

Hangar Digest

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2003

From The Editor:

This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of powered flight by the Wright brothers at Kill Devil Hill, North Carolina. Plans are in the works to acknowledge this event both here at the museum and throughout the Delaware community.



However, the REALLY BIG NEWS is that we are getting the much needed funds for our new entrance, access road, fence and parking area. In addition, contracts have been let to assemble the C-121 Constellation and to transport and reassemble the C-124. Read more about these and other exciting museum happenings in the director's column.

In this and in future issues you will find "The Hall of Heroes."

The museum's "Hall of Heroes" exhibit recounts the stories of many of America's Medal of Honor recipients. A twenty year project by MSgt Ron Gough, USAF (Ret) was originally displayed at Dover AFB's Field Training Detachment. His collection was then transferred to the AMC Museum so the stories of our country's greatest heroes could be shared with our visitors. The exhibit has been praised as one of the finest Medal of Honor photo and memorabilia collections ever assembled and on several occasions has been displayed in our nation's capital, the last at a venue commemorating President George W. Bush's inauguration.

In the next issue I will begin a series of articles covering overlooked and sometimes long forgotten humanitarian and tactical airlift operations. Except for some highly publicized airlift achievements, as the Berlin Airlift, little has been mentioned of the airlifter's role in responding to past world crises. So, look for "Airlifts Remembered" starting in April.

Harry E. Heist, Editor

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LOOKING BACK

General Officers who fly as passengers on MATS transports should be afforded the opportunity of observing the performance of MATS crews. It is to our advantage that General Officers appreciate the techniques and procedures utilized by our crews as well as understand the high quality standards of crew operation we require for the performance of the MATS mission.

Source: 1607th ATG
Aircrew Bulletin,
September 1959.

From the Director

With so many things happening lately, some at a frantic pace, I asked Harry for a full-page spread so that I may bring you all up to date.

Probably the best news is that we have received the funding for the installation of our fence, road and parking area. This new road will use the existing gate (originally built for the museum) off Route 9 and will run parallel to the current perimeter road. This will allow direct access to the museum thus eliminating the necessity to enter the main base. However, there is a trade-off as on-base personnel under most circumstances, in order to get to the museum, will be required to exit the base and enter through the Route 9 gate. The placement of the fence has been quite a challenge. Thanks to some excellent aerial photography by museum foundation board member Harry Van Den Heuvel, we, along with the base civil engineers, were able to reach a satisfactory consensus as to the fence's location. This will still allow access to the east side of the base for official traffic. The new boundaries will also allow for the expansion of our aircraft ramp area along with additional vehicle parking.

Fortunately, concurrent with the fence and road project, we will be able to pave some additional area for aircraft parking. As John Demory's KC-97 report indicates, he and his crew of restoration experts will move the airplane to the museum soon after the additional ramp space is provided. We are not planning on painting the aircraft's natural aluminum exterior and our intentions are to apply the Tennessee Air National Guard markings that the aircraft carried while in service. It will be great to finally have a tanker on display at the museum.

We have held several brainstorming sessions with Ben Natrass of Worldwide Aircraft Recovery Ltd. and if all goes according to plan he and his crew will start assembling the major components of our C-121 "Connie" this month. Ben is also in the planning stage of the C-124's disassembly. As the aircraft is located within two miles of Ben's Omaha headquarters, his plan is to disassemble and ready the aircraft for shipment while at home and in between working his prior contracts.

Our C-54 now sports a new coat of paint. We have been challenged, over the past several years, to come up with a paint and an application process that met all EPA and DNREC regulations. It appears that we have found a paint that is satisfactory to both parties and one that will offer a more durable finish in protecting one of the museum's most historic aircraft.

Our new exhibit "Operation Enduring Freedom" is located in the hangar. The exhibit was designed and built by a civilian contractor using ideas from a committee led by collection manager Deborah Sellars and with the text provided by the 436th AW's Historian TSgt. Theresa Lashley.

By the time you read this our new "schoolroom" will be in place. Our educator, Dick Caldwell, will now have a facility to offer some practical instruction on the principals of flight. Additional training aids will be added over the course of the next two years.

I attended the Airlift Tanker Association convention in Nashville, Tennessee in November. We displayed our traveling exhibit and made many good contacts while passing out museum and other literature supplied by the folks at AMC.

And finally, besides the C-124, I have been notified that we should be receiving several other significant airlift aircraft within the next eighteen months. I will keep you informed.

Mike

Meet Museum Volunteer Hank Baker



Hank is the restoration project officer for the museum's C-133B Cargomaster. Upon the aircraft's arrival at Dover in July 2000, Hank formed a team of volunteers that began the restoration of the cockpit before the crew from Worldwide Aircraft Recovery started the aircraft's reassembly. When the aircraft's restoration required new tires, cockpit seat cushions and thousands of rivets, he contacted the manufacturers and all the items were donated. The instruments, the cargo decking, galley and even the honey buckets were spit-and-polished.

When he is not busy with the C-133, Hank also serves as a member of the AMC Museum Foundation's Board of Directors and yet he still finds the time to captain his pleasure boat on the Chesapeake Bay.

Hank hails from Rockford, Illinois retiring from the Air Force in 1977 with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant.

KC-97 Progress Report

Following the aircraft's debut, during the air show last May, the KC-97 was rolled back into restoration. Project officer John Demory reports that the following work has been done since then:

- The top deck fuel tanks have been installed.
- The cockpit restoration is now 60% completed.
- The bottom compartment has been degreased.
- The insulation repair work is almost complete.
- The cargo door has been resealed.
- Miscellaneous exterior work has been done.

Once all of the insulation has been installed work can begin on connecting the control cables, repairing the electrical leads and installing the cargo deck hoist. Overall, the aircraft's restoration is about 50% complete and plans are to move it to the museum following the paving of the additional ramp area.



C-124 Project Update

Although we now have the funds necessary to disassemble, transport and reassemble Old Shaky once it arrives here at Dover, we still need money for its restoration. Many parts are missing and must be either fabricated or purchased. Paint, hardware, flooring materials, seats and numerous other items will be required and your donations will aid in their purchase.

In the immediate future you will find only the donation form in the newsletter. However, when we accept delivery of the airplane and as the restoration begins, I will again include the C-124 Project Update.

Thanks to everyone, our contributions now exceed \$24,000.

Please send you tax deductible donation to:

The AMC Museum Foundation, C-124 Project,
P.O. Box 02050, Dover AFB, DE 19902-2050

Please include the form on the following page with your donation.

Outdated fundraiser

“The Hall of Heroes”

The Air Force Medal of Honor was created on July 4, 1960. Previously, the Army’s Medal of Honor was awarded to the Air Force recipients. The first to be awarded the Air Force Medal of Honor was Major Bernard F. “Bernie” Fisher, for his heroism during the Vietnam War. The citation that accompanied his award reads as follows:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On that date (10 March 1966), the special forces camp at A Shau was under attack by 2,000 North Vietnamese Army Regulars. Hostile troops had positioned themselves between the airstrip and the camp. Other hostile troops had surrounded the camp and were continuously raking it with automatic weapons fire from the surrounding hills. The tops of the 1,500-foot hills were obscured by an 800-foot ceiling, limiting aircraft maneuverability and forcing pilots to operate within the range of hostile gun positions, which often were able to fire down on the attacking aircraft. During the battle, Major Fisher observed a fellow airman crash land on the battle-torn airstrip. In the belief that the downed pilot was seriously injured and in imminent danger of capture, Major Fisher announced his intention to land on the airstrip to effect a rescue. Although aware of the extreme danger and likely failure of such an attempt, he elected to continue. Directing his own air cover, he landed his aircraft and taxied almost the full length of the runway, which was littered with battle debris and parts of an exploded aircraft. While effecting a successful rescue of the downed pilot heavy ground fire was observed, with nineteen bullets striking his aircraft. In the face of the withering ground fire, he applied power and gained enough speed to lift-off at the overrun of the airstrip. Major Fisher’s conspicuous gallantry, his profound concern for his fellow airman and his intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the United States Air Forces and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.”



Source: *USAF Southeast Asia Monograph Series: Volume VII, Monograph 9*

The Medal’s History

On December 9, 1861 bill S. No. 82 was introduced into the U.S. Senate. The bill was designed to “promote the efficiency of the Navy” by authorizing the production and distribution of “medals of honor”. On December 21st the bill was passed, authorizing 200 such medals be produced “which shall be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen and marines as shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action during the present war (Civil War).” President Lincoln signed the bill and the (Navy) Medal of Honor was born.

Two months later on February 17, 1862 a similar bill was introduced which authorized “the President to distribute medals to privates in the U.S. Army who shall distinguish themselves in battle.” President Lincoln signed this bill, S.J.R. No. 82 into law on July 14, 1862 and the Army Medal of Honor was now born. With these two acts of Congress, a unique award was created that would achieve prominence in American history like few others.

Source: *Congressional Medal of Honor Society*

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 post card, 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.

BEFORE E-MAIL? V-MAIL! by: Deborah Sellars

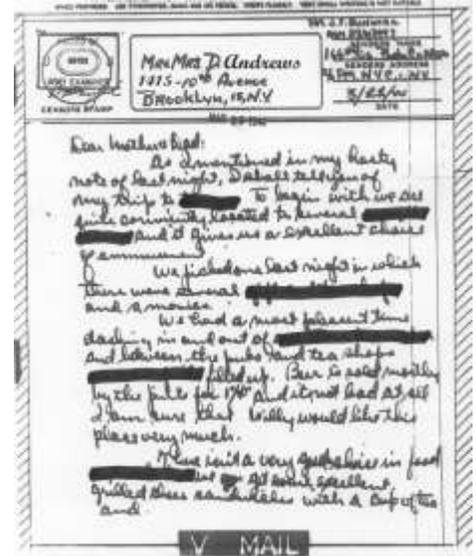
Keeping in touch with friends and family when you're far from home is one of the most important ways of maintaining morale and fighting loneliness. Today, servicemen and women keep in touch all over the globe by E-Mail. But during World War II? It was V-Mail!

Using a system that originated in England, V-Mail was first used in the United States in 1942. V-Mail was used to reduce weight and conserve space that was needed for shipping war materials. Thirty-seven sacks of mail could be reduced to a single sack and the weight reduced from 2,575 pounds to 45. How?

The airman wrote his or her letter on an 8½ by 11 inch sheet of specially designed paper that was folded to make an envelope, sealed and then mailed. V-Mail correspondence was photographed, reduced in size and then put on microfilm. The rolls of film were developed and each letter was printed at about one quarter of its original size and sent on to the addressee.

Mail from overseas also required a trip to a censor to make sure that the letter didn't contain sensitive information like troop movements or a planned attack. Any information not allowed was either blackened or cut out. The stamp at the left of the address in the V-Mail pictured shows that the censor has read the letter.

No matter the method, V-Mail or E-Mail, keeping in touch with family and friends will always be vital to servicemen and women.



When I Grow Up by: Major Steven Daskal, USAFR (Ret.)

My very first flight (as a 3 year old) was in 1959 on a Delta Super Constellation. My earliest memories by far are of the airplane's interior, the bouillon to drink (I was a picky eater at 3) and looking out the window as we flew over the Red River and into Shreveport, Louisiana. We were going to visit my aunt and newly promoted uncle, a major, who was assigned to Barksdale AFB.

My next flight, my first military flight, was as an ROTC cadet at the University of Connecticut. It was in an Air Force Reserve C-130B out of Westover, Massachusetts. We took a "familiarization flight" with the University of Massachusetts and Norwich cadets. We flew down to New York City and as the only native New Yorker on board I had the absolute joy of being in the right seat as we flew down the Hudson River. With the brilliantly glowing lights of New York City on the left and the shoreline of Bergen County, New Jersey on the right I was sold on the Air Force then and there.

C-133 Reunion

The C-133 Association has announced plans for their forthcoming reunion scheduled for the 9th through the 11th of May 2003 here at Dover. The reunion is open to all C-133 crewmembers and C-133 support team personnel that were assigned to Dover and Travis Air Force Bases.

Planned, is a visit to the museum's C-133, a golf tournament and dinner.

For information, please contact: Jay Schmukler, 30 Tina Dr., Dover, DE 19901; Ph: (302) 697-9053 and email: jay@ezol.com.

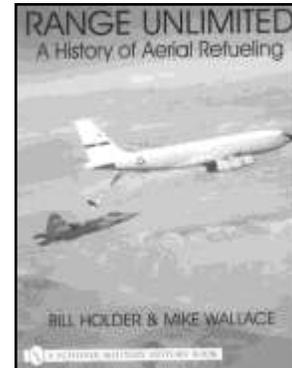
Recommended Reading: Range Unlimited “A History of Aerial Refueling”

Ever since the first aircraft was designed, engineers have always had thoughts on how to make it go faster and further.

Going faster was a relatively straight-forward undertaking—more powerful engines and cleaner aerodynamic design. But making a plane fly further was, and is, a whole other consideration. Through the years of powered flight there have been many experiments attempting to extend a plane’s range with many efforts resulting in failure.

Range Unlimited covers the developmental history of aerial refueling, including the United States and other countries, as well as modern advancements and technologies. Also covered are the current aerial refueling model types and configurations used in the world today, as well as a look at what refueling techniques may be applied in the 21st century and beyond.

This book is available from the museum’s gift shop and can be purchased for \$23.00 including shipping and handling, payable by personal check, VISA or MasterCard.



Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: Lockheed C-141A “Starlifter”

The museum’s C-141A, tail # 61-2775, was the first Starlifter ever built. Its maiden flight took place on 17 December 1963 and its final flight on 20 February 1998 when it arrived here at the museum from Edwards AFB, California.

At the aircraft’s rollout ceremony, 22 August 1963, President John F. Kennedy, speaking over closed circuit television to those assembled, called the C-141 “the fastest cargo-carrying airplane in the world.”

General Joe W. Kelly, Commander, Military Air Transport Service (MATS), remarked, “Complemented by the USAF 463L Materials Handling System, the C-141 promises to be the fastest, most efficient and flexible airlift system in the world.”

Following the ceremony, the aircraft was formally accepted by MATS and then returned to Lockheed for the duration of the flight test program.

During its entire active military career the aircraft was used by the Air Force for flight test operations. Its most recent duty assignment was testing the manned single stage-to-orbit concept (USAF Project Eclipse). The concept, a satellite delivering vehicle, the “Astroliner”, would be towed to an altitude of 20,000 feet and then released to proceed by internal engines placing it into space in order to release its on-board satellite. Then, the vehicle would continue its reentry and come to a normal airplane type landing. This concept was tested by our C-141A towing a Convair QF-106 drone.

See more on this program at <http://www.dfrc.nasa.gov/gallery/movie/eclipse>.



“Name the Plane”

The airplane that I asked you to identify in the last issue of the Hangar Digest is the McDonnell Douglas KC-10A “Extender”.

Based on the McDonnell Douglas DC-10 Series 30CF Convertible Freighter, the KC-10A was chosen over Boeing’s Model 747 aerial tanker variant to meet the needs of the USAF’s Advanced Tanker Cargo Aircraft requirement. The KC-10’s maiden flight took place on 12 July 1980 and the first aerial refueling test occurred on 30 October 1980 with a C-5 Galaxy as the receiving aircraft. The first KC-10 was delivered to the Air Force’s Strategic Air Command (SAC) on 17 March 1981. The 60th and final aircraft was formally handed over to the USAF on 29 November 1988.



A major USAF reorganization, in the mid-1990s, eliminated SAC and resulted in the KC-10 fleet being re-assigned among units of the Air Mobility Command (AMC) and the Air Combat Command (ACC). All aircraft were eventually assigned to AMC. All KC-10s, apart from a single aircraft that was destroyed in a ground fire in September 1987, are still in service. There are currently two operational KC-10 bases: McGuire AFB, New Jersey and Travis AFB, California.

Of the readers submitting an entry, all correctly identified the aircraft as the KC-10A. Our randomly selected winner of the “Name the Plane” contest is Mr. Willie Lorenz of Clayton, Ohio and he will receive the book “Range Unlimited”. 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! **Note:** the identity of this aircraft may be a toughie for some readers. **Hint**—one aircraft was modified into what would become a line of the most successful USAF heavy airlifters ever manufactured.

(Museum staff and volunteers are not eligible)



Around the Bases: Dyess AFB, Texas

Dyess Air Force Base, near Abilene Texas, is the home of the **317th Airlift Group (Air Mobility Command)**; a base tenant unit which is hosted by the 7th Bomb Wing, Air Combat Command (ACC).

World War II saw the blossoming of “tent camps” throughout the United States and Abilene, Texas was no exception. Camp Barkley, a few miles south of Abilene, became an Army infantry training camp for thousands of recruits. Army inductees were trained for various duties while there.

Army Air Corps cadets learned to fly trainers and P-47 Thunderbolt fighters while stationed at Tye Army Air Field, a Camp Barkley adjunct. When both installations were closed at the end of World War II, the deed to Tye Army Air Field was sold to Abilene for one dollar. Fifteen hundred acres of the former Army Air Field were used by the Texas National Guard as a training facility.

Following the outbreak of the Korean crisis, the citizens of Abilene called for a military installation. Armed with 1,500 acres and determination, civic leaders besieged Washington, DC and Pentagon officials with their request for a military installation. Proving that they meant business, the city raised \$893,000 to purchase and additional 3,500 acres to provide home for a military base they hoped would be in Abilene.

Several prominent men were instrumental in convincing authorities of the suitability of Abilene. They together with Senator Lyndon B. Johnson persuaded military and civilian officials to put a military base in Abilene.

After letters and visits had been exchanged, the Department of Defense announced in July 1952 that Congress had approved the \$32 million needed in appropriations for constructing a base at Abilene. After the initial ground-breaking ceremonies in September 1953, construction of the base progressed rapidly.

Known as Abilene Air Force Base, the Strategic Air Command base was dedicated on April 15, 1956. On December 6th, that same year, the base was renamed in honor of Lt. Col. William Edwin Dyess, who was killed in a P-38 crash in December 1943.

The **317th Airlift Group (AMC)** was activated at Dyess on April 1, 1997. Made up of the 39th and 40th Airlift Squadrons, the 317th Operations Support Squadron, the 317th Airlift Control Squadron and the 317th Maintenance Squadron, the group flies and maintains twenty four C-130 Hercules tactical transports. The group comes under control of the 15th Air Force (AMC), Travis Air Force Base, California.

The 317th Group's beginning occurred on February 22, 1942 at Duncan Field near San Antonio, Texas. Eighteen enlisted men and one officer formed the entire unit. However, it wouldn't be long before the 317th would acquire the Douglas C-47 and the familiar drone of the props would become forever synonymous with the 317th.

In July 1942 the Army re-designated the unit the 317th Troop Carrier Group. After receiving several months training, the group had grown into a viable component of America's defense machine. In December, of that same year, they departed for Australia in support of World War II.

The Army Air Corps quickly stripped the 317th of their new C-47s upon arrival and in turn gave them the battered aircraft of the veteran 347th Troop Carrier Group. With an assortment of damaged C-47s, C-60s and cargo versions of the B-17, the 317th Troop Carrier Group set about their mission.

As the Japanese pounded the airdrome at Wau, New Guinea, the 317th endured monsoon conditions flying low level supply drops to the Australian Army engaged on the airfield in hand to hand combat. The mission cost the 317th three aircraft and several men and for their actions the group received its first Distinguished Unit Citation.



(Continued on the following page)

Around the Bases: Dyess AFB, Texas (Cont.)

Spearheading a combined airborne-glider offensive in June 1945, the 317th released allied elements over Northern Luzon (Philippines). Enemy anti-aircraft fire was intense; forcing the group to make repeated passes over the drop zone. Soon the Japanese forces were weakened to the point of defeat. For its outstanding performance, the 317th received its second Distinguished Unit Citation.

Following the war, the 317th participated in one of the most widely know humanitarian efforts in history, the Berlin Airlift. Once the blockade had been lifted and their mission completed, the 317th was deactivated.

In July 1952 the Air Force reactivated the 317th at Rhein Main Air Base, Germany as the 317th Troop Carrier Wing. It became the first Air Force unit assigned to NATO.

Now flying C-119 "Boxcars", the 317th relocated to Neubiberg Air Base near Munich in 1953. Shortly after their arrival at the Bavarian base, newer C-123 transports arrived to compliment the C-119s.

The 317th continued to fly many humanitarian missions and supported NATO airborne units throughout Europe. They airlifted life rafts, tents and emergency food supplies to flood victims in the Netherlands and aided thousands of earthquake victims in Italy, Greece, Pakistan and Yugoslavia among others.

In October 1957 the 317th moved to Evreux Air Base, France. There they joined with another C-119 unit from Dreux Air Base, France in preparation for the transition to the new turboprop equipped C-130 Hercules.

Several operations kept the 317th occupied in the Middle East throughout the late 1950s. However in 1960, in the midst of the crisis in the Belgian Congo, the 317th flew several peacekeeping contingents into some of the world's most primitive airfields. Congolese rebels often fired upon the C-130s from the dense jungle further complicating each mission. Before the bloodletting ended, the 317th had airlifted a large portion of the United Nation's 20,000 deployed peacekeepers.

Having returned to the United States after more than twenty years abroad, the 317th became Tactical Air Command's C-130 operations representative in providing most of the world's C-130 training.

In June 1964 the 317th moved to Lockbourne AFB, Ohio. Between 1965 and 1971, they provided vital support in training and deployment during the Vietnam conflict. They also developed and perfected the use of the Adverse Weather Delivery System (AWADS) becoming the Air Force's pioneer group behind this method of cargo delivery.

In May 1967 the unit became the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing and not long after, in 1971, was reassigned to Pope AFB, North Carolina. In that year, they provided emergency food relief and equipment to flood victims in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

In 1983 the 317th led the airborne assault during the U.S. invasion of Granada, dropping Army Rangers sent to rescue seven hundred American students who were threatened by communist forces on the island.

Six years later in 1989, the 317th again led the way in Operation Just Cause, (the U.S. invasion of Panama) and in 1990 they showcased their abilities by deploying elements of the XVIII Corps to Saudi Arabia during the first days of Desert Shield. The 317th became the first tactical airlift unit from the U.S. to deploy. Early in 1992, during the final days of Desert Storm, the 317th airlifted U.S. and allied combat troops deep inside Iraq territory. This was in support of General Schwartzkopf's "Hail Mary" flanking maneuver that led to the surrender of Iraq's elite Republican Guard.

Early in 1992 the 317th reorganized under the Air Forces Composite Wing structure. The unit transferred all of its combat support personnel and equipment to Pope's 23rd Wing (Air Combat Command).

Shortly after restructuring, the 317th provided the initial U.S. relief to the war torn nation of Bosnia. They airdropped food supplies while under enemy fire in harsh weather conditions over rock terrain where non-combative civilians could find them.

As the Air Force continued to streamline its operations, the 317th deactivated at Pope AFB in July of 1993; however, four years later, in April 1997, the unit was again re-activated as the 317th Airlift Group and assigned to Dyess Air Force Base where its men and women proudly carry on the tradition of professionalism and personal sacrifice.

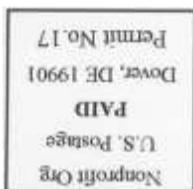
Source: <https://dyess.af.mil>

★The Benefits of Membership★

Becoming a Member of the Museum is easy and it not only benefits the Museum's programs and projects, it also benefits you!

For an updated membership form,
please visit:

<http://amcmuseum.org/support>



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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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