

Hangar Digest

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 2004

From the Editor

This issue includes the second in the series of the history of military airlift: "The Creation of the Air Transport Command." Future issues will include the Birth of the Military Air Transport Service, MATS to MAC and finally melding elements of MAC and SAC into the formation of the Air Mobility Command.



In our continuing series on "Airlift Legends", we look at the career of Lt. Gen. Harold L. George, the first commander of the Air Transport Command.

The friends of the museum reelected Brig. Gen. Richard Bundy, TSgt. Jay Schumkler, CMSgt. Jimmy Nolan and MSgt. Harry Van Den Heuvel to the AMC Museum Foundation's Board of Directors. Col. Richard B. Harper, Jr., USAF (Ret) was elected as the board's new member. To new member Col. Harper and to those reelected, congratulations! The officers appointed for the forthcoming year are: President, Brig. Gen. Michael Quarnaccio; Vice President, TSgt. Jay Schumkler; Secretary, Lt. Col. Phil White and Treasurer, MSgt. Harry Van Den Heuvel. A special thanks to Maj. Hans Reigel for his dedicated service who withdrew his nomination prior to the election in order to pursue other interests.

Are you strapped for a holiday gift idea? Consider a museum membership. For as little as \$20.00 a year your benefactor receives a member's certificate, 10% discount off of all museum store purchases (including mail orders) and this quarterly newsletter. As always, a membership form can be found on the inside cover of the last page.

Finally, on behalf of the museum's board of directors, the museum's staff and volunteers, I extend our best wishes for a safe and Happy Holiday season.

Harry E. Heist, Editor

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LOOKING BACK

The C-5 Galaxy lengthened its list of significant achievements when it became the world's heaviest aircraft to be refueled in flight. The huge transport took on 1,000 pounds of fuel from a KC-135 tanker aircraft after both took off from the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB. The two aircraft practiced hook-ups earlier but this was the first time fuel was transferred. In the 10 remaining test sorties, the KC-135 will empty its entire fuel capacity of 100,000 pounds into the C-5

Source: MAC Aircrew Newsletter, Oct. 1969

From the Director

During the last three months, the museum has made some progress but also has had a major setback. We had to say goodbye to MSgt. Rich Breckenridge. This leaves us without an active duty aircraft maintenance technician. Without Rich, or a replacement, it makes it extremely difficult to comply with all the safety and operational requirements that make our volunteers so effective in the restoration of our aircraft. We are working with the base attempting to find a solution.

We have finalized the second phase of the aircraft refueling exhibit. We have completed the probe and drogue portion of the exhibit. Kevin Wysopal, modeler extraordinaire, has completed all of the aircraft models showing major milestones in air refueling. As some aircraft types are not available, several of the models are essentially scratch built.

We have a new "Crew Chief" for our F-106 Delta Dart. Ted Marshall has become a new member of our volunteer staff and has already made improvements to the museum's fighter. His first challenge is repairing the canopy actuator so the cockpit can be opened for some necessary preservation work and possibly to make it available during our open cockpit days.

As a side note, in July, I had the pleasure of attending the Farnborough Airshow in England along with Bill Hardie and Hank Baker. Farnborough is one of the premier aviation trade shows in the world alternating with the famous Paris Airshow every other year. A point of patriotic pride was the demonstration of American products. A decades old Chinook helicopter flown by one talented RAF pilot put on an awesome display including vertical maneuvers. The F/A 18 beat out the Eurofighter and the Tornado by flying some very amazing non-aerodynamic acrobatics. This year's Dover's show was certainly in the same league, which can be attributed to all the hard work the base and museum volunteers put into the show.

As always.... thank you for your support.

Mike

Cruisin' with the Curator

Put your seat back into the upright position, click it (we don't want a ticket) and hang on. Let's head over to the restoration hangar first and see what's cookin.

Getting to hangar 789 is a bit different now and will be until December or so. All three base gates are currently undergoing renovations, simultaneously, so traffic patterns are somewhat changed. For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to visit the base since early June, here's the skinny. The north gate is for inbound traffic, only, 24 hours a day. The main gate is for outbound traffic, only, 24 hours a day. You may also exit the base using the south gate. Now here comes the confusing part. Those wishing to enter the base using the Route 9 museum gate may do so Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 8:00 am and 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm if you have a base decal. That's all that needs to be said about the gates. Anymore would just add to the pain of change.

Before we get out of the car, I too would like to reiterate Mike's disturbing news. MSgt. Rich Breckenridge, who has been with us for just about four years now, was plucked from our patch and placed in the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, aka AMXS, as an expeditor on the night shift. His reassignment was totally unexpected and we've received no replacement for him although negotiations are underway to see if his position will be filled. His departure has left a huge gap in our operation and he will be surely missed.

As stated in the July 2004 issue of this magnificent piece of journalistic reading, the upper half of the C-124
(Continued on the following page)

Cruisin' with the Curator (Cont.)

fuselage was indeed delivered. We downloaded it off of a K-loader and placed it outside of hangar 789. Just by itself it is an impressive sight and quite a few "youngsters" from our neighbors in AMXS look in awe at a piece of an airplane that size. Yeah, right.....wait until it's assembled. Then they can stare in awe! We also took delivery of the two bottom pieces of the fuselage. They too were downloaded outside of 789 so you can imagine how crowded it's getting. The only pieces we lack are the center wing section and the landing gear. They are due to arrive shortly.

Ok, now we can step out of the car at 789. The first person that meets the eye is TSgt Gail Flowers, our sheet metal specialist. She has been working on the C-124 vertical stabilizer, removing all of the corroded skin and prepping the attach points for reassembly. It's a daunting task and I'm glad she has undertaken it.

The "boys" are at it again! That darn C-121 door is still a burr in their saddles, however I do believe they've got the bull by the horns. Unfortunately, we've had to put the paint stripping process on hold for a bit in order to make room in the hangar for the Old Shaky pieces that need attention prior to its reassembly. Good job guys and lady!

Back into the car and over to the museum. Geez, look at all the cars in the parking lot. And no, there isn't a retirement! Our visitorship has increased greatly since the opening of the Route 9 gate. It's like...hey, free admission! (we won't tell them it's always been that way). Ok. Inside we see mmm, what do we see? Who is that sitting at the welcome counter? Introductions discover that he's one of our newest volunteers, Ted Marshall. Welcome aboard, Ted. I thought we had another C-124 worker but I see Mike has other plans for him. In the corner near the rocket room there's a new exhibit in the making. Deborah Sellars and I are in the process of creating an Air Corps Observation exhibit and the observation tower is being constructed as we speak. We've received some interesting artifacts from a donor that will be incorporated into the exhibit. Suspense date for it's completion is....well, that's why they call it a "suspense" date. Mike Leister tweaked the refueling exhibit adding new carpeting and display rails to the KB-50 refueling reel and drogue section of the exhibit. Nice touch Mike, thanks.

I know I ran a bit long but heck, I just filled the tank. Again, I'd like to pass on my thanks to all the volunteers and a special "good luck" to Rich. We'll all miss you.

Take care folks and remember, now what was I going to say?

Jim

In Memoriam Joseph A. Fournier., Jr. 1935-2004



Joe, one of the museum's most dedicated volunteers, passed away on June 4, 2004 one day short of his 69th birthday.

He had a great love for the Air Force and continued to share his enthusiasm and dedication by volunteering as the supervisor of the day-to-day operations in the restoration of the museum's C-133 Cargomaster.

Joe logged time in both the C-133 and the C-5 as a flight engineer and as a crew chief on America's first four engine jet bomber, the B-45 Tornado.

He hailed from Franklin, New Hampshire, retiring from the Air Force in 1973 with the rank of Master Sergeant.

Joe will be truly missed by his many friends here at the museum.

Creation of the Air Transport Command

United States Army aviation underwent a major reorganization in June 1941. The General Staff established the Army Air Forces (AAF) and named General "Hap" Arnold its chief. Within the AAF, two subordinate commands were created: the Air Force Combat Command (AFCC) and the Air Corps. Not considered a combat command, the Air Corps Ferrying Command (ACFC) remained part of the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps until March 1942. On that date, the War Department established three Army branches — Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces and Services of Supply. Included in this realignment was the elimination of the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps. This left the ACFC, now termed the Ferrying Command, directly subordinate to General Arnold. Nevertheless, the Ferrying Command continued to grow and overlap with other units. In particular, the Ferrying Command duplicated the duties of the Air Service Command, which was created to meet the increasing requirements for the supply and maintenance of Army aircraft. To solve the problem, in late March 1942, General Arnold assigned the responsibility for transporting supplies to bases within the Western Hemisphere to the Air Service Command and assigned the Ferrying Command the mission of operating all transport lines beyond the Western Hemisphere.

Despite the new organizational arrangement, the Ferrying Command and the Air Service Command still duplicated too many functions. In addition, the United States Navy had created its own Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) in December 1941 to provide logistic airlift for the Navy's fleets at distant bases. The Civil Aeronautics Board recommended the creation of a new command separate from the Army and the Navy to control military air transportation. Taking the suggestion under consideration, General Arnold concluded that the responsibility for air transportation must be assigned to "permit the most efficient utilization of aircraft, facilities and personnel by the elimination of dual responsibility and duplication of services." He also believed that the Army Air Forces had to "provide transport operations by military personnel, rather than by civilians under contract, on routes that enter the combat areas or are likely to become combat areas." Motivated by these considerations, on 20 June 1942, General Arnold issued orders creating both the Air Transport Command (ATC) and the Troop Carrier Command. The Air Transport Command would be responsible for ferrying all aircraft within and out of the United States; the air transport of personnel, material and mail for all War Department Agencies, except those served by Troop Carrier units; the control, operation and maintenance of facilities on air routes outside the United States which were under control of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces (Arnold).

General Arnold's course of action limited the Air Service Command to continental operations and allowed ATC to handle all other air transport except that reserved for support of theater combat forces. In addition, the Troop Carrier Command would assume the responsibility of providing air transportation for paratroopers, airborne infantry and glider units. Colonel Harold George, who had assumed command of the Ferrying Command on 1 April 1942, became ATC's first commander, a post he held until the end of the war.

The Navy, never interested in any plans for the unification of airlift forces, continued to operate the Naval Air Transport Service as its own long-range airlift organization throughout the war. The Air Transport Command and the Army Air Forces staff studied the question of duplicated effort by ATC and NATS and presented their finding to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) without results. However, the JCS agreed that NATS would restrict its operations to serving the naval establishment, only. To monitor duplication, the JCS created the Joint Army-Navy Air Transport Committee (JANATC). Because of the decisions made by General Arnold, the JCS and the Navy, consolidating all military air transportation under a single command would not be achieved until years later (Military Air Transport Service).

Despite several false starts, the United States possessed a rudimentary military air service when it entered World War II. Although the Air Corps Ferrying Command existed for only thirteen months, it created a strong base for the expansion of the wartime Air Transport Command. Growing from an organization comprised of two officers and a civilian secretary in May 1941 to a force of 11,000 by the time of ATC's

(Continued on page seven)

Airlift Legends: Lieutenant General Harold L. George

Harold L. George was born on 19 July 1893 in Somerville, Massachusetts. On 21 May 1917, after completing Officers' Training Camp at Fort Myer, Virginia, he was assigned to active duty in the Cavalry Section, Officers Reserve Corps on 5 June. Within the year, he was discharged from the Cavalry and enlisted as a private first class in order to become a flying cadet with the Aviation Section of the Signal Reserve Corps. On 29 March 1918, he earned his wings and commissioned a second lieutenant at Love Field, Texas.



Going to France in September 1918, he was assigned to the 7th Aviation Instruction Center at Clermont, France and two months later he joined the 163rd Day Bombardment Squadron on the Meuse Argonne Front. In January 1921, he was assigned to the 49th Bomb Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas and later that October was transferred to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland.

For the next twenty years, he held various operational and command positions, including that as an instructor at the Air Corps Training School at Maxwell Field, Alabama and as Commanding Officer of the 2nd Bombardment Group, Langley Field, Virginia.

On 14 July 1941, he was appointed Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for War Plans, Washington, DC. In that capacity, he headed a board of officers who prepared the plan for the air war against Germany. He later assumed command of the Air Corps Ferrying Command on 1 April 1942 (redesignated the Air Transport Command on June 20th). During his tenure, he extended the Command's network of moving planes, men and supplies around the world. He oversaw massive air transport operations such as the "Hump", the India-China supply line; the Green Project, returning men and equipment to the United States from Europe and the White Project, ferrying aircraft from the European to the Pacific Theater.

General George retired from active duty on 31 December 1946 and became President of Peruvian International Airways until May 1948 when he joined the Hughes Aircraft Company as Vice President and General Manager, resigning in 1953 to take the job as Senior Vice President of the Ramo-Wooldridge Corporation, a company engaged in advanced electronic and guided missile research and development.

Recalled to active duty on 1 March 1955, general George was named Special Consultant to the Chief of Staff at Air Force Headquarters. He reverted to his retired status on 4 November 1955. He died on 24 February 1986 at the age of 92.

Lt. Gen. George was the Airlift/Tanker Association's "Hall of Fame" inductee for 1991.

Sources: MAC History Office, *Anything, Anywhere, Anytime: An Illustrated History of the Military Airlift Command 1941-1991*; Airlift/Tanker Association

The Air Force Air Transport Command Insignia...

differed from the design previously used by its parent unit, the Air Corps Ferrying Command "ACFC". This modified patch would be of the same general design but would be silver instead of gold and the Morse Code would read "AFATC" instead of "ACFC". The design suggests a symbolic aircraft being flown from West to East which refers to President Roosevelt's directive to the command that aircraft be transported "with the greatest possible speed."

Source: *Air Transport Command Special Order via CPD/HO Maxwell AFB.*



Airlifts Remembered: Operation Market-Garden

One of the largest and most daring operations of World War II was Market-Garden, the Allied airborne invasion of Holland in September 1944. This dramatic plan involved notably the 61st, 435th, 436th, 437th and 438th Troop Carrier Groups.

On 10 September 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had recently taken command of all Allied ground operations on the European Continent, agreed to a bold plan by British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. The plan was to turn the German northern flank in order to clear a 60-mile-long narrow corridor from Holland's southern border to Arnhem, on the Rhine River. This was to be accomplished by dropping three airborne divisions behind the German lines. The British Second Army would then rush up the corridor and cross the Rhine River into Germany's heartland. The plan depended on the airborne forces capturing several key bridges, across the Rhine River at Arnhem.

The ambitious Market-Garden plan called for the airlift of 35,000 troops and support equipment from England on three consecutive days. These forces came from the First Allied Airborne Army which included the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. More than 20,000 men, 500 vehicles, 330 artillery pieces and 590 tons of equipment were to be delivered the first day, D-Day, 17 September 1944. The movement was staged from 24 American and British bases and involved some 4,700 Allied aircraft on D-Day, including bombers to soften the German positions, fighters for escort and flak suppression, 2,000 troop-carrying planes (mostly C-47s) and 600 gliders. The troop carriers and gliders took two hours and fifteen minutes to get airborne.

Although the first airdrops were satisfactory, on successive days both the ground and airborne segments began to bog down. The paratroopers were unable to take and hold all of their tactical objectives, especially several of the bridges. By nightfall on 19 September, the Allies controlled only a narrow 35-mile-long corridor between Eindhoven and Nijmegen, Holland. Moreover, the British Second Army was stalled by fierce German resistance. The Arnhem bridge was still intact but the Germans had a battalion of the British First Airborne Division cut off and outnumbered. The desperate plight of the British at Arnhem prompted the Royal Air Force to launch an aerial resupply mission in impossible weather with disastrous results — only 41 of the 386 tons dropped were recovered. A day later, a resupply attempt by 60 troop carrier aircraft fell victim to German fighters, resulting in the destruction of 13 airplanes. Another 53 transports launched by the British also ran into fighters and heavy anti-aircraft flak with the loss of 10 aircraft.

The boldest venture of the operation was airlifting a Polish Parachute Brigade. Troop carrier pilots took off with about 1,500 Polish troops but only 1,000 were able to jump at Arnhem due to strong winds. Those that did jump were carried to the wrong bank of the Rhine. Too few and too late to help the British, the Polish paratroopers suffered heavy losses. Missions scheduled for the following day had to be cancelled due to bad weather. The situation was compounded by flooding caused by ruptured dikes and haze that covered much of Holland.

On Saturday, the weather permitted the airlift of 3,300 reinforcements and supplies to the two American airborne divisions. Aerial resupply to the British, however, was more difficult due to the small 1,000-foot diameter area that they held. As a consequence, less than 10 percent of the 291 tons dropped actually reached the British.

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Photo of the museum's *Turf & Sport* was taken by Lew Johnston during Operation Market-Garden.

Airlifts Remembered (Cont.)

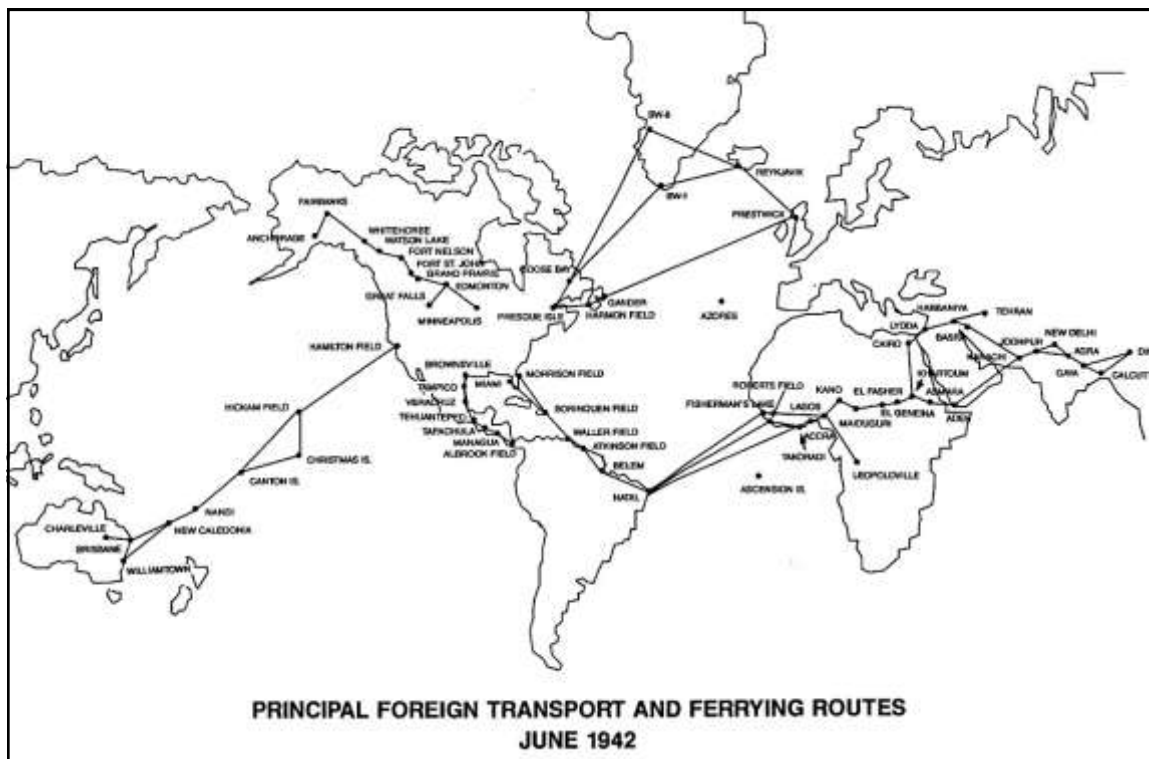
After a week of unsuccessful attempts, Field Marshall Montgomery ordered the withdrawal of all Allied forces to the south of the Rhine, thereby abandoning the primary object of Market-Garden. Ironically, the same harsh weather that had played such a key role in the defeat of the British saved them in the end from total annihilation, permitting them and the trapped Polish forces to slip away undetected.

Began with such high hopes, Market-Garden ended in devastating failure. In just nine days, one-third of the 35,000 men were lost. Of the 11,853 casualties, 9,333 were either killed or missing. The number of Allied casualties approximated the number lost during the D-Day invasion at Normandy the previous June. Eighty-seven fighters and bombers as well as 153 troop carrier aircraft were destroyed; another 1,265 sustained damage. Many reasons were offered; each had played a part. Harsh weather hampered resupply and support efforts. Intelligence reports underestimated the German forces. There were deficiencies in communications, air support, resupply and combat qualifications of the glider pilots. Nor had the Allies been able to interdict German troop and supply movements.

Source: MAC History Office, *Anything, Anywhere, Anytime: An Illustrated History of the Military Airlift Command 1941-1991*.

Creation of the Air Transport Command (Cont.)

activation, the command had ferried over 14,000 aircraft. All of this was but a prelude to the remarkable development of airlift during the Second World War, when the value of airlift became apparent.



Source: MAC History Office, *Anything, Anywhere, Anytime: An Illustrated History of the Military Airlift Command 1941-1991*; Office of Air Force History, *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol. 1*.

On the Lighter Side

On 26 June 1955, a C-124 departed Dover AFB for RAF Burtonwood, England via Harmon AFB, Newfoundland and Lajes Field in the Azores. The purpose of this mission was threefold — to deliver much needed priority cargo and medical supplies to USAF bases in Europe, to film the documentary “This is Dover Air Force Base” and to deliver Dover’s entry to the Dover, England’s 49th Annual Flower Show and National Sweet Pea Society’s Exhibition.

This was a scheduled mission crewed by members of the 20th Air Transport Squadron of the 1607th Air Transport Wing and accompanied by Dover AFB’s information officer. He was given the special task of representing the mayor of Dover and the citizens of Delaware at the Annual National Show of the Sweet Pea Society of England by accompanying an array of Delaware sweet peas grown by a local greenhouse. These sweet peas were to serve as the official entry of Dover, Delaware.

Upon arrival at Burtonwood, the aircrew showered, shaved and, not norm to the typical crew rest of the day, donned their Class A Blues and headed to town followed by the film crew to record their every move, “sightseeing.” Ugh! But for the information officer it was a long train ride down to Dover, England.

Upon his arrival in Dover, he immediately grabbed a taxi to Connaught Park, the site of the famous sweet pea show. Met by the show’s secretary, he handed him the parcel of sweet peas and he quickly opened the box. To both their amazement, the flowers were in almost perfect condition after surviving four days in Old Shaky, a train and taxi ride and having traveled 3,500 miles.

Dover, Delaware’s florist had specially prepared the flowers for their long journey. He placed the stem of each sweet pea in a test tube filled with water and sealed the top with a rubber cap. The flowers were then placed in excelsior to cushion any rough handling. At one end of the box, he placed a plastic sack filled with water so that a cool temperature would be maintained. The flowers were than placed on Old Shaky’s clam-shell doors to maintain a constant temperature of 40 degrees and the rest is history. That is, of the 28 Dovers (Dover, Arkansas to Dover, Tasmania) that were invited to participate, only eight submitted entrees. Dover, Delaware’s sweet peas were the only flowers actually grown outside England. The others were in the form of telegraphed flowers which were sent from downtown Dover, England!

Source: *Taken in part from a report filed by the 1607th ATW Public Affairs Office, July 1955.*

Royal Air Force Burtonwood, UK “The Gateway to Europe”....

was one of the largest and busiest bases during World War II. Located between Manchester and Liverpool and two miles northwest of Warrington, it was initially responsible for the support of the 8th Air Force, then the 9th and ultimately the 12th and 15th Air Forces as well.

Following the war, the base returned to RAF control for two years as a maintenance depot and then reverted back to USAF control in 1948 undertaking all the major servicing for the C-54 *Skymaster* involved in the Berlin Airlift. Major redevelopment took place with the construction of the Header House (the largest warehouse in Europe at 3 million square feet), extending the main runway to over 9,000 feet and the construction of a new control tower and passenger terminal.

Burtonwood, a popular stop for the MATS crews during the mid 1950s and early 60s, and Warrington with its Red Lion Pub served as a respite following the long over water legs from Newfoundland and the Azores.

After eleven years of maximum use the base started its decline in 1959 and was closed by the USAF in 1965 reverting back to the Royal Air Force. Two years later the United States Army took command and remained until the base’s final closing in 1993, then occupying only a fraction of the original site.

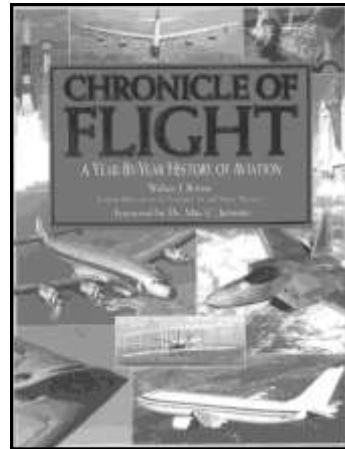
The runway now forms part of M62 Motorway, the major thoroughfare between Manchester and Liverpool. Little remains of Burtonwood except for the remnants of the Header House, lesser discernable base roads and three hangars. The passenger terminal was demolished in 1987 followed by the tower in 1988. Preservationists are attempting to save the hangars as memorials to the American serviceman who served there.

Recommended Reading: Chronicle of Flight

Travel from the sands of Kitty Hawk to the surface of the moon. Go around the world in 29 days or spend 437 days living in a space station.

Experience the adventure of flight first-hand. Join Orville and Wilbur Wright as they make their early morning flight into history. Travel with Charles Lindbergh as he sets the world ablaze with the excitement of his non-stop flight from New York to Paris. Walk in Neil Armstrong's footsteps across the surface of the moon.

Walter J. Boyne's *Chronicle of Flight* is a captivating pictorial record of thousands of great moments in aviation. Historic photographs record the epic journey from the earliest balloon flights to the unpiloted combat drones of today. Exciting narratives about each era and a detailed timeline highlighting thousands of aviation milestones make this the best book on the subject. With *Chronicle of Flight*, you'll enjoy the ride of a lifetime.



This book is available from the museum's gift shop and can be purchased for \$35.00 including shipping and handling, payable by check, VISA or MasterCard.

Please call (302) 677-5992 or email: william.hardie@dover.af.mil to place your order.

Artifact Facts by: Deborah Sellars

The words paracaisson, paracrate and parachest all describe a similar type of air-delivery container used for dropping supplies and ammunition to the troops in the field.

The World War II-era paracaisson on display near the "Turf and Sport Special", the museum's C-47, is a metal cylinder supported by an axle mounted with two rubber tires. A handle at one end enabled the paracaisson to be pulled when on the ground. The cushion on the other end acted as a shock absorber when the paracaisson hit the ground after its descent by parachute from the airplane. The museum's paracaisson was designed to carry ten rounds of 75mm cannon ammunition.



Pictured, is the museum's paracaisson.

Change of Address

Don't miss out on receiving your copy of the Hangar Digest, other membership benefits and notification of special events that are hosted by your museum. If you are planning a move, please take the time to send a postcard, letter, FAX, phone call or e-mail to any of the addresses or numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter notifying us of your new address. The post office will not forward nonprofit standard mail that is sent bulk rate.

“Name the Plane”

The airplane that I asked you to identify in July’s issue of the Hangar Digest is the Chase XCG-20 assault glider.

The Chase Aircraft Company of West Trenton, New Jersey was the first to design an all metal transport glider, the XCG-18. The XCG-18 was followed by the larger and more efficient MS-8 Avitruk model. The MS-8 was given the military designation XCG-20. The XCG-20 was a high wing all metal glider with a reinforced nose section and a strong tow connection. It featured a retractable landing gear and hydraulically operated flaps with power supplied from an onboard auxiliary power unit. The glider had a maximum take off weight of 70,000 pounds; however, the weight was reduced to 40,000 pounds as there was no aircraft available that could get that much weight into the air. On April 27, 1950, the XCG-20 was introduced during Exercise Swarmer at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.



Two prototypes of the XCG-20 were built (47-786 and 47-787, pictured) with (47-786) as the first of the two chosen for conversion to power and redesignated the XC-123. The aircraft was fitted with two 1,900 hp Pratt and Whitney air cooled radial engines. As the aircraft had been designed as a glider, no provisions had been made for fuel. As a result, the fuel had to be carried externally and the rear of the engine nacelles became the fuel tanks and were designed to be jettisoned in an emergency.

The XC-123 successfully completed its flight test period and Chase was issued a production contract for 300 aircraft under the designation as the C-123B. Chase Aircraft began production of the C-123B in 1952 and after building five aircraft the majority interest in Chase was purchased by the Kaiser-Fraser Company. Contract disputes between Kaiser and the USAF resulted in the cancellation of the 300 aircraft by the USAF. As a result, the USAF put the C-123B production contract up for bids and the Fairchild Corporation was awarded the contract in 1953. The new contract was for a total of 302 aircraft. The second XCG-20 glider (47-787) was fitted with four J47 jet engines in two pods and was redesignated the XC-123A.

I’m sure the XCG-20 stumped a few readers, however, I did have a good response. Our randomly selected winner of “Name the Plane” contest is Col. Garnett C. Brown, Jr., USAF (Ret) of Lexington, Kentucky and he will receive the book “Chronicle of Flight”. 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: Fairchild AFB, Washington

Located twelve miles southwest of Spokane, Washington and established first as the Spokane Army Air Depot on 1 March 1942, Fairchild Air Force Base is the home of the **92nd Air Refueling Wing (Air Mobility Command)**.

Two cities, Seattle and Everett also sought to have the base built in their communities. The competition was keen but Spokane won out as the War Department believed that Spokane offered better weather conditions as well as a mountain range considered to be a natural barrier to a possible Japanese attack.

As an added incentive to the War Department, many Spokane businesses and public-minded citizens donated money to purchase the land for the base. At a cost of more than \$125,000, these people bought 1,400 acres and presented the title to the War Department in January of 1942. That year the government designated \$14 million to purchase more land and began construction of the new Spokane Army Air Depot.

From 1943 to 1946, the base served as a repair depot for damaged aircraft returning from the Pacific Theater. In 1947 the base was transferred to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and assigned to the 15th Air Force. That same year, the 92nd and the 98th Bomb Groups arrived. Both units flew the most advanced bomber of their day, the B-29. Just a year later the base received the second of its three official names, Spokane Air Force Base.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, both groups deployed to Japan and Okinawa. After only a few months, General Douglas MacArthur released the 92nd to return to the United States while the 98th remained in the Far East. The 98th was reassigned to Nebraska after the conflict. Upon its return to Fairchild, the 92nd was redesignated the 92nd Bombardment Wing (Heavy).

The base took its current name in November 1950 in memory of the late Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, General Muir S. Fairchild, a native of Bellington, Washington. General Fairchild died while on duty at the Pentagon in March 1950. The formal dedication ceremony was held on 20 July 1951 to coincide with the arrival of the wing's first B-36.

In October 1953, the Air Depot facility was deactivated. By 1956, the wing had begun a conversion that brought the B-52 Stratofortress and later the KC-135 Stratotanker to Fairchild. In 1961, the 92nd became the first wing in the nation to acquire the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile. With the addition of the Atlas, the 92nd was redesignated the 92nd Strategic Aerospace Wing. However, the designation remained longer than the missiles as the Atlas missiles were removed in 1965.

On 1 March 1966, the 3636th Combat Crew Training Group was activated and in 1971 the wing assumed control over all of the Air Force survival schools.

From August 1990 to March 1991, the 92nd deployed a total of 560 personnel in support of Operation, DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. The 43rd and 92nd Air Refueling Squadrons flew a combined total of 4,000 hours, offloading 22.5 million pounds of fuel to such receiver aircraft as the A-6, A-10, B-52, C-5, Tornado and the F-117A.

On 1 September 1991, under the Air Force's reorganization, the 92nd Bombardment Wing (Heavy) was redesignated the 92nd Wing, emphasizing a dual bombing and refueling role.

In June 1992, the wing became part of the newly formed Air Combat Command (ACC) and was redesignated the 92nd Bomb Wing. As the Strategic Air Command (SAC) finished up 46 years of service to the nation, Fairchild bomber and tanker crews took top honors at Proud Shield '92. This was SAC's final bombing/navigation competition. The wing won the Fairchild Trophy for the best bomber/tanker team as well as

(Continued on the following page)



Around the Bases: Fairchild AFB, Washington (Cont.)

the Saunders Trophy for the tanker unit attaining the most points on all competition missions.

December 7, 1993 marked the beginning of perhaps the largest change and transition in the history of Fairchild and the 92nd Bomb Wing when the first B-52 left Fairchild to be turned over to another unit. The 92nd Bomb Wing's B-52s had been assigned to ACC, while the KC-135s were assigned to the Air Mobility Command and designated the 453rd Operations Group. During the spring of 1994, B-52s were transferred to other units and flown to other bases with the last bomber departing on May 25, 1994. The bomber mission of the 92nd had ended after 52 years.

On July 1, 1994, the 92nd Bomb Wing was redesignated the 92nd Air Refueling Wing and Fairchild was transferred from the Air Combat Command to the Air Mobility Command creating the largest air refueling wing in the Air Force..

Dubbed as the "Tanker Hub of the Northwest," the wing is capable of maintaining an air bridge across the nation and the world in support of US and allied forces.

Source: <https://www.fairchild.af.mil>; <http://globalsecurity.org>.

Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: Boeing B-17G "Flying Fortress"

Described by General Hap Arnold as the "backbone of our worldwide aerial offensive", the B-17 served in all theaters of the war and a symbol of the daylight bombing campaign against Nazi Germany.

In 1934, the Army Air Corps requested bids from the U.S. aircraft industry for a multi-engine bomber. The airplane had to carry a 2,000 bomb load a distance of 2,000 miles at a speed of 200 miles per hour. Using its own money and staking the firm's future on the results, Boeing Aircraft Corporation developed a four-engine bomber designated the Model 299. The first flight, on 28 July 1935, demonstrated a performance that exceeded all other bombers and most fighters then in military service. It must have seemed to Boeing that their gamble had failed when, almost at the end of the military trials, the Model 299 crashed on take-off. Fortunately the investigation proved that the aircraft had been flown with the flying controls locked and a design flaw did not cause the crash; however, Boeing failed to win the production contract. Nonetheless, the Air Corps was impressed enough to order 13 service-test models designated the YB/Y1B-17. These aircraft demonstrated the potential to carry out long-range strategic bombing and the Air Corps ordered 39 B-17B production airplanes in August 1937. 38 B-17Cs followed and twenty were supplied to the RAF in the spring of 1941. The C model was heavier and had more powerful engines. The armament stations and gun configurations were also modified. In July, these bombers became the first Flying Fortresses tested in combat. RAF crews identified many deficiencies and were generally dissatisfied with the aircraft. There was insufficient armament and armor and self-sealing fuel and oil tanks were lacking. The next model, the B-17D adopted some of these improvements but the E model marked the turning point in design sporting a new redesigned aft fuselage with a larger vertical fin and a tail gun station. The last production variant was the G model. When the last B-17 rolled off the line on 9 April 1945, a grand total of 12,731 had come from Boeing (6,981), Douglas (3,000) and Lockheed Vega (2,750).

The museum's B-17G, SN 44-83624, was built by the Douglas Aircraft Corporation in Long Beach, California and delivered to the USAAF on 26 April 1945 with its first assignment at Patterson Field, Ohio. The aircraft is not a combat veteran. It was transferred to the AMC Museum in July 1989 and in 1995 painted in the markings of the 381st Bomb Group with nose art by noted aviation artist Gil Cohen.



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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.

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