AMCM PRESENTS

A NEW EXHIBIT ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN MILITARY TRANSPORT

— Gen. Howell M. Estes Jr
MAC’s commander brought airlift into the jet age

— Gen. Howell M. Estes III
A four-star general remembers his dedicated father

Plus:

• AMC Museum helps a Dover airman work toward her dream

• The bucket list: a flight in a B-17 plus a memorable Pennsylvania air show
The AMC Museum 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. Viewpoints in this publication are those of the contributing authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The AMC Museum Foundation or of the Museum’s staff. Subscriptions are free and are mailed via nonprofit standard mail to paid-up members of The AMC Museum Foundation Inc.

Contributions. Reader comments, articles and ideas are solicited for future issues. Mail to The Hangar Digest, 1301 Heritage Road, Dover AFB DE 19902-5301; fax 302-677-5940; or email ntrprz@dmv.com.

Contact Editor Master Sgt. Jeff Brown, USAF (Ret.) via email at ntrprz@dmv.com. Photos are by Jeff Brown, except as noted.

Air Mobility Command Museum
Mission Statement
The mission of the Air Mobility Command Museum is twofold:
- To present the history and development of military airlift and tanker operations.
- In a goal closely aligned with the first, to portray the rich history of Dover Air Force Base and its predecessor, Dover Army Airfield.

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What is the Air Mobility Command Museum?
Located in Building 1301 on Dover Air Force Base, Kent County, Delaware, the AMC Museum is part of the National Museum of the United States Air Force’s field museum system. Building 1301 was built in 1944 and used in World War II by the 4146 Base Unit as a secret rocket development site at what was known as the Dover Army Airfield. During the 1950s through 1970s, the area was home to various fighter squadrons serving the base. Following several years of inactivity, the facility was renovated to house the AMC Museum. The Museum consists of the former hangar, administrative offices, shop and heating plant, and now counts more than 30 planes as part of its inventory.

Building 1301 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. Although located on Dover AFB proper, entrance to the Museum may be made from Delaware Route 9, south of the base. Admission to and parking at the Museum is free and military identification is not required. The Air Mobility Command Museum is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. It is closed on Mondays, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For more information, call 302-677-5939.

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Despite cuts, AMCM keeps on getting better

Like everyone else affected by sequestration the Museum is taking a hit this year. We’ve lost 20 percent of our yearly budget. But since we have not had a budget increase in more than 15 years while doubling in size, things will become especially interesting.

The good news is that we have Master Sgt. Les Polley and an awesome posse of volunteers that can and do step in to make sure our public visitors still receive the very best experience when they come to visit.

Also affected is the arrival of our C-5, No. 69-0014, which we had hoped to add to our collection in March. The whole procedure is way too complicated for me to understand let alone explain but the short story is that we will get the plane whenever it is released and when funding is allotted to retire it.

Several years ago, when it became time to retire a C-141 and turn it over to the Museum, it turns out it was cheaper to fly it to Dover than to fly it to the Boneyard and retire it. Several years ago, because it was taking so long, I turned to the USAF for help. They gave us an offer we couldn’t refuse and in a few days we had it in our yard.

I mentioned last issue that nationally known aviation artist Dave Godek was moving from Oregon to Delaware, at least in part to be near one of his favorite museums. You may recognize Dave’s painting of our C-54 making an approach to land at Templehof Airport during the Berlin Airlift.

I mentioned last issue that nationally known aviation artist Dave Godek was moving from Oregon to Delaware, at least in part to be near one of his favorite museums. You may recognize Dave’s painting of our C-54 making an approach to land at Templehof Airport during the Berlin Airlift. It is prominently displayed in our Berlin Airlift Exhibit. Many thanks for your continued support and welcome to the Diamond State, Dave.

Deborah Sellars, our collections manager, has been conscientiously examining each and every artifact in our collection to comply with the bi-annual requirement to physically inventory our artifacts. The good news is that we will be going to a five-year cycle soon to ease the workload on overstretched curators, both in the field and at the National Museum. We have been tracking our artifacts internally using an Access-based program that Deborah has developed for over the past 20 years. We also use the proprietary system developed for the USAF Heritage Program.

Just recently, we were looking for a specific uniform coat out of the hundred or so that we have. Instead of looking though boxes stacked on shelves or on padded hangars I only had to type in the donor name and the information I needed popped up in less than one second. Technology is great when it can be harnessed to make tedious jobs simple.

Hal Sellars is working with Paul George to erect a new Vietnam exhibit and it already looks like a winner. They completely gutted one of our exhibit rooms and took the interior back to its basic cement floor and exposed wood stud walls, just like what many Vietnam-era vets would recognize as a “hooch.” A hooch could be a barracks for airmen, or a bar or a flight line coffee-and-doughnut hangout. Each was intensely customized depending on the skills and abilities of the residents.

Hal also has completed a small display that compliments a traveling exhibit we have from the Smithsonian titled “How We Worked.” This temporary exhibit shows how Americans were employed in the early 20th century. Our little addition shows some of the tools familiar to aircraft mechanics. As we all know, pilots without maintainers are just people with leather coats and cool sunglasses.

— Mike

Edmond L. “Ed” Barnes
Aug. 25, 1929—Feb. 9, 2013

The Air Mobility Command Museum lost one of the volunteers upon who we depend so much with the passing of Edmond L. “Ed” Barnes.

Ed died Saturday, Feb. 9, 2013, at Milford Memorial Hospital, Milford, Del., with his family in attendance. Born Aug. 25, 1929, in Syracuse, N.Y., he proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years, retiring as a technical sergeant. His career took him to many places, including a combat tour during the Korean War.

Ed’s final assignment was at Dover Air Force Base, Del., from where he retired from military service. His hobbies and activities included volunteering at the Museum, where he worked as an aircraft restoration crew member and crew chief. Ed was the driving force behind the restoration of the AMC Museum’s CG-4A glider. He said it could be done and it is through his leadership that it was done.

He continued his proud association with the military through his membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 8801, Smyrna, Del.; the Walter L. Fox American Legion Post No. 2, Dover, Del.; and the Delaware Veterans Association Post No. 2, Dover.

Ed was interred with full military honors at the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Millsboro, Del.

Ed’s family and friends were key to his life and he spent many happy moments with all. He will be sorely missed here at the Air Mobility Command Museum.
Profile
Gen. Howell M. Estes Jr: a man and his mission
AMCM pays tribute to the man who revolutionized air transport in the Air Force

“Victory is the beautiful, bright coloured flower. Transport is the stem without which it never could have blossomed.” — Winston Churchill, The River War

When Gen. Howell M. Estes Jr. closed out a 33-year military career in August 1969, he left behind a legacy of combat bravery, command resourcefulness and far-sighted innovation. His influence is still felt today at units throughout the Air Mobility Command and particularly at Dover Air Force Base.

As such it’s fitting the Air Mobility Command Museum’s newly opened “History of Airlift” exhibition pays tribute to Estes. At its center is an imposing life-size figure of the four-star general, dressed in his Military Airlift Command flight jacket, complete with command pilot wings and Military Airlift Command patch, plus the general’s service cap, with the traditional clouds and thunderbolts on the bill.

Nearby are displayed Estes’ Class A uniform blouse, complete with 14 ribbons including two awards of the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, and several trophies and awards bestowed during his career.

“We wanted to focus on the history of airlift, from the 1930s, when it became a real deal, and bring it up to today,” said AMC Museum Director Mike Leister, noting the display highlights all facets of air transport operations, from moving truckloads of cargo to distant theaters to carrying battle-wounded soldiers back home.

Leister feels much of what now defines air transport has its roots in the ideas Estes championed.

“General Estes was the last commander of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) and the first commander of the Military Airlift Command (MAC), and he took MAC into the jet age,” Leister said. “When we learned we could obtain some of his personal items and memorabilia, we knew it made sense to anchor our exhibit on his leadership.”

A good horse and a polo mallet

The son of U.S. Army Col. Howell M. Estes and his wife, Juanita, the future general was born Sept. 14, 1914, while his father was stationed at Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. The family left Georgia for Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, when Estes was just a year old, later moving to several Army posts including Fort Monroe, Va. A sister, Katherine, joined the family when they were living in Tennessee.

An athletic young man, Estes was known for his interest in polo (“He does nothing but talk of his horse,” noted his high school yearbook), who also served as captain of the polo team during two of his four years at the U.S. Military Academy. In Estes’ last year, West Point won the national championship in polo.

“A good horse, a polo mallet and three teammates are all he desires,” noted the Academy yearbook in 1936. “The Cavalry will find this man much to its liking.”

Indeed, Estes found his way to the mounted forces, joining the 7th Cavalry Regiment and later being assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. Deciding to transfer to the Air Corps, he was assigned to Class 40-A of the Dallas Aviation School and Air College. Estes was one of 38 graduates, from an original roster of 64 cadets, who graduated Sept. 19, 1939. Five of those graduates later went on to flag rank in the Air Force.

Estes had perhaps gained his interest in flying from his father, who served as an instructor from 1927 to 1928 and again from 1929 to 1931, at the U.S. Army Tactical Air School at Langley Field, Va.

“Having been an Army brat around Langley Field, Virginia, and having had my first airplane ride there in about 1926, it was not at all unusual that I decided early on that I would try to get into flight training after college,” he said in an interview published in the Fall 1992 journal of the American Aviation Historical Society.

In 1943, seven years after receiving his second lieutenant’s bars, Estes was a full colonel and had been named director for training and operations at the Army’s Advanced Flying School at Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas. He later moved on to command flying training bases at Waco and Lubbock airfields.

By June 1948, Estes was serving as assistant chief of staff for plans at the U.S. Air Forces in Europe when the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on the city of Berlin. Drawing on a contingency plan Estes’ operations division had drawn up earlier, U.S. Air Force aircraft began hauling vital supplies into the city.

After his return to the United States and completing the Air War College, Estes was assigned to March Air Force Base, California, where he eventually became commander of the 44th Bombardment Wing, training airmen to fly the B-29 Superfortress in the Korean War. Only three months after arriving on base, Estes was sent on temporary
duty as vice commander of the Far East Air Forces Bomber Command. While there, he flew 25 combat missions over Korea.

In 1952, Estes was named commander of the 12th Air Division; in addition, he was selected in October 1952 as commander of Air Task Group 7.4, the Air Force component of Operation Castle, one of several overseas thermonuclear weapons testing programs. In order to command the task group, Estes was promoted to brigadier general on Nov. 29, 1952, and assumed his duties on Aug. 1, 1953.

Castle was a major undertaking for the burgeoning U.S. nuclear fleet, and Estes immediately threw himself into the task of assembling the necessary parts of the Air Force’s contribution and then coordinating with the other military services, plus the civilian scientists who would oversee the tests and collect the data.

A well-known photograph from the period shows Estes inspecting the B-36 Peacemaker bomber crews, who were assigned to take air and radiation samples during each explosion.

Following Operation Castle, Estes moved on to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, as director of Weapons Systems Operations, and then to the Pentagon as assistant deputy chief of staff for operations.

Along the way, Estes, who had a knack for gathering talented and insightful people about him, recruited an officer he’d met in 1947. Col. Gene Deatrick, who’d flown B-47s during Operation Castle and B-52s during later nuclear tests, joined Estes’ coterie in 1956 at about the time Estes received his second star. Deatrick would remain part of the general’s inner circle for eight years. Despite the differences in rank, the men became good friends.

“He didn’t want an aide,” Deatrick said, reflecting on the assignment. “He just wanted someone to fly with.”

The two seemed to spend more time on the road than at home, prompting Deatrick’s reporting official to tell him, “I have to write your performance report, but I don’t know what to put in it since you’re never here.”

Deatrick transferred to Air Force Systems Command when Estes was promoted to lieutenant general and named deputy commander of aerospace operations in 1961, and then went to Andrews AFB, Md., when Estes served as vice commander, Air Force Systems Command.

“T always say that when you first meet a man, you can tell in the first five minutes if you’d follow him through hell and back or if you’l hate his guts,” Deatrick said. “I thought he was aloof, and he wasn’t gregarious. “But I knew then I’d enjoy working for him, which I did for many years.”

That style sometimes left people scratching their heads.

Deatrick remembers one colonel who told him he simply couldn’t understand what made Estes tick.

“You know, I come into work and pass him in the hallway, and he barely acknowledges I’m there,” the colonel said.

“I told him, ‘He’s always here at six,’” Deatrick said. “You come in at eight and by that time he’s already been here for two hours.”

Estes also tended to rub some people the wrong way, particularly his peers, Deatrick said.

“His mind sometimes got him into trouble,” he said. “That’s because when he got into a group, he usually knew more what was going on than anyone else did.”

Estes proved he was one of the Air Force’s forward thinkers by taking to heart General of the Air Force Henry H. “Hap” Arnold’s admonition, “The principles of yesterday no longer apply. Air travel, air power, air transportation of troops and supplies have changed the whole picture. We must think in terms of tomorrow.”

No doubt he’d been thinking about air transport during his stint at AFSC; when he was promoted to full general and named commander of the Military Air Transport Service in July 1964, he was able to put some of those plans into effect.

Enter the C-141

The United States had demonstrated its ability to honor its international obligations by using its airlift capability during several crises between the end of World War II and the beginning of the country’s massive build-up in Vietnam in 1965. This ability to move men and equipment quickly was, Estes said, the common denominator in all of those instances.

“Thus,” he wrote in the Sept-Oct 1969 issue of Air University Review, “there is very powerful presumptive evidence that national will, made immediately manifest and unmistakable through high-speed strate-
**FOUNDATION NOTES**  
By Don Sloan

Ninety-four Air Mobility Command Museum Foundation members participated in our 2012 Annual Membership Fundraising Campaign. How much did they donate? Fifty-two of your fellow members made donations up to $50, with 33 making donations of $100. We received one $150 donation, seven donations of $250, and one each of $400 and $500.

The member-level of donors follows: 25 donors are Foundation Crew Members and 18 are Flight Crew. Fourteen are AMC Museum Foundation Squadron Commanders, one a Foundation Group Commander and one a Foundation Wing Commander. Thirty-five of our donors are Lifers.

Our annual campaign has consistently been one of our most successful fundraising avenues. We’re people, too, so we realize the sacrifice it takes to write a check to help support an organization — even an organization as likeable as the AMC Museum. While we are grateful for a $500 donation, we appreciate that a $50 donation can be just as great a sacrifice to a family, and keeping that in mind, be assured we work hard to make sure we spend those dollars wisely.

Some of you may remember we originally started this fundraising attempt in 2006, “targeting” only our Life members. For four years, we averaged just over $2500 a year. Then in 2011 we decided to give ALL our members a chance to participate — you can see the results! Fantastic!

The 2011 total raised was $7,890. This year’s total is $8,050! As you all know, The AMC Museum Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c) (3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible within IRS regulations. Those donations help us fulfill the mission of the AMC Museum as an aviation and aerospace education, scientific, cultural, historical and inspirational facility for the public and the Air Force community. And we’re still the NUMBER ONE free cultural attraction in the state.

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Shopping in the AMC Museum store just got easier. You now can go online and shop from the privacy of your own home. Kudos to Keith Kreisher, another one of our very dedicated store volunteers, who has spent countless hours over the last year to get us into the eStore business. Literally, we couldn’t have done it without Keith. Remember that the AMC Museum Store is a great place to buy retirement gifts, souvenirs, birthday presents, or mementos for the grandkids. Simply visit www.store.amcmuseum.org. And don’t forget that as an AMC Museum member, you are able to receive your 10 percent discount on all purchases. If you are a member and you haven’t received a notice that the eStore is open, we most likely don’t have a good email address for you. That email will explain how to get your discount.

If you have any questions, please call Keith or store manager Jim Stewart at 302-677-5992.

Free Shipping!
In the USA

Hangar Flying” Welcomes Author Bob Dorr back to the AMC Museum

At 1 p.m. on Sunday, April 28, the AMC Museum welcomes noted columnist, author and historian Bob Dorr back to share his latest book, Mission to Tokyo. Nationally known for his gripping aviation histories, Bob’s latest offering takes the reader on a World War II strategic bombing mission from an airfield on the western Pacific island of Tinian to Tokyo and back. Told in the veterans’ words, Mission to Tokyo is a narrative of every aspect of long-range bombing, including pilots and other aircrew, ground crew, and the escort fighters that accompanied the heavy bombers on their perilous missions. B-29 Superfortress missions were catastrophic to the industry and population of Japan’s capital city.

Robert F. Dorr is a retired American diplomat, an Air Force veteran, a prodigious author (more than 60 books), a columnist for the Air Force Times newspaper and a longtime friend of the AMC Museum. Autographed copies of “HellHawks,” “Air Force One,” “Mission To Tokyo” and several of Bob’s other books will be available. The event begins at 1:00 pm in the main hangar with light hors d’oeuvres.

There will be a Questions and Answers session afterward.

A $5 donation is appreciated to help defray costs. Bob will be available before and afterward to sign books and answer your specific inquiries.

Welcome to the New Online Store!

Jim Douglass
February 22, 1940 - February 10, 2013

As president and a founding member of the Massey Aerodrome and Massey Air Museum in Massey, Md., Jim Douglass wore a lot of hats. At Massey, he was their banker, member coordinator, purchasing agent, docent, director, manager – Jim’s hands were in everything.

Although a highly appreciated and much-respected member of The AMC Museum Foundation Board, Jim also was a previous board member of the Experimental Aircraft Association, a long-time member of Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the Maryland Airport Managers Association, and a former Commodore of the Columbia Sailing Association. Jim was a Quiet Birdman.

After family (and flying), Jim’s love was dope and fabric! There are no aircraft at Massey that Jim hasn’t touched! His methodical and meticulous habits led to truly creative and outstanding work. His direction and leadership were invaluable during the restoration of our CG-4A, and his influence can still easily be seen in the ongoing glider wing restoration that our volunteers are finishing up at Jim’s stomping grounds, Massey Air Museum.

We will miss him and his frequent, and always convincing, input to our Board. As you look West, take a moment to smile -- the AMC Museum is a better place because of Jim Douglass!
Estes on Estes: a son talks about his father

Ask anyone who’s grown up with one or possibly both parents serving in uniform. There’s a lot of time spent away from home, frequent moves, new locales, parting from friends. It’s not an easy life.

Now imagine that scenario when one of those parents is a general officer destined to become recognized as one of the most forward-thinking men of his time.


As a youngster, Estes said he really didn’t attach any significance to the fact his father was an up and coming senior officer in the newly established U.S. Air Force.

“I wasn’t really aware of it at first,” Estes said. “What I remember most about living in the Air Force was the constant moves. It made me a lot more adaptable than I would have been otherwise.

“I did get to meet an awful lot of people, though, some of whom are still friends.”

The younger Estes was born Dec. 16, 1941, just nine days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and only 10 days after his father was promoted to the rank of major. The senior Estes was only five years out of West Point and had only recently transferred to the U.S. Army’s Air Corps. Tapped to command training bases for aircrews needed overseas, Estes had moved up quickly, pinning on the eagles of a full colonel before his son’s second birthday.

By the time the young Estes celebrated his tenth birthday, he, his mother, Nan, and younger brothers Mike and Charlie had seen the senior Estes accept at least a dozen different assignments, from desert bases in Texas to war-devastated Europe to combat in the skies over Korea.

“It was life with my mother, and not with my father,” Estes recalled. “My father was always traveling; he was gone tremendous amounts of time. I remember my mother keeping track of the days.

“My father was the head of the house, but my mother ran the family from day to day.”

From January 1946 to July 1948, young Estes and his family lived in Wiesbaden, Germany, where they saw firsthand the devastation wrought by World War II. Part of that time his father was working for U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander Gen. Curtis LeMay in responding to the Soviet blockade of West Berlin, which brought on the Berlin Airlift.

Even as a five-year-old, Estes realized living conditions were particularly bleak for the Germans.

“I was amazed [the military] let families come over,” Estes said. “They still had lots of rubble in the streets.

“We had to grow our own vegetables on the side of the house, and surrounded them with high fences and screens to prevent them from disappearing. The Germans were in bad straits. I can remember them coming over the wall on our property and taking apples from the apple trees in our yard just so they would have something to eat.”

Although he only opened up about many of his experiences in his later years, growing up Estes knew his father was extremely unhappy that he’d spent all of World War II training pilots but never actually seeing combat himself.

That changed when the Korean conflict broke out after the family’s return to the United States, and Estes made every effort to get into the war.

“He got himself over there as quick as he could,” Estes said. “He felt he needed combat experience. As young as I was, I can remember his really complaining about not fighting in World War II.”

As a senior colonel and vice commander of the Far East Air Forces Bomber Command, Estes got into the thick of things. During five months in 1951, he flew 25 combat missions over Korea, racking up 328 hours in the B-29 Superfortress.

Estes said his father seldom discussed his work during the rare times he was at home.

“My dad was in some respects an extrovert, but in many ways an introvert. He kept to himself. He’d just sit at the dinner table with my mother trying to strike up a conversation.

“She’d say he has so much responsibility that he thinks about it all the time. I think that when he came home, he just wanted to relax.”

To that end, Estes enjoyed golfing almost every Saturday and in his later years often unwound by hunting or fishing.

As his son was getting close to graduating high school and considering a career as an engineer, Estes gave him some advice.

“The one conversation I remember having with was when he was at the Pentagon and I was in high school,” Estes said. “He called me outside and said he wanted to talk to me. This was very unusual for him to do and had me a bit worried.”

“What he said was, ‘I don’t care what you do. If you want to sell shoes, it’s ok with me. Just be the best shoe salesman there ever was.’”

“That was the one piece of advice my father gave me I remember. It stuck with me the rest of my life.”

Instead of engineering school, the younger Estes went on to attend the Air Force Academy, eventually rising to the rank of general. He and his father are one of only two father-son combinations to achieve the Air Force’s highest rank. He retired in 1998.

During his own career, Estes said he often encountered senior enlisted personnel who had known his father when they were young airmen, and that all commented on his father’s commitment to the enlisted force. Estes said that one of his father’s proudest moments came in May 1967, when he became the second officer to be inducted into the Order of the Sword, an honor bestowed by noncommissioned officers in recognition of service to enlisted personnel.

“I know he paid a lot of attention to the people out there doing the work,” Estes said. “He realized the day-to-day work in MATS and MAC was really done by the young enlisted personnel and senior NCOs.

“He was really proud to be the commander of a group of people who worked so hard and who served their country.”

Though pleased with his accomplishments during his 33 years in uniform, Estes said his father rarely talked about his career.

“I know he was very, very proud of what he did,” Estes said. “I think he really felt he was a servant of the people and the taxpayers. He was given huge responsibility and because of that felt he had to do his absolute best on behalf of the country.”
This Dover airman has her eye on the sky

Visitors at the Air Mobility Command Museum may be excused if they do a bit of a double-take when passing the Museum’s aircraft flight simulator, but it’s not often they’ll see someone with two stripes seemingly at the controls of the giant C-5 – or any other aircraft, for that matter.

But Airman 1st Class Rachel Simmons isn’t someone who’s just trying out the simulator for fun. She’s deadly serious. You can see it in her eyes, in how she carries herself, in how she talks about her future with the Air Force. Simmons is going places, and she’s been depending on the Air Mobility Command Museum to help her get there.

Goal-oriented airman
A former military dependent – her father is a retired Air Force master sergeant -- Simmons, 26, is a maintenance data systems analyst at the 436th Maintenance Operations Squadron. She is working toward a double goal: a commission as an Air Force second lieutenant and a slot as a remotely piloted aircraft pilot.

The first goal is within reach: she entered the Air Force with a college degree, but opted first to enlist rather than seek a commission. The second goal is being met in that simulator. Simmons is going places, and she’s been depending on the Air Mobility Command Museum to help her get there.

Simmons’ DNA. In addition to her retiree father, her mother also wore the uniform, as have both sisters. One is a C-17 mechanic and the other a defense paralegal.

“IT’s just the way we were,” she said. “It would have been crazy to think of going into another branch.”

Simmons began working in high school, and at 16 was doing odd jobs and saving money while working with her father’s company. She had no scholarships and did not qualify for financial aid, so she had to pay her own way through college, sometimes working four jobs while carrying a full academic load.

When Simmons received her degree in photography, she had paid off her college bills and was debt free. She worked in several jobs, including that of a family services counselor at a cemetery, before making good on a pledge to join the Air Force.

Although aiming for an Air Force commission when she entered active duty in 2011, she decided to enlist instead when the commissioning board was called off.

“I was disappointed when the board was cancelled, but I didn’t take the plunge,” Simmons said. “I didn’t want to go back on my word.”

Although anticipating an overseas tour out of technical training school, Simmons instead was assigned to Dover, arriving in May 2012.

Ever since, she’s been working on perfecting her skills with the 436th Maintenance Operations Squadron as well as honing her remote piloting skills at the AMC Museum.

“I think I have a lot of potential and a lot of skills,” she said. “I want a challenge, not that being enlisted isn’t a challenge, because it is, but I want to see how far I can go.”

Doyle thinks she’s up to that challenge. “She has a lot on her plate, but she’s not going to give up,” he predicted. “She’s dedicated, really dedicated, and she’s got a good head on her shoulders.

“I really wish her the best of luck in her career choices. I think she’ll do well.”

Airman 1st Class Rachel Simmons
World War II Weekend
Pennsylvania air show offers trip back in time

Ever yearn for the days of shaving out of steel pot helmets, fending off enemy fighters in unpressurized aircraft, face to face combat in tiny French villages or wolfing down cold C-rations?

If you do, then the World War II Weekend is just what you’re looking for, particularly because the 2012 air show at Dover Air Force Base has been cancelled.

And even if you don’t wax nostalgic for “the good old days” of the military, or weren’t even born until long after VJ Day, a great time can be had at this event, presented annually during the first full weekend of June.

Held at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, Pa., the centerpiece of the weekend is its Gathering of Warbirds; aircraft that have regularly appeared range from a Boeing N2S-1 Stearman to Fifi, the world’s remaining flyable B-29 Superfortress.

The show regularly features numerous transport aircraft including a C-46 Commando, C-54 Skymaster and two C-47 Skytrains, the latter being versions of aircraft on display at the AMC Museum.

Almost every aircraft at the show is in airworthy condition, giving flying enthusiasts a chance to see these and other aircraft take to the skies in rarely seen displays of historic airmanship.

“The show is the museum’s biggest and only fund raiser for the year,” said Russ Strine, president of the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum. “We are not supported in any way except by our own doing. It requires more than 400 museum member volunteers, 250 Civil Air Patrol cadets, 200 Boy Scouts and other groups to produce.”

The lineup typically includes as many as 1,800 re-enactors, 80 aircraft, 200 military vehicles and more than two dozen special guests on hand, with literally millions of dollars worth of antique vehicles and aircraft on display throughout the weekend.

A large flea market gives attendees the chance to search for almost any type of paraphernalia, including weapons, uniforms and books.

The weekend of June 7 through June 9 will be the 23rd annual Gathering of Warbirds, which has become the world’s largest and best-known event of its kind, with people traveling from as far as Europe and Asia among the more than 30,000 people in attendance.

It will be a full day each day, beginning when the gates open at 8:30 until the closing dinner and dance on Friday and Saturday nights. In 2012, various stages throughout the airfield hosted entertainers channeling celebrities from Abbott and Costello through Frank Sinatra. President Franklin D. Roosevelt also made an appearance.

Each year, the sound of machine guns rattling and carbines firing draws the attention of crowds as they gather atop a hill to watch a simulated infantry attack on a French village.

Re-enactors portray American GIs, villagers and German soldiers as each side battles the other. Casualties are realistic, with dead and wounded from each side littering the battlefield. Medics load wounded soldiers onto jeeps and speed them away to safety while French mademoiselles help more than one wounded GI to safety.

The battle ends as German troops lay down their arms while their commanding general, decked out in full uniform, is led away, hands raised in surrender.

Other 2012 events included a flamethrower demonstration, a recreation of the Iwo Jima flag raising, lectures by World War II veterans, and a parade.

But an air show wouldn’t be an air show without airplanes zooming by over the crowds, and the World War II weekend had those experiences in spades. In 2012, crowds squinted into the skies, cameras, video recorders and even iPads in hand as a Japanese Aichi D3A “Val” buzzed the runway, followed by one of the weekend’s three North American P-51 Mustangs. A Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless performed acrobatics, often trailing a bright plume of smoke.

And, of course, no World War II show would be complete without appearances by some of the conflict’s most famous aircraft, planes that in 2012 included a Consolidated B-24 Liberator, a North American B-25 Mitchell, a Curtiss-Wright SB2C-5 Helldiver and a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, nicknamed the Yankee Lady.

In all, it’s a hugely satisfying show, not only for those who walk through the gates each day, but for those who arrange the event.

“The gratifications are too numerous to mention,” Strine said. “To be able to bring so many different venues together … and have it all jell into the most unique event and the largest of its kind in the world is beyond gratifying to me.”

For the most up-to-date information on the 2013 World War II weekend, go to http://maam.org/maamwwii.html.
From the Editor

Yankee Lady provides most memorable trip

OK, that’s one item off my bucket list.
My ride in the B-17 Yankee Lady during the 2012 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum’s World War II weekend was loud, cold, cramped and altogether wonderful.

I can use those words without fear because I got to experience a tiny taste of what B-17 aviators went through during bombing missions in World War II. The B-17 was not insulated, so airmen often experienced bone-chilling cold. It had no soundproofing, so the thunder and vibration of its four Wright Cyclone engines rumbled from the front of the ship to its tail. Decked out in oxygen masks, heated flying suits and flak vests, airmen had a hard time moving from one station to another, particularly if they were under attack.

I’ve long been an admirer of B-17s, including the AMCM’s own Sleepy Time Gal, so when the opportunity came to take a flight on one of the few remaining flyable Forts, I jumped at the chance.

Of course, I didn’t face the hours of boredom as each plane made for its destination, nor the minutes of stark raving terror as the Forts released their bombs while under attack. What I had was a peaceful trip over the rolling hills of southern Pennsylvania, far from any threat of enemy fire.

It cost $450 and only lasted 30 minutes, but it was the ride of my life.

Absolute nirvana

Yankee Lady is owned by the Yankee Air Museum out of Belleville, Mich. Delivered in July 1945, it never saw combat service. Flown as a rescue craft, surveyor and sprayer, it was acquired by the Yankee Air Museum in 1986, restored and given a wartime appearance and now makes several air show appearances each year.

The 66-year-old aircraft is a lot of fun to fly, said pilot and flight engineer Peter Sellgren, who serves on the Lady’s crew.

“It’s a privilege and honor to fly this airplane,” he said.

“It’s the fulfillment of a lifetime ambition.”

Sellgren added without a hint of irony, “This plane is completely different from anything I fly at work.”

As it is, the plane is 98% authentic, with only a GPS and modern avionics setting it apart from a wartime bird. It took nine years to bring the plane to flyable condition.

“You get the sights and smells and sounds of World War II,” while flying, Snellgren added. “The good thing is you’re not shooting at anybody and no one’s shooting at you.”

Eleven other customers boarded the B-17 as I fumbled my way past the two waist guns and around the unoccupied belly turret to the radio room, where I peered out a tiny window to a wartime bird. At startup, the engines coughed and blew smoke, startling my wife Renate, who was watching from behind a barrier.

The take-off was long and rumbling as the B-17 clawed for air. I almost could close my eyes and imagine flying for the Eighth Air Force. But I didn’t do that – instead I stuck a video camera against the radio room’s upper window. From there I could see down the spine of the aircraft, past the huge tail and horizontal stabilizers, back at the airport runway we had just left.

I couldn’t help but wonder if this is what my second cousin, Staff Sgt. Clair “Sam” Carl saw on Sept. 12, 1944, as his plane headed for Berlin. Actually, he probably was bored. Having completed one tour of duty, Sam volunteered to go back into combat and was on his 37th mission when German flak brought him down. His body was recovered five years later, and he now rests in our hometown of Tower City, Pa., just a few miles from the Lancaster County farmland over which I now flew.

The 12 of us were free to move about the aircraft, and so we traded positions every few minutes. I had trouble navigating the bomb bay, where I could look through the gaps between the bomb bay doors and fuselage to the ground below. The walkway is only eight inches wide and the bomb racks so close together I had to exhale and hold my breath to squeeze past.

The best view from a B-17 is from the Plexiglas nose, where from where the bombardier used his top secret Norden bombsight to zero in on targets below. The bombardier’s station offered an almost 180-degree view of the countryside. Sitting there, I almost felt suspended in space.

Imagine trying to line up the Norden with flak bursting nearby and shrapnel rattling against the ship’s skin. There was no evasive action possible as the bombardier honed in on the target. The tension up until “Bombs away!” was called would have been excruciating, but then again, the men aboard each B-17 probably were too busy during this time to notice.

Like those crews of old, we eventually headed for home, or in our case, the Reading airport runway. Touchdown was as smooth as glass. We taxied to the hardstand, the 12 of us took photos of each other, and we parted ways.

Renate didn’t have to ask how the flight went. I think the grin on my face said it all.
Estes

(Continued from page 5)

turned to the Air Force Reserve.

Up until that time, Reserve units generally operated on their own from small airports or former Air Force bases, with little support from Regular Air Force units. Estes planned to change the fundamental underpinnings of airlift operations by associating Reserve AF units Regular Air Force wings and groups.

This concept, the Reserve Associate Program, proposed by Estes in January 1966, meant affected Reserve units no longer would own their aircraft, as had been the case, but would share flying time and maintenance duties on active duty planes assigned to active duty units.

The idea was not a popular one at first, as Reservists worried about becoming second-stringers to the active duty force. However, as the C-124 fleet continued to age, Reserve commanders eventually accepted the fact that while they wanted to become a part of the jet age, a parsimonious Congress would not provide the funding to send new C-141s to anything other than active duty units.

Estes sold the concept to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who approved it in July 1967.

Estes backed the program by ensuring reservists got highly-coveted C-141 training slots; reservists also were given precedence when it came to using the new Starlifters for training missions.

The use of the C-141 to move massive amounts of men and material was proven during Operation Eagle Thrust, flown between November and December, 1967. The largest such operation up to Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force moved more than 10,000 U.S. Army troops and more than 5,000 tons of cargo from Fort Campbell, Ky., to Vietnam. More than 370 C-141 missions and 20 missions using the turboprop C-133 took two of the three brigades making up the 101st Airborne Division to Vietnam, covering more than 10,000 miles.

It was a tremendous accomplishment for American airlift forces under the new Military Airlift Command, which had superseded MATS on Jan. 1, 1966.

“The airlift demonstrates the tremendous strides MAC has made in strategic airlift capability in very few years,” Estes said at the time.

“There is no question that this ability to move division-size combat units to war zones quickly is a vital deterrent to general war,” he added.

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, a West Point classmate and close friend of Estes, was equally pleased.

“This historic airlift had proved that, with the speed and efficiency afforded by the Military Airlift Command, we can place combat-ready forces anywhere in the world in a minimum amount of time,” Westmoreland said.

Dover AFB was one of five bases to contribute to Operation Eagle Thrust, and the Airlift Control Element that executed the airlift was made up mostly of personnel from the base.

The effort was to earn Dover’s contributing units the coveted Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Regular and Reserves work together

Estes’ efforts brought major changes to Dover Air Force Base, which up until 1968 had operated without Air Force Reserve components.

Under the Reserve Associate Program, the Air Force Reserve deactivated the 912th Tactical Airlift Group, based at Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Montgomery County, Pa., and transferred it – without its C-119 aircraft – to Dover Air Force Base as the 912th Military Airlift Group (Associate). Under the plan, the 912th would organize and train a C-141 associate airlift group using aircraft, facilities and other equipment assigned to the active duty 436th Military Airlift Wing.

The idea was to use the augment the 436th with C-141 reserve aircrews, maintenance support and aerial port operations to allow the active duty wing to get full use of its assigned Starlifters.

Estes was on hand at Dover for the formal activation ceremonies on Sept. 21, 1968 (although the official activation date was set for Sept. 25, 1968).

The assignment of 429 drill pay personnel and 13 civilians to Dover under the Reserve Associate Program was “part of a real revolution,” Estes said.

“I know that we in MAC could never achieve from the C-141 its inherent potential without this program,” he said. “And furthermore, I know that our Air Force Reserve people could never fly that great airplane until it was old and weary weigh if it were not for the associate program.”

The ceremonies marked Estes’ second, and as it turned out, last, visit to Dover. He had made an initial trip to the 1607th Air Transport Wing, the predecessor to the 436th, in January 1965, six months after assuming command of MATS.

Members of the 912th continued to fly the C-141 with their active duty counterparts until 1973, when the group was inactivated and its personnel transferred to the 512th Military Airlift Wing. Today, as the 512th Airlift Wing, its personnel fly both the C-5 Galaxy and the C-17 Globemaster III.

Following his retirement from the Air Force on Aug. 1, 1969, Estes served as both president of World Airways and Federal Express. He later settled in the Washington, D.C., area and passed away at his home in Bethesda, Md., on July 2, 2007.

While it is impossible to note all of Estes’ contributions to air power and air transport in one corner of its hangar floor, AMCM Director Mike Leister believes the Museum has made a good start with its exhibit.

People today, Leister said, look at the C-5s and C-17s taking off and landing at Dover without much thought about their missions or the men and women behind those missions.

He hopes the airlift exhibit will lead people to think about the meaning of global transport and what it does to support those on the front lines.

“A lot of people know that heavier-than-air flight started with the Wright Brothers, they know about the B-17 and B-29 in World War II, and about the airplanes we use today,” Leister said. “But they don’t know a lot about how the Air Force got started with airlift.

“We’re hoping this will answer some questions and lead people to learn more on their own.”
February saw demolition of Hangar 1315, which the Museum used for its restoration projects. The hangar also was an alert facility for three fighter squadrons during the 1960s.

A dummy Minuteman III ICBM, similar to that used in the Air Mobile Feasibility Demonstration, arrived Jan. 23. It will be on display with our C-5 when it is delivered later this year.

Logan Handlin, 5, of Clayton, Del., gets a once-in-a-lifetime chance to try on a space shuttle helmet and glove, with a little help from ILC Dover’s Bill Ayrey. Logan and his dad, Mike, were at the Feb. 10 Hangar Flying presentation.

Abby Collier, 9, of Bear, Del., looks ready to go to work as she models a hard hat once worn by North American Rockwell engineer Jim H. Creagle Jr. during his days at the Kennedy Space Center.

Museum Director Mike Leister, left, and Mike Van Den Heuvel, right, accept a B-17 navigator’s compass and sextant, donated by Elliott Smith, president of Friends of the Bellanca Airfield.

Jim Nolan and Les Potter wax nostalgic as they look over some C-133 flight records. The two volunteers took a break Feb. 5 from their work fixing the Museum’s high-lift.

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