

# Hangar Digest

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## From The Editor:

Yes, you have already noticed that something is different with your Hangar Digest. Not only does it have a new look but a new editor as well.

I would like to thank the previous editor, Bethany Hacker. Bethany will continue to maintain our web site at <http://www.amcmuseum.org>.

In future issues you can look forward to a regular column by the museum's director, Mike Leister; Jim Leech, our curator, will keep you apprised of our restoration projects and new exhibits; Deborah Sellars, our collection manager, will periodically have an item on "Artifact Facts" and I suspect that Bill Hardie will have some specials for you from time to time in the museum's gift shop. Also, I plan on dusting off a few histories of MATS and MAC and you can also look forward to "Tanker Topics" in upcoming issues.

It is my aim to make the Hangar Digest a publication that encompasses the whole of the Air Mobility Command, tanker and airlifter alike; a newsletter that you will anxiously await once every three months. I would like to solicit your comments, ideas and articles for future issues. Only your continued participation will make the Hangar Digest a successful publication.

Harry E. Heist, Editor

## From The Director: Mike Leister

I would like to welcome Harry E. Heist as the new editor of the Hangar Digest. Harry has been with the museum for almost eight years, initially taking on the job as the museum's librarian and then as the museum's archivist. He is well qualified to edit this newsletter as he is the editor, writer and publisher of "Old Shaky" *Remembered*, a newsletter dedicated to the pilots and navigators who flew the C-124 Globemaster II while assigned to Dover AFB. I am sure we all can look forward to upcoming articles, news items and notices of events that will be of interest to all of the "friends" of the Air Mobility Command Museum.



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## FLIGHT LINES

In 1954 the Military Air Transport Service averaged a flight across the Atlantic or Pacific oceans every 54 minutes...For every hour, the Command hauled an average of 56 military passengers, 5 patients and more than 20,000 pounds of high priority cargo and mail...Lt. Gen. Joe Smith, MATS Commander, noted that "flying approximately 110,000 miles of air routes, MATS recorded impressive performance and safety records during 1954 on scheduled and special mission flights over oceans, deserts, jungles and Arctic icepacks."

Source: The MATS Flyer March 1955.

## **Jim Leech is Inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame**

Jim Leech, our museum curator, was inducted into the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame on October 13, 2001. Jim joins an exceptional group of aviation notables such as aircraft designer and manufacturing pioneer, Giuseppe Bellanca; World War II ace Major George Welch; SAC Commander, Richard Ellis and George Durney, designer of the Apollo astronaut's moon suits.

Jim, a flightline supervisor in 1986 and responsible for nine C-5 aircraft, left this post at the request of Dover's wing commander to assist in getting the museum up and running. His first project was the restoration of our C-47 "Turf & Sport Special"; an aircraft refused by all other museums as not restorable. The aircraft, now the museum's centerpiece, is probably the most famous of all of the C-47s that are in aviation museums today.

Jim, along with Mike Leister, was the co-recipient of the Delaware Governor's Tourism Award for 1999.

Congratulations, Jim!



## **Meet Museum Volunteer John Demory**



John Demory can be described in one word "craftsman." Almost single handedly John has been responsible for the superb restoration of the cockpit of our Waco CG-4A "Hadrian" glider. The glider came to the museum from Wright Patterson on May 17, 1995 as something that can be described none other than a crate. John, over the past 3 years, has meticulously scratched, scraped and molded the cockpit into a masterpiece. Down to the last details of the installation of the Very pistol, tow release mechanism and even obtaining a brand new, in its original leather case, load adjuster; the aircraft is viewed by experts as one of the finest pieces of restoration in any museum.

John hails from Shephardstown, West Virginia retiring from the Air Force in 1987 with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant.

## **Mezzanine Is Now In Place**

What a platform for that photo opportunity!

The long awaited mezzanine was put into place on the east side of the hangar's interior. Running seventy two feet long with a depth of twelve feet and rising ten feet from the floor, the perspective of the museum's interior from this vantage point is one to behold. The visitor is now able to view the C-47, B-17, the C-45 and other floor aircraft from above and look into the cockpit of the hanging PT-17.

This structure will provide additional exhibit space below and will offer a backdrop above for the placement of Dover Air Force Base's time line.

## The Museum Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

Brigadier General Richard Bundy, USAF (Retired); Major Hans Reigle, USAFR and Chief Master Sergeant Jimmy Nolan, USAF (Retired) were elected to the Museum's Board of Directors on September 5, 2001.

General Bundy, former Commander of the 436th Airlift Wing returned to Dover from the Pentagon upon his retirement from the Air Force. He is Director of Administrative Services at Wesley College in Dover.

Major Hans Reigle is an Airbus 320 pilot with United Airlines and a reservist with the Air Education Training Command assigned duty as the Air Force Liaison to the Delaware Civil Air Patrol.

Chief Jimmy Nolan, an active C-133 restoration volunteer, retired from the Air Force in 1983 chalking up 30 years of active duty as a flight engineer.

To these new members, **welcome!** To those they replaced: Dr. Stephanie Wright, Mr. Jack Woods and Mrs. Ethel Finley, the museum thanks them for their years of dedicated service.

## Artifact Facts "The Blood Chit": by Deborah Sellars



This blood chit is one of several in the museum's collection and was carried by an aircrew member assigned to the 1st Combat Cargo Squadron (The Great SNAFU Fleet) in World War II.

Blood chits were usually printed on cloth with a flag and a message in one or more languages identifying the bearer as a member of the United States military and promised a reward for his safe return to friendly control.

Today, blood chits are still issued to aircrews that operate in hostile territories.

## Cargo Classics: The C-124 "Globemaster II"

The C-124 Globemaster II was the Military Air Transport Service's first "heavy" airlifter. The prototype, YC-124, was a modified C-74 Globemaster I. The YC-124 retained the wings, tail surfaces, the Pratt & Whitney Wasp Major R-4360-49 engines and the four bladed Curtiss Electric props of the C-74. The YC-124 made its first flight at Long Beach, California on November 27, 1949. No longer required as a test aircraft, it was placed on exhibit at the United States Air Force Museum. It was removed from exhibit in 1969 when the museum received the XB-70 "Valkyrie." The YC-124 was later replaced with the current C-124C in 1975. The C-124 was affectingly known by its crews as "Old Shaky." Of the 448 manufactured, only nine remain and are in museums today.



## *“Name the Plane”*

Those of you that are recipients of Air Power History, published by the Air Force Historical Foundation, are familiar with Bob Dorr’s “History Mystery Plane.” With Bob’s blessing, I have decided to do a similar version called “Name the Plane.” Your challenge will be to identify the aircraft depicted. However, to make it a little more difficult, not only must you identify the manufacturer, mission and design but also the series; i.e., **Boeing B-17G**. Your incentive for entering this contest will be a book selection from the museum’s gift shop. So, on a post card, correctly identify this airplane, include your name, address, and phone number and mail it to: Harry E. Heist c/o The Hangar Digest, P.O. Box 02050, Dover AFB, DE 19902-2050. A winner will be selected at random from the post cards with the correct answer.

(Museum staff, and volunteers are not eligible)



## **Air Force One “27000” Goes to the Reagan Library**

What seemed like a sure thing, overnight, turned into a great disappointment not only for the staff and volunteers of the AMC Museum but also to Dover and to the residents of the entire mid-Atlantic region as well. The museum had been on record since 1995 expecting that Air Force One “27000” would be retired here but, at the last minute, the decision was made to place it at the Reagan Library.

On September 8, 2001, “27000” made its final flight to San Bernardino International Airport. The aircraft will be dismantled and trucked to the library 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles where it will be reassembled and put on display. Money will be raised by the Reagan Library Foundation to build a hangar and Boeing Aircraft Corporation will be contracted to maintain it.

The airplane not only served President Reagan but six other presidents as well.

## **Recommended Reading: The “C” Planes**

Since this book was published in 1996 it has been the definitive historical reference of the American airlifter dating from the Douglas C-1, built in 1925, to the newest of today’s modern cargo and passenger aircraft.

The authors, Bill Holden and Scott Vadrnais have traced the roots of each of the “C” aircraft and have presented to the reader the name of the manufacturer, serial numbers, model variants, crew component, speed, ceiling, physical characteristics and the story of the aircraft’s development.

This book is a must for the aviation enthusiast’s library and can be purchased either by personal check, VISA or MasterCard from the museum’s gift shop for \$39.95 including shipping and handling.



## **Museum Access**

Since the tragic events of 11 September, Dover Air Force Base has been the hub of activity in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. With the increased level of security, only those persons with Department of Defense IDs have been permitted entry onto the base. Thus, the museum has been closed to the general public. Needless to say, except for transit military personnel and permanent party, the museum has seen little activity. However, we have continued to function, by catching up on the paperwork, working on and completing several projects and exhibits and hosting the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Dover Air Force Base.

Several options, both long and short term, have been discussed as to reopening the museum to the public and yet maintaining the necessary level of security. They are:

- ▶ **Fence in the entire museum complex with direct access from the Route 9 gate.**
- ▶ **Operate a shuttle bus from the main gate to the museum.**
- ▶ **Move the museum to another location on base.**

The subject of fencing in the museum has been discussed ever since we relocated from our original site in 1996. This has always been considered the best method of access to the museum by the general public. Up until now, however, it has just been discussion. As we are now faced with the prospect of a long term base restriction, it has become obvious that a short term solution will not satisfactorily solve the problem. We feel very confident that both the base and Headquarters AMC will be responsive to our predicament and select the optimum solution in order that we again may host the visitorship that we have long enjoyed.

I hope to have a more on this in the next issue. Stay tuned!

(Please call (302) 677-5938 for current access information)

## **Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: Fairchild C-123K “Provider”**

The “Provider” is a short-range assault transport used to airlift troops and cargo onto short runways and unprepared airstrips. Designed by the Chase Aircraft Company, the C-123 evolved from earlier designs for large assault gliders. The first prototype XC-123 made its initial flight on October 14, 1949, powered by two piston engines. A second prototype was built as the XG-20 glider. It was later test-flown and powered by four jet engines.

The production version, with two piston engines, was designated the C-123B. Chase began manufacture in 1953 but the production contract was transferred to Fairchild. The first of more than 300 Fairchild-built C-123Bs entered service in July 1955. Between 1966 and 1969, 184 C-123Bs were converted to C-123Ks by adding two J85 jet engines for improved performance.

Our aircraft, tail #54-658, was flown to Dover on October 14, 1990.



### **C-133 Restoration “Want List”**

- 8 Day Clocks
- APN-70 Loran Receiver
- Pressure Altimeter
- APN-59 Radar Azimuth & Range Indicator
- C-133 Loadmaster’s Mattress

(Please contact Jim Leech at (302) 677-5938 if you have and are willing to donate any of the above items.)

For an updated Pave a Path to History  
brick form, please visit:

<http://amcmuseum.org/support>

## Museum Celebrates 15 Years

It can almost be said that, “the Air Mobility Command Museum’s birthplace was in a field in central Pennsylvania.” There, during the summer of 1986, a wreck of an airplane was found that was being used by the Pennsylvania Air Guard as a training aid for their heavy lift helicopter crews. That airplane, a C-47, would be the first aircraft of the new Dover Air Force Base Historical Center.

A museum for Dover AFB was envisioned by a few, but how was one to get it from a “nice to have” to an up and running museum? Enter Colonel Walter Kross, 436th Military Airlift Wing Commander. With Colonel Kross’ go ahead and planning group in motion, organized by Mike Leister, and the necessary paperwork, the C-47 was airlifted from Pennsylvania to Dover Air Force Base.

It was realized that the task of restoring the C-47 was beyond the capability of the occasional volunteer and required full time supervision. Thus, on 1 December 1986, Jim Leech was reassigned from his C-5 flight line duties to the historical center for one year. He along with full time volunteer Al Shank and others, the restoration of the C-47 began. Eventually the museum’s name was changed to the Dover Air Force Base Museum and Jim’s job became permanent.

In 1997 General Kross, then Commander Air Mobility Command, designated the museum as the Air Mobility Command Museum with its primary mission dedicated to the preservation of our airlift and tanker heritage. The rest “really” is history.

The museum is acknowledged as central Delaware’s most visited cultural tourist attraction.

## Dover AFB Celebrates its 60th Anniversary

Dover Air Force Base celebrated its 60th Anniversary on 17 December 2001.

It was on 17 December 1941 when the Federal Government leased the facility for military operations. At various times, the base was known as Dover Field, the Dover Municipal Airport, the Dover Airdrome, the Dover Sub-Base, Dover Army Air Base and finally Dover Air Force Base. During World War II the facility was used for such operations as anti-submarine warfare, tow target and P-47 Thunderbolt pilot training and the development of air launched rockets. The latter played a decisive role in the closing phase of the war.

Subsequent to World War II, the base has played a significant role in support of the Department of Defense’s world wide airlift requirements: from the transportation of materials used in the 1950s construction of the Defense Early Warning Network “DEWLINE” ; the Congo Airlift, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War and Operation Nickel Grass of the 1960s and 70s; Operation Just Cause and Urgent Fury of the 80s; Desert Shield and Desert Storm of the 1990s and now Operation Enduring Freedom. All in all, hundreds of operations covering the globe.

In commemorating the many achievements of the past sixty years, the 436th Airlift Wing held an informal birthday party on 14 December at the museum. The program, conducted by Chapter 201 of the Air Force Sergeants Association, consisted of a slide presentation, an historical photo display, and several members of the Dover team called to post wearing uniforms representing the Air Force’s past six decades. Also, proclamations from the United States Senate, Delaware’s State Legislature and the City of Dover recognizing the base’s many achievements were presented to Colonel Scott Wuesthoff, 436th AW Commander. **Congratulations Dover Air Force Base!!**



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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 property 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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