1998, marking the largest buildup of airpower in Southwest Asia since the end of the Gulf War. The 436th Airlift Wing supported Operation ALLIED FORCE, the bombing campaign designed to end Serb aggression in Kosovo, which began in March 1999. Most recently, the wing has been involved with supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the war effort to end terrorism.

Source: *Newcomer's Guide Dover AFB, DE 2002*

The C-5 Galaxy

It stretches almost the length of a football field and extends more than six stories into the air at the top of its T-tail. Truly, the Lockheed C-5 Galaxy is a giant among flying machines.

The aircraft carries nearly all of the Army's combat equipment, including such bulky items as its 74-ton mobile scissors bridge, from the United States to any theater of combat on the globe.

Four TF39 turbofan engines power the C-5, each rated at 43,000 pounds of thrust. Each engine weighs 7,900 pounds and has an air intake of more than 8½ feet.

The Galaxy has 12 internal wing tanks with a total capacity of 51,150 gallons of fuel — enough to fill 6½ regular size railroad tank cars. A full fuel load weighs 332,500 pounds. A C-5 with a cargo load of 270,000 pounds can fly 2,150 nautical miles, offload, and fly to a second base 500 nautical miles away from the original destination — all without aerial refueling. With aerial refueling, the aircraft's range is limited only by the crew's endurance.

Outdated fundraiser

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The Hangar Digest is published quarterly and is dedicated to the preservation of our airlift and tanker heritage. All articles, unless otherwise noted, are written by the editor. All photographs are the courtesy of the Air Mobility Command Museum unless otherwise designated.

I solicit your comments, articles and ideas for future issues. You may contact me by mail: Harry E. Heist c/o The Hangar Digest, P.O. Box 02050, Dover AFB, DE 19902-2050; FAX (302)677-5940; PH (302)677-5997 and email:

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