

# Hangar Digest

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2004

## From The Editor

Our "Grand Reopening" was a complete success and drew several hundred visitors.

I would especially like to extend a **BIG THANKS** to all of our dedicated supporters who stood by us during the past two years. We welcome you back!

Was October's Name the Plane contest too easy for you? Obviously it proved to be no challenge because few submitted an entry. As you will read in this issue, I did have a purpose in selecting the VC-25A.

Your new and revised Hangar Digest celebrates its second anniversary. I hope you have enjoyed each issue and have looked forward to receiving the next. Again, I solicit your comments, ideas and articles for future issues. Further, if you are planning a move, please take the time to send a post card, letter, FAX, or email notifying us of your new address as the post office will not forward nonprofit standard mail that is sent bulk rate.

As our aircraft inventory begins to grow it is obvious that we need more room; thus, we have undertaken a feasibility study to see if we can raise the funds to build a new hangar. I will keep you posted.

Harry E. Heist, **Editor**

## From the Director

**Its here...** the first load of the C-124 arrived via C-5 in mid October and the second load should be here by the time you receive this newsletter.

Three additional loads are planned. The folks from the 512th Airlift  
(Continued on the following page)



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cruisin with Jim	2
Meet the Volunteer	3
Airlifts Remembered	4
Hall of Heroes	7
Artifact Facts	8
Name the Plane	9
Around the Bases	10

## LOOKING BACK

Three VC-137s (the military version of the Boeing 707) are slated to join the 1254th Air Transport Group, Washington, DC on or about 1 April 1959.

The all-jet transports, first to be assigned to the military services, will be used by the Special Missions unit at Washington National Airport for DV use.

The VC-137s will augment the specially appointed aircraft presently being used for the transportation of very high ranking civilian and military passengers and are expected to result in a considerable savings of time due to their higher speeds.

Source: The MATS Flyer, April 1959.

## **From the Director (Cont.)**

Wing (Reserve) have volunteered to take on the job of transporting the C-124 to Dover as a training project. Acquiring a C-124 has been top priority since the museum's inception in 1986.

One delight I have is discovering the history of our aircraft once they are accessioned. In the case of "Old Shaky" it is the only "A" model remaining in the world. Now don't blame yourself (unless you were a C-124 crewmember) if you don't know the difference between the "A" and the other variants. There is a handful of museum volunteers glad to take all afternoon to regale you with their stories of this very important addition to our collection.

C-124A, S/N 49-0258 has a great history for an old warhorse. It was the 27th aircraft, in a series of 449, manufactured by the Douglas Aircraft Corporation in Long Beach, California. It was assigned to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) as a troop transport; it was then reassigned to a Troop Carrier Squadron with the Air Force Reserves. It saw duty with various Air Transport Wings in MATS, stationed in Japan and Hawaii. It ended its flying career as a troop carrier for a Reserve Group in Texas. It was displayed at the SAC Museum from 1969 until 1996 when the museum was moved from Offutt AFB to its new location 15 miles away. To our good fortune, the C-133 and the C-124 were left behind. The C-133 has already taken its rightful place on our ramp to be followed by the C-124.

We are a small museum and still growing but we have the distinction and responsibility of being the **only** museum that is dedicated to the preservation of our military's airlift and tanker history. Few aviation museums have a cargo aircraft and those that do usually have a C-47 or C-54. As airlift and air refueling are more important today than ever, in this age of rapid global response, it is our privilege to preserve the stories, memorabilia and aircraft of our predecessors and build on the future of America's airpower.

To that end, we will be receiving a C-130E Hercules that was recently deactivated at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas. C-130s have been flown on every continent, landed and taken off from an aircraft carrier, operated with skis and have been used to haul every conceivable type of cargo. They currently fly for over a dozen foreign military services and are still in production nearly 50 years since the first one rolled off the line. Some incredible stories are to be told about this "Herky Bird" so stay tuned....

Mike

## **Cruisin' with the Curator**

Please fasten your seatbelts. Here we go!

The grand reopening of the museum gate on Route 9 heralded the return of public access to our facility WITHOUT the inconvenience of identity checks or escorts. Ma Nature provided excellent weather and the crowd was estimated at about 250 for the ceremony and the daily count rounded out at 425 visitors.

After the ribbon cutting, the guests were guided to the main entrance of the building for the unveiling of the historic marker signifying our facility as one listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**(Continued on the following page)**

## **Cruisin with the Curator (Cont.)**

In preparation for the event, the KC-97 was towed from the restoration hangar to its place of honor just outside the canteen door. John Demory and Charlie Tanner “walked” the chocks and I kept the tow speed just right to get Charlie’s blood pressure at an elevated level. Hey, I’d do anything to help one’s health around here! We then towed the C-121 to the south ramp. I gave John and Charlie a break on this tow. They got to ride in the tow vehicle.

Hank Baker picked up the fire truck from hangar 789 and drove it over for the day. That feat in itself is amazing. Not that Hank can drive a fire truck but that the truck is driveable at all. We owe that possibility to Dawson’s Bus Service in Camden. Mr. Dawson accepted the challenge to restore our fire truck to operational status and his crew did an excellent job getting it there. Now if we can just keep Hank’s hand away from that darn siren switch.

At this point I would like to extend my personal appreciation to all the volunteers that helped to get the museum ready for the grand reopening. A lot of cleaning was accomplished the week prior and if it wasn’t for those who rolled up their sleeves and pitched in, we wouldn’t have shined as we did. Thanks to all!

Okay, let’s drive on over to the restoration hangar and see what’s shaking. Rich, John, I.E., Charlie, Doc and I have been busy moving just about everything in the hangar in preparation for the Connie’s move inside to begin work on its restoration. The hangar’s nose section, which served as the tool room, was completely cleaned out and all the equipment around that area was moved to the outer reaches of the hangar. Well, the day after the grand reopening, we towed the Connie over and parked it outside for a couple of days and finished the “stuff” moving. Thursday, we opened the hangar doors and lo and behold she fit comfortably and completely inside. Now all we have to do is put everything back! Somehow I never did find great joy in moving the furniture around at home. Geez was this any worse?

Heading back over to the museum, via our new access gate, I recollected when, several years ago, Lt Gen Welser (Colonel at the time) floated the idea of moving the museum to its present location. Foresight...what a talent!

If we build it...they will come. And they did and they continue to come. Our visitorship since the opening of the Route 9 gate has steadily increased.

Time to park. Please leave your seats in the upright position. Thanks for riding along.

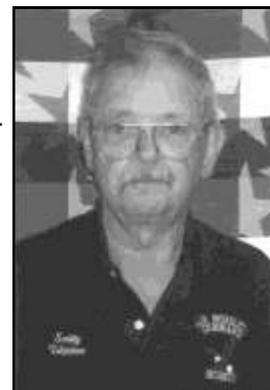
Jim

## **Meet Museum Volunteer Chester Smith**

Chester “Smitty” Smith is the museum’s landscape artist. Upon your arrival at the museum, the first sight you will encounter is Commemoration Park. Its care, as well as all the museum’s grounds, is Smitty’s responsibility.

He entered the Air Force in 1961 with his first operational assignment working in air freight at Tachikowa AB, Japan. He went on to crew the C-118 and C-135 at McGuire AFB as a loadmaster with further assignments flying the C-130 during the Vietnam War. He also served with the Airlift Control Element at Hickam AFB, Hawaii and flew the C-5 at Dover. His hobbies include fishing and gardening.

Smitty retired from the Air Force in 1983 with the rank of Master Sergeant. He has been a volunteer with the museum since 2001 and was the AMC Museum’s Volunteer of the Quarter for January-March 2003.



## **Airlifts Remembered: Peruvian Earthquake**

**THE BACKGROUND:** In the late afternoon of May 31, 1970, an earthquake registering 7.75 on the Richter scale struck west of Peru on the floor of the eastern Pacific Ocean. With an epicenter 211 mile northwest of Lima and 12 miles west of Chimbote, the quake devastated the Callejon de Huaylas valley and the towns of Yungay, Huaras, Caras and Chimbote between the Andes and the Pacific coast.

An avalanche on Mt. Huascaran buried 18,000 of the 25,000 residents of Yungay and 10,000 of the 35,000 residents of Huaras. The avalanche started as a sliding mass of glacial ice and rock about 3,000 feet wide and one mile long. It swept eleven miles to Yungay at a speed of 100 miles per hour. The fast-moving mass picked up glacial deposits and by the time it reached Yungay, it is estimated to have consisted of about 80 million cubic yard of water, mud and rocks. Landslides, mudslides, floods from broken dams and collapsed buildings killed 70,000 people, injured 100,000 and left 800,000 homeless. Broken bridges and buried roadbeds cut highways and railroads in northwestern Peru, isolating the earthquake victims. Peru's president asked for international assistance and more than 60 countries responded with emergency relief.

On June 1st, the U.S. ambassador to Peru forwarded a request for helicopters and supplies to the U.S. State Department. The U.S. Southern Command, in the Panama Canal Zone, assumed control of the disaster relief operations provided by the United States.

**THE AIRLIFT:** Six C-130s from the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing at Lockbourne AFB, in Ohio, on rotational duty with the USAF Southern Command, flew 115 tons of relief supplies from Howard and Albrook AFBs in the Canal Zone to Lima. The cargo included two UH-1 helicopters and crews. Four C-123 Providers from the 605th Special Operations Squadron and two 24th Air Transport Squadron C-118s performed similar missions in providing airlift into the devastated area. Between June 2nd and July 3rd, the USAF South Command airlifted 689 tons of relief supplies aboard the 12 cargo planes, evacuated 501 injured persons and transported 2,827 passengers.

The Military Airlift Command (MAC) would enter the airlift on June 5th. Two C-133B Cargomasters from the 60th Military Airlift Wing (MAW) at Travis AFB, California airlifted two special high-altitude CH-47 Army Chinook helicopters and a 1½ ton truck from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Lima. They flew via Dover AFB, Delaware, where crews from the 436th MAW took over, then on to Howard AFB to refuel and finally delivering their cargo at Lima. That same day, a C-141 from the 437th MAW at Charleston AFB, South Carolina, airlifted 25 helicopter crew members and 13 tons of helicopter support equipment from Harrisburg to Lima. On June 11th, another C-141, from the 438th MAW at McGuire AFB, New Jersey, loaded five tons of equipment—including fuel bladders and helicopter transmissions—at Harrisburg and flew to Scott AFB, Illinois. There it picked up another 10 tons of cargo, including 300 tents. It then proceeded to Lima. At the end of the month, a 436th MAW C-133A carried three UH-1 helicopters from Homestead AFB, Florida to Lima.

Between June 5th and the 30th, six MAC cargo planes hauled more than 43 tons of relief equipment and supplies to the Peruvian capital.

**AN ACCOUNT BY THE EDITOR:** Our alert came at 6:00 am on 6 June. We were to crew one of Travis' C-133Bs that just arrived from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Following our crew briefing, within three hours, we were airborne and on our way to Howard AFB, Panama. After 9½ hours in the air and three hours on the ground, for refueling and a bite to eat, we departed Howard for another five hour flight to Jorge Chavez Airport in Lima. At Howard we picked up an ABC television news crew to report, first hand, of the earthquake's devastating effects. I recall the reporter inquiring as to the location of Yungay and over my shoulder shooting a motion picture of the area on my navigational chart. A flight over Yungay was out of the question as it was long after sunset and some of the terrain exceeded our flight level.

We arrived at the airport at 2:00 am on the 7th, offloaded our chopper and headed to our hotel.

**(Continued on the following page)**

## Airlifts Remembered (Cont.)

With only a few hours into our crew rest, we were off to breakfast and to see the sights of Lima. The earthquake had no effect on the shops downtown as the merchants went about their business of selling their tapestries, rugs and alpaca furs. Of course, most of us had shopping lists from our wives back at Dover.

That evening it was entertainment up on the hotel's roof garden. Along with a group of German tourists, we enjoyed a fine dinner and the exotic sounds of Afro-Andean music.

Some of the musical instruments played in Peru today have their origins in Peru's pre-Columbian history. From the original Andean people, the Incas inherited a variety of wind instruments including flutes and pan-pipes. Then when the Spaniards came to Peru, they brought European stringed instruments such as the guitar, violin and the harp which the Peruvian musicians quickly adopted by inventing their own versions. The interaction of the African population with the original Peruvian people of the Andes, that began with the first voyage of Columbus in 1492, led to the Afro-Andean music culture which thrives in Peru today. Dance performances involve improvised rhythmic foot tapping and slapping accompanied by the guitar, box drum, goat's hooves and a stick drawn across the teeth of the jawbone of a donkey's skull combined with other instruments create the rhythms that accompany the Afro-Andean music.

Later the next morning we were again airborne, headed back to Howard AFB. On our return trip, we were scheduled for a crew rest at Howard as from there we were to fly directly to Travis AFB to deliver their airplane without any stops en route. However, our plans were altered over San Antonio, Texas as an in-flight problem put us on the ground at Kelly AFB for two days. Finally, after visits to the Alamo and other favorite San Antonio attractions, we arrived at Travis six days following our departure from Dover.

On June 28th, Mrs. Richard Nixon flew to Peru aboard an 89th Military Airlift Wing VC-137 aircraft with relief supplies donated by private organizations in the United States. Mrs. Nixon toured the devastated area on one of the airlifted CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

Sources: *U.S. Geological Survey*; Haulman, Daniel, *Humanitarian Airlift Operations*; Pearson Education, Inc.; Heist, Harry, *memoirs*.

## Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: Convair F-106A "Delta Dart"

From early 1949 the USAF's goal was the development and procurement of the ultimate interceptor. However, it was not until 1956 that a further move was made in this direction when the Air Force expressed its need for a Mach 2 interceptor which could operate to an altitude of 70,000 feet in all weathers. By then Convair had solved its initial problems with the F-102 and its proposal to meet this requirement was an improved version of the Delta Dagger under the designation F-102B.

In common with many other "improvement" programs, the task was not quite as easy as might have been imagined. Extensive fuselage modifications were necessary to accommodate the chosen Pratt & Whitney J75 turbojet. By the time the air intakes had been relocated, the cockpit repositioned, new landing gear and changes in the rudder, Convair had virtually a new aircraft now designated the F-106A.

The first F-106A flew on December 26, 1956 and deliveries to the Air Force began in July 1959. Production ended in late 1960 after 277 F-106As and 63 F-106Bs had been built.

The museum's F-106A's initial assignment, in February 1960, was with the 319th Fighter Interceptor Squadron located at Bunker Hill AFB, Massachusetts. It was stationed at Dover AFB with the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in 1972 before being transferred to the New Jersey Air National Guard.

For more information on our F-106 and others, log onto: [www.f-106deltadart.com](http://www.f-106deltadart.com)



# Grand Reopening



1



2



3



4



5

1) Swing City Band. 2) Dedication of Historical Marker: Tim Slavin, Director Delaware Archives; Delaware State Senator, John Still; Miss Delaware, Cheryl Crowe; Delaware State Representative, Donna Stone. 3) Ribbon Cutting: Col Bruce Davis, 512AW Commander; Jim Leech, Museum Curator; Tom Cossaboom, AMC Historian; Col John Pray, 436AW Commander; M. Jane Brady, Delaware Attorney General; Lt Gen William Welser III, Hqs AMC; Brig Gen (Ret) Mike Quarnaccio, President AMC Museum Foundation; Jim Hutchison, Mayor City of Dover; Cheryl Crowe; Kathy Still, 436AW Civil Engineering Flight; Senator John Still; Representative Donna Stone. 4) Chopper pilot Eric Hamm & paramedic Michelle Wright, Delaware State Police. 5) Fire fighting demo.

## The Hall of Heroes

On August 26, 1967 Major George E. Day was airborne over North Vietnam on a forward air control mission when his F-100 was hit by enemy ground fire. During ejection from the stricken fighter his right arm was broken in three places and his left knee was badly sprained. He was immediately captured by the North Vietnamese and taken to a prison camp.

Major Day was continually interrogated and tortured and his injuries were neglected for two days until a medic crudely set his broken arm. Despite the pain of torture, he steadfastly refused to give any information to his captors.

On September 1, feigning a severe back injury, Major Day lulled his guards into relaxing their vigil and slipped out of his ropes to escape into the jungle. During the trek south toward the demilitarized zone (DMZ), he evaded enemy patrols and survived on a diet of berries and uncooked frogs. On the second night a bomb or rocket detonated nearby and Major Day was hit in the right leg by shrapnel. He was bleeding from the nose and ears due to the shock effect of the explosion. To rest and recover from these wounds, he hid in the jungle for two days.

Continuing the nightmarish journey, he met barrages from American artillery as he neared the Ben Hai River, which separated North Vietnam from South Vietnam. With the aid of a float made from a bamboo log, he swam across the river and entered the no man's land of the DMZ. Delirious and disoriented from his injuries, he wandered aimlessly for several days, trying frantically to signal US aircraft. He was not spotted by two forward air controller (FACS) pilots who flew directly overhead and later he limped toward two Marine helicopters only to arrive just after the choppers pulled away.

Twelve days after his escape, weakened from exposure, hunger and his wounds, Major Day was ambushed and captured by the Vietcong. He suffered gunshot wounds to his left hand and thigh while trying to elude his pursuers. He was returned to the original prison camp and brutally punished for his escape attempt.

On a starvation diet, the 170-pound man shrank to 110 pounds. He was refused medical treatment for broken bones, gunshot wounds and infections. Renewing the pressure to force Major Day to give vital military information, the North Vietnamese beat and tortured him for two days. Finally, he was bound by a rope under his armpits and suspended from a ceiling beam for over two hours until the interrogating officer ordered a guard to twist his mangled right arm, breaking his wrist.

At this point Major Day appeared to cooperate with his captors, who felt that they had broken him at last. However, facing death if he was discovered, he deliberately gave false answers to their questions, revealing nothing of military significance.

Two months after he was shot down, Major Day was transferred to a prison camp near the capital city of Hanoi. By this time he was totally incapacitated, with infections in his arms and legs and little feeling in his twisted hands. He could not perform even the simplest task for himself, but still he was tortured. Almost unbelievably, his commitment to utterly resist every attempt to gain military intelligence never wavered. By withholding information, despite the cost of personal suffering, he sought to protect fellow airmen who were still flying missions against the northern strongholds of the enemy. He did not fail.

After five and one-half years of captivity, he was released with the other American prisoners of war on March 14, 1973.

For his heroism he was presented the Medal of Honor by President Gerald Ford on 4 March 1976.

Colonel George E. "Bud" Day, USAF (Ret.) is the second-most decorated military member in American history. General Douglas MacArthur being the first.

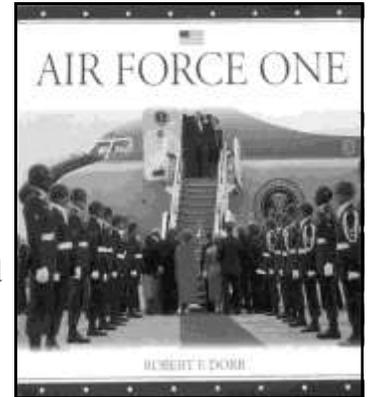
Source: *USAF Southeast Asia Monograph Series, Vol. VII, Mono. 9*



## **Recommended Reading: Air Force One**

There is no question that the plane known as Air Force One is one of the most easily identifiable airplanes in the world. Always beautiful with its polished blue and white exterior, no other aircraft spends more time in the public eye.

In *Air Force One*, author Robert F. Dorr has compiled a complete history of the aircraft that have carried our presidents beginning with Teddy Roosevelt's short flight on a Wright Type B biplane in 1910 and continuing through to the huge presidential 747s used today. With 150 color and black-and-white photographs *Air Force One's* captivating story will give you an inside look at this American icon.



This book is available from the museum's gift shop and can be purchased for \$32.00 including shipping and handling, payable by check, VISA or MasterCard.

Please call (302)677-5992 or e-mail: [william.hardie@dover.af.mil](mailto:william.hardie@dover.af.mil) to place your order.

## **Artifact Facts by: Deborah Sellars**

Passengers on presidential aircraft usually receive small gifts that range from playing cards to golf balls. The photo shows a golf ball, notebook paper and matchbooks from the current "Air Force One". Also shown are playing cards and matchbooks from the beautiful *Columbine III*, a VC-121E Constellation and President Eisenhower's aircraft from 1954 to 1961. The *Columbine III* was retired in 1966 and is now on display at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

The AMC Museum's "Connie" was assembled by Worldwide Aircraft Recovery, Ltd. a few month ago (see the photos located in the museum's main entrance) and is undergoing a planned five-year restoration.



## **C-124 Reunion**

The Dover C-124 "Old Shaky" Group has announced plans for their forthcoming reunion scheduled for the 8th and 9th of October 2004. The reunion is open to all C-124 crewmembers who were assigned to Dover Air Force Base.

Planned is a reception at the Air Mobility Command Museum, a golf tournament and dinner.

For information, please contact: Don Rynes, 309 Fiddlers Green, Dover, DE 19904; Ph: (302) 736-1070 and email: [dyrnes@comcast.net](mailto:dyrnes@comcast.net).

## “Name the Plane”

The airplane that I asked you to identify in October’s issue of the Hangar Digest is the Boeing VC-25A “Air Force One”.

The presidential air transport fleet consists of two specially configured Boeing 747-200Bs — tail numbers 28000 and 29000 — with the Air Force designation as the VC-25A.

The principal differences between the VC-25A and the standard Boeing 747, other than the number of passengers carried, are the electronic and communications equipment, its interior configuration and furnishings, self-contained baggage loader, front and aft stairs and the capability for in-flight refueling.

Accommodations for the president include an executive suite consisting of a stateroom (with dressing room, lavatory and shower) and the president’s office. Other separate accommodations are provided for guests, senior staff, Secret Service and the news media.

Two galleys provide up to 100 meals at one sitting. Six passenger lavatories, including disabled access facilities, are provided as well as a rest area and mini-galley for the aircrew. The aircraft also has a compartment outfitted with medical equipment and supplies for minor medical emergencies.

It is not unusual for some to identify the aircraft as “Air Force One” only. When the president is aboard either aircraft, or any Air Force aircraft, the radio call sign is “Air Force One”. Otherwise, the aircraft call sign is SAM 28/29000. In identifying this aircraft you were to be specific and all entrants did recognize the aircraft as the VC-25A. Our randomly selected winner of the “Name the Plane” contest is Maj. Steven Daskal, USAFR (Ret) of Burke, Virginia and he will receive the book “Air Force One”. Congratulations!

This time I ask you to identify the helicopter depicted below. As this aircraft has many variants, I will accept all of its missions and series as correct answers. 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: Andrews AFB, Maryland**

Located ten miles southeast of Washington, D.C. and established first as Camp Springs Army Air Field on August 25, 1941, Andrews Air Force Base is the home of the **89th Airlift Wing (Air Mobility Command)**.

The base was under construction during all of 1942 and became operational May 2, 1943, with the arrival of the first Republic P-47 Thunderbolt.

The name of the base was formally changed to Andrews Field on March 31, 1945, in honor of Lieutenant General Frank M. Andrews. General Andrews was commander of the United States Forces in the European Theater of Operations when he perished in an aircraft accident near Iceland in 1943. When the Air Force became a separate service on September 18, 1947, the name was modified to its present form, Andrews Air Force Base. The year 1947 also marked the arrival of the first permanently assigned jet aircraft, the F-80 Shooting Star.



Serving largely as a headquarters base, in a curtailed operational capacity during the post-World War II years, Andrews has been the home of the Continental Air Command, the Strategic Air Command and the Military Air Transport Service (MATS). It was also home to the Headquarters Air Force Systems Command and its predecessor the Research and Development Command. Headquarters Command played host at Andrews from 1947 through 1952 and again after 1957. MATS controlled the base during the interim period.

Andrew's air defense role was strengthened in the 1950s with the latest fighter-interceptor hardware appearing on the flightline: F-94 Starfires, F-102 Delta Daggers and finally the F-106 Delta Darts which operated from the base until the 1960s.

In 1959, Detachment 1 of the 1254th Air Transport Group (ATG), at Andrews, received its first VC-137 aircraft for special air missions. While President Eisenhower's VC-121E (ColumbineIII) remained with the 1254th ATG at Washington National Airport, he often used the new VC-137 for longer trips. President Eisenhower was the first to fly a presidential aircraft from Andrews AFB on August 26, 1959.

Andrews AFB's flight operations and its importance increased greatly. In 1961 and '62 the last of MATS' flying units at Washington National Airport and all fixed-wing flying activities at Bolling AFB were transferred to Andrews. In 1961 Andrews became the home of the official presidential aircraft known as "Air Force One" when President Kennedy's C-118 was transferred with the 1254th from Washington National. The 1254th would be discontinued and in its place, the 89th Military Airlift Wing Special Missions was activated at Andrews in January 1966.

In 1963 the Naval Air Facility (NAF), originally established at Anacostia in 1919, moved to Andrews and is currently headquartered on the east side of the base. The NAF handles Naval VIP flight operations and flies photo reconnaissance missions in support of government agencies. It is also home for a Marine Corps detachment which flies the F/A-18 Hornet.

A tragic time for Andrews AFB occurred on November 22, 1963 when the 35th president of the United States was assassinated in Dallas. The body of John F. Kennedy arrived at Andrews at 6:08 p.m. that same evening accompanied by his widow Jacqueline Kennedy, newly sworn in President Lyndon Johnson and his wife Ladybird. The air terminal was jammed with thousands of people, including the largest gathering of news media representatives ever assembled at any one time on Andrews AFB. Since that time, Andrews has seen the arrival of other fallen leaders but no other death has caused such national attention.

In February 1973, Andrews was the scene of joyful reunions as U.S. POWs began returning to the United States from Vietnam.

In a major reorganization, Headquarters Command was disbanded in July 1976 and restructured under the  
(Continued on the following page)

## **Around the Bases: Andrews AFB, Maryland (Cont.)**

Military Airlift Command as the 76th Airlift Division and transferred its headquarters from Bolling AFB to Andrews. The 76th remained the parent unit of the Andrews host command, redesignated as the 1st Air Base Wing. Then in October 1977, the 76th Airlift Division became the 76th Military Airlift Wing. The 1st Air Base Wing was redesignated the 76th Air Base Group and the 89th Military Airlift Wing became the 89th Military Airlift Group. The 76th MAW remained the host unit at the base.

In 1979 Andrews witnessed such historic events as the arrival and departure of the People's Republic of China's Deng Xiao Ping, a visit by England's Margaret Thatcher and trips by Israel's Menachem Begin and the late President of Egypt Anwar Sadat. Pope John Paul II was greeted by thousands of well wishers when he arrived for a visit to Washington D.C., at the end of his historic tour of the United States.

On December 15, 1980 the 76th Airlift Division was reestablished, the 76th Air Base Group became the 1776th Air Base Wing and the 89th Military Airlift Group again became the 89th Military Airlift Wing. Then in October 1985, the 76th Airlift Division was inactivated as a result of the activation of the Headquarters Air Force District of Washington at Bolling AFB. The 1776th was designated the host wing for Andrews and assumed base support responsibilities.

In 1985 Andrews again captured the nation's attention with the return of the hostages of TWA Flight 847 from Beirut and the arrival of the Soviet foreign minister and Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana. And in 1987 all eyes were centered on Andrews when General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union arrived for a summit visit with President Ronald Reagan.

Andrews was a key arrival and departure point for troops, diplomats and refugees throughout Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM and even hosted a live television special honoring the men and women of the armed services. The base also provided support for the National Victory Day parades in Washington D.C. and New York City honoring the troops.

On June 1, 1992, the 89th Military Airlift Wing was redesignated the 89th Airlift Wing (Air Mobility Command) and assumed duties as the host wing at Andrews. Support functions previously performed by the 1776th Air Base Wing now fell under the 89th and the 1776th was inactivated. With the consolidation of the two wings, the 89th became one of the largest wings in the Air Mobility Command with a work force of 8,000 people. The wing is assigned directly to the 21st Expeditionary Mobility Task Force, headquartered at McGuire AFB, New Jersey.

Today, the 89th Airlift Wing's aircraft inventory consists of some of the most modern technologically advanced aircraft in the world providing comfortable and reliable worldwide airlift and logistical support for the President of the United States, the vice president, cabinet members and other high ranking U.S. and foreign government officials. Understandably the most notable aircraft in the inventory is the VC-25A, known as "Air Force One" when the president is aboard. The Presidential Pilots Office operates and maintains two VC-25As, with tail numbers 28000 and 29000. These aircraft are especially equipped to meet the president's needs. Accommodations include an executive suite with a stateroom and office and a conference/dining room. Both aircraft have secure global communications and in-flight refueling capabilities.

The 89th Airlift Wing is truly a diverse wing and in recognition of its quality efforts, has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award eleven times.

Andrews AFB has evolved from the muddy fields and wooden buildings of the 1940s to become one of the most modern bases in the Air Force. With more than 10 AMC units, 40 tenant units and the Naval Air Facility housed on the base and with more than 20,000 active duty military, civilian employees and family members, it has solidified itself as "The Gateway to the Capital".

Sources: <https://www.dcmilitary.com>; <http://www.andrews.af.mil/89aw>; Clear, Kirk, *89thAW Historian*

## Outdated fundraiser

## ★The Benefits of Membership★

For an updated membership form,  
please visit:

<http://amcmuseum.org/support>

AMC Museum Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 02050  
Dover AFB, DE 19902-2050

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

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

[harry.heist@dover.af.mil](mailto:harry.heist@dover.af.mil)

Harry E. Heist (Editor)