AMCM COLLECTIONS
MANAGER DEBBIE SELLARS:
SHE’S IN CHARGE
OF ALL OF OUR ‘STUFF’
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.

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Photos are by Jeff Brown, unless otherwise noted.

What is the Air Mobility Command Museum?
Located in Hangar 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.

Hangar 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.

Hangar 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.

The Hangar Digest is printed and mailed by Associates International, Dover, Del.
From the Director

The Air Mobility Command Museum: Come fly with us!

If you missed our C-5 dedication, then you missed a really great event. About 1,000 of our closest friends joined us to celebrate welcoming a truly classic airlift plane to the museum. Only in Delaware would the whole congressional delegation show up along with local dignitaries and loads of people who have been connected to the C-5 over the past 40-some years. A great time was had by all.

What is new with the C-5 now that it’s mostly ready for visitors -- before the spring tour season starts we will have overhead LED lights installed in the cargo compartment so we can take tours inside without running a large power unit. We also are going to add some additional signs inside to explain what everything does. One large interior panel has been removed from a hydraulic system and those parts will be labeled as well. We were fortunate to obtain a set of large air stairs that will allow us to take visitors up to the flight deck on the third Saturday of each month. The crew stairs are not designed for average visitors to safely climb so we are limiting access to the exterior air stairs.

Last time I told you about an AN-2 Colt Soviet-era airlifter that we have acquired. Why would we want an aircraft from Russia? Because it clearly shows how different countries produce different answers to similar questions. Three of the most significant airlift aircraft of the 1940s were the German Ju-52, the American C-47 and the Soviet AN-2. Three engines, two engines, one engine. The AN-2 was a biplane while the other two were traditional monoplanes. We are going to examine and compare the C-47 and the AN-2. Our future plans call for acquiring a Ju-52 so we can really compare all three head-to-head, or should I say prop-to-prop.

I should have already suspected Deputy Director John Taylor had connections at the North Pole. He knows how to get things done so when the holiday season rolled around he arranged an exclusive booking with the Jolly Old Elf and on one Saturday morning dozens of kids of all ages got to sit on Santa’s lap inside the C-5. It was such a success that next year we plan to do it several more times.

The annual train set-up in the main hangar was another success that brought people to the Museum that may otherwise not have visited us in the winter months. I don’t know who had more fun, the folks running the trains or the kids who came to see them. Another project that has been moving along under the radar, so to speak, is our restoration of a 1940s jeep to display along with our CG-4A Glider. When we obtained it the body was badly rusted out and it was missing many parts. Enter John Zistl, a longtime friend of the museum and a guy who just happenes to have his own World War II-era Jeep complete with a non-firing .30-caliber machine gun mounted on a swivel. John is leading a bunch of our restoration guys in overhauling our jeep so it looks good enough to be displayed with the glider. People are still amazed that a fabric covered glider could carry a jeep -- or a bulldozer -- into combat.

One last note. We are planning a trip to England next September for any of our supporters who would like a really excellent opportunity to visit the premier aviation museums in that great country. The plan is to visit the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, one day for exhibits and one day for their world class air show. We will visit the Shuttleworth Collection, the world’s greatest collection of flyable pre-1930s aircraft. We will also take in the Royal Air Force museum among others. But this is not just an aviation tour. We will visit the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace for the changing of the guard, the university town of Cambridge, and much more. Pricing will be around $3,000 per person with a full time guide, some meals and all lodging, land transportation and gratuities included. Airfare will add about $1,100 per person. If you are interested drop me an email and I’ll keep you informed as we progress.

— Mike

New names added to AMC Museum’s Commemorative Garden

Fifteen additional memorial bricks were added to the walkway at the Air Mobility Command Museum’s Commemorative Park in conjunction with Veterans Day 2013.

The bricks, which are inscribed with names, organizations or other tributes are added to the Commemorative Park each Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The larger, 8-by-8-inch bricks can contain up to six lines of text, while the smaller, 4-by-8-inch bricks carry up to three lines.

The name and inscriptions of the most recent tributes are:

- C-97 Loadmasters, 142 ALS, Delaware ANG, 1962-1971
- Edward J. Straub, 80th Firefighter
- Phil Oshier, MSG, US Army, Ret. 1944-2013
- Kevin J. Cullen, CMSgt, USAF, Ret.
- In memory of Larry Osbourn, USAF
- In honor of Lt. Gen. Mark Ramsay, 2013 436 AW BALL
- AMC Museum Volunteer Edward O’Dell, 1,000-plus hours
- TSgt. Ed Barnes, Crew Chief, WACO-4A Glider, Aug. 25, 1929-Feb. 9, 2013; Home with God
- Col. T.J. Kauth, TEAM Dover, 436 MXG, 512 MXG, 25 June 10-20 June 13, 1 Cor. 12:12
- In memory of Sandy Sandstrom, Love & Miss You, God Bless You, Potts, Robbins & Rigterinks
- Col. Rich Harper, Veterans Day 13, Guest Speaker, Sr. Navigator, Cmd Pilot

For more information on the AMC Museum’s Commemorative Brick program, see page 14.
The key to any military endeavor is organization: you have to know what you’ve got and where you’ve got it.

The same is true for a good museum, and at the Air Mobility Command Museum the job of organizing its assortment of more than 5,200 objects falls to Collections Manager Deborah J. “Debbie” Sellars.

There’s a story to be told about that title, Sellars said.

“When people see ‘collections manager,’ they think I’m out looking for money, but I tell them I’m not in charge of that type of collecting,” she said with a smile.

“Actually, the title used to be ‘Collection Manager,’ but we changed it because we have more than one collection.”

In reality, the Museum has four categories that fall under the general title of collections: permanent, historic reference, educational and museum support, Sellars said.

The educational collection consists of specially-selected items that are not historically significant, that are considered consumable because they are occasionally used for special events where they can be worn or handled by Museum visitors. Documents and other paper items -- there are about 1,500 of those -- go into the Museum’s historic reference collection. Items such as mannequins used to display clothing and pieces such as exhibit cases fall under museum support.

But the best part of the Museum’s collection of artifacts are those visitors don’t regularly see. Kept in a vault behind her office, Sellars tracks, catalogs and lovingly maintains more than 3,700 pieces in the AMCM’s permanent collection. These items range from uniforms to flight gear to sentimental objects, all given to the Museum by people wanting to share experiences and mementos with future generations.

Because of space issues, only about 10 percent of the permanent collection can be on display at any one time.

Keeping all of this together is tough, Sellars admits, but it’s also fun when she needs to put on her historian’s hat to come up with more information.

“I think it would be hard to find any museum person who’s not interested in history, because that’s why we’re here,” she said. “I try to get as much information as possible about each artifact from the donor, but if I can’t, I have to do some research.”

“It’s important to find out as much as I can about the article,” Sellars said. She digs through her collection of books and cranks up Internet search engines to get as much information, however mundane, about the article.

Changing times

Sellars’ interest in all things aviation comes from her family. A native of Pittsburgh, Pa., her father and uncles were Air Force veterans, so it’s natural she tended to lean toward a career in a blue uniform.

“Back then, most everyone had time in the military,” she said. “It was hard to find someone in their 40s or 50s that didn’t.

“When I was in high school, I got it into my head that I wanted to join the Air Force. My dad told me stories about it and that’s just what I wanted to do.”

Sellars headed for basic training in October 1973, a time when many things, particularly the roles of women in the military, were changing. So, instead of being put behind a typewriter in an orderly room, she was paired up with a toolbox and sent to work on the C-5.

Many in the previously men-only career field were not exactly welcoming, she said.

“The Air Force was trying to put women into the aircraft maintenance field, but the men didn’t want us there, the commanders didn’t want us there. But they were stuck with it.”

All the same, Sellars didn’t consider herself a trailblazer for women’s rights.

“It was interesting, and most people were very nice, but as in all things, all it takes is a few people to really mess things up,” she said.

“It’s much different now. Today you even have women pilots and these days the guys don’t even blink an eye.”

All told, however, Sellars’ time turning wrenches was relatively brief.

“The commander wanted most of the women off the flight line, so I ended up in job control,” she said. “Plus, I was at Travis Air Force Base in California, which was pretty great.”

Sellars left the Air Force in 1979, took some college courses and re-entered the civilian work force.

“I went to Michigan, where I got my real estate license, but realized I didn’t like it all that much,” she said. “I went back to my recruiter and said I wanted back in.

In January 1981 Sellars drove back to Travis, this time assigned to work on the KC-135. When the Stratotanker was phased out there, she moved over to job control and worked with computers to manage C-5 maintenance.

Although she had reached the rank of staff sergeant and received two Air Force Commendation Medals for her work, Sellars left the Air Force for good in 1984 to become a full-time mother to son Ryan, who was born in 1981.

Son Hal was born in 1986 at the hospital at West Point while Sellars’ husband was at the former Stewart AFB, N.Y.; the family eventually moved to Dover.

Sellars was a stay-at-home mom when in 1989 she heard of the Air Mobility Command Museum, then called the Dover Air Force Base Historical Center, which was working out of a now-demolished hangar on the main part of the base.

Starting (almost) from scratch

Volunteers had completed work restoring the World War II B-17, Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby, when Sellars came onboard.

“My husband knew [Museum Director Mike Leister] and Mike said he was looking for someone who could take care of the collections,” Sellars said. “I thought that was something I could do.”

Work was needed on keeping an accurate accounting of the artifacts that had been coming in to the historical center, and Leis-
ter knew that as part of the Air Force museum system, somebody higher up eventually would want to know what they had on hand. “I went in there and they had a ton of artifacts and a lot of paperwork that had to be matched up,” Sellars said. “We got a computer and designed the database, we started numbering and shelving and we’re still doing it today.”

Sellars worked as a volunteer for several years, but realized her status had to change as the collection of artifacts continued to grow. She got a business license and morphed into a paid contractor. Hal, who practically grew up in the Museum, eventually joined her as a business partner in their joint company, Dunrovin Design & Copy LLC.

“Debbie came to us as a volunteer early on,” Leister said. “At that time, we were hand writing entries in a journal and had no way of searching for a particular artifact or donor without going line-by-line.

“Debbie immediately used her computer knowledge to get us on a more professional track and she is largely responsible for the fact we’ve had the best reporting and accountability within the U.S. Air Force Heritage Programs for more than 15 years.”

Sellars works in an office behind the Museum store. It’s a relatively small room which at times holds everything from partially-dressed mannequins to a rack of uniform pieces, all waiting to be cataloged.

She keeps track of everything on three computerized registers from which she can draw just about any tidbit of information. Each item on each register has a reference number that allows her to quickly find any piece, part or item needed.

There’s also a climate-controlled room where uniforms are neatly hung, along with other items of Air Force memorabilia, from unit plaques to crash helmets to a large brass eagle that once graced the desk of Panamanian dictator Gen. Manuel Noriega.

Each item has been numbered, photographed and researched before being placed in storage. Sellars interviews each donor either by phone, email or letter, to find out as much as she can about each piece. She also has a wide-ranging collection of reference books she regularly consults for additional information.

Just as aircraft mechanics rely on their maintenance manuals to keep their planes in top shape, Sellars turns to AF Instruction 84-103, U.S. Air Force Heritage Program, to maintain the Museum’s collection.

The manual covers the National Museum of the Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and all field museums including the AMC. It has some stringent requirements, Sellars noted.

“We inventory our permanent collection every two years and re-photograph approximately 3,600 artifacts every four years,” she said.

In addition to the heavily modified version of Microsoft Access she uses to keep track of the collections, Sellars updates the Air Force Museum Artifact Tracking System, the Air Force-wide database. All of this experience has come without any formal training or college courses in historic preservation, Sellars said.

“It was all on-the-job training,” she said. “I learned by familiarizing myself with what the National Museum’s requirements are for field museums and also the procedures of other museums.

“Civilian museums are populated by people with advanced degrees, usually at least a master’s degree. Military museums are a little different. Most of us here just have the experience we need to do what we do.”

There’s no such thing as a typical day when it comes to managing the Museum’s collections, either.

“Each day is different, depending on whether recent donations are being processed or depending on what exhibit we’re working on,” she said. “When designing a new exhibit, I research our database to see if we have the artifacts we need.

“If we don’t we’re able to borrow them from the National Museum’s collection.

“Everything we have in the permanent collection actually belongs to the National Museum since we’re a field museum within their system, but what I accession at Dover stays at Dover.”

Memories and memorabilia

Sellars often fields questions from veterans and Museum visitors about adding to the collection. But it’s not as simple as coming in and handing over a box of military memorabilia, she said.

Donations have to relate to the Museum’s mission of chronicling air transport or air refueling.

“Mostly, we’re looking for something that we don’t already have,” she said. “Sometimes, we’ll take something if it’s a better example of what we already have. It’s always best for people to call us or email if there’s something they’d like to donate.”

But because items such as books, manuals, newspapers and the like don’t usually survive the rigors of military use, they are of particular interest, she added.

“We have a historic reference collection of documents and other paper items, and we’re always glad to add to that,” Sellars said. “We are also glad to add photos to our collection.”

Photographs can be particularly important since they can add a real “you are here” feeling to new exhibits, Sellars said. One of the Museum’s newest displays, that on the Vietnam War, features a video that includes dozens of donated color photographs from the 1960s. Almost every exhibit in the Museum contains some sort of photographic record, many of which are possible because of donated photos and film.

While the AMC Museum contains more than 10,000 square feet of exhibits inside its main hangar, there’s a lot more to the collection that can’t be displayed simply due to lack of space.

Thanks to the Internet, however, Sellars is finding a way to get those items out before the public.

“One thing museums are doing today is putting their artifacts online and that way people who are working on special interest projects or research can see what they’ve got,” she said. “That way, the educational part of our mission is served by making it available so people can really see it.”

The Museum’s most recent example of its online collections may be found at www.amcmuseum.org, where a virtual exhibit of memorabilia belonging to former TSgt. William J. Brady, 90, is on display.

The digital display includes Brady’s personal photographs, copies of military documents, including orders and his student pass, as well as pictures of uniform items donated to the Museum. The latter includes photos of everything from his “Ike” jacket to a pair of olive drab socks.

“I’d like to be able to present more artifacts like this to people outside of the Museum,” Sellars said. “Some items like these we can’t put out because we don’t have the
FOUN DATION NOTES

By Don Sloan

I’m sad to have to inform you that we’re losing a valued board member, Chaplain (Lt. Col. Retired) John Groth. Many thanks to John for his years of service to the AMC Museum and the Foundation Board. John’s legacy of quick wit and sharp humor has always been a welcome quality, whether as a featured speaker, a prayer-bearing chaplain, or just to lighten up a board meeting. He’s promised to stay active with the Museum and will continue to help whenever we make the call. Thank you, John!

That leads me to the introduction of our newest board member, retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Phillips. Mike, one of our aircraft restoration volunteers, has been at the AMC Museum since 2007 when he retired from a second career in commercial flying.

After his 1969 AFROTC commission (St. Joseph’s University) and pilot training, Mike flew T-29s at Mather Air Force Base, Calif., and C-130s out of Clark Air Base, Philippines. He said his most memorable flights were carrying Vietnamese refugees out of Saigon in April 1975. Mike came to Dover in May 1976, initially as a finance and management analysis officer, then to the 9th Military Airlift Squadron where he flew the C-5 Galaxy for the next three years and worked as a scheduler/planner in wing current operations.

After graduating from Air Command and Staff College at Montgomery AFB, Ala., in 1982, he stayed as a course development officer writing lessons on chemical warfare, airlift, terrorism, the Vietnam War and Air Reserve Forces. In 1985, Mike returned to Dover where he again flew the C-5 and served as assistant operations officer and then as operations officer for the 9th MAS. Mike says the time served as operations officer was the highlight of his 20-year Air Force career.

In 1989 Mike retired from active duty and spent the next 18 years flying for commercial airlines. He flew for Pan American World and then United Airlines, retiring from United in 2007. He’s flown Boeing’s 727, 757, 767, and 777, accumulating more than 4,500 civilian flight hours. Mike and his wife Pam live in Dover, and have two children and four grandchildren.

We officially welcomed the AMC Museum’s newest “big” attraction in November. Mike Leister and his staff, our volunteers and board members and TEAM Dover came together to make it one of the most exciting and successful events in the history of our Museum.

Many folks to thank. Mike Leister and John Taylor were the conductors! Outstanding expertise and coordination. Silas Stephan donated huge amounts of time before and after the plane arrived. He posted (and continues to post) all the Facebook stuff that helps us attract widespread attention -- check out some of his photos on Facebook. Before the dedication, he was on his hands and knees changing out “bad looking” anti-skid to make sure photos would look good on dedication day. It’s a matter of pride with Silas that the plane looks great! Since the arrival, Rodney Moore has kept busy helping with the preservation and refurbishing of “014.” Our “GI,” Les Polley, has been everywhere working on this one, not to mention the countless “usual suspects” from the Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday restoration teams.

Board member Bettie Campbell did a great job finding 014 souvenirs to sell in the store and on the flightline. Bob Mench, Bob Berglund and others helped us with a record-breaking day in sales – and some of those dollars undoubtedly will go right back into the only museum-displayed C-5A Galaxy in the world.

Only two days later, our Veterans Day ceremony was another huge success. Conceived and organized by Ed Perkowski two years ago, this is fast becoming a standout event. Board member Jon Andrews welcomed a standing-room-only crowd, volunteer Ev Sahrbeck gave the invocation, the 436th Airlift Wing Honor Guard posted the colors, and past board vice president Rich Harper gave a sobering and insightful presentation. That was followed up with some excellent patriotic music from the Milford Community Band and airplane tours. Volunteers Harry Bright and Les Polley managed the event that day and as usual, John Demory provided all kinds of help. We’re already looking forward to next year.

A frequent diner at the Glasgow Deli, at 3920 N. Dupont Highway, Dover, I was asked by owners Steve and Theresa Franks about the possibility of a display from the AMC Museum to help them decorate their restaurant and, coincidentally, give the Museum some recognition. Always looking for new ways to advertise (but NOT spend a lot of money), we jumped at the chance. Mike Leister and I have flown around the Museum several times getting updated shots of the outdoor layout of our displayed aircraft, and it was time to do so again, hence we were able to get the Franks a great advertisement, er, mural, and our logo of the grounds -- nearly nine feet of it! Steve put a frame on it and it stands out for all to see. If you have other ideas about how we can help spread the word, let us know. From looking at our surveys, we get the most visitors from folks telling other folks about what a great experience they’ve had at the Air Mobility Command Museum!
We’re welcoming Bill Ayrey back at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23. Have you ever wondered why astronauts need to wear a space suit when they venture outside of the relatively safe confines of the International Space Station -- all while traveling at 18,000 miles per hour? Or how about when the day comes that they step out onto the Martian surface? What will the latest fashion look like? Bill will bring along an Apollo space suit and the suit that’s currently being used by our astronauts on the ISS. He’ll have a great slide presentation that clearly shows why a suit is necessary and include details about the next-generation space suits. Finally, he’ll talk about some of the other neat products keeping our neighbors at ILC Dover busy. After his presentation, you can try on actual space suit gloves and get a better feel for the technology that keeps their hands warm when they are grabbing hand rails that are 190 degrees below zero! It’s free — don’t miss it.

Finally, we’re happy to announce that the 2013 Annual Fundraising Campaign was an outstanding success. As of mid-December, we’ve had 112 donations totaling $11,597. Folks, that’s an average of $104 per donor! The previous two years brought $7,890 (2011) and $8,050 (2012). Just another reminder, The AMC Museum Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible within IRS regulations.

As an added perk, this year we offered each of our 88 donors of $50-plus a chance on a donated Stearman flight. The winner, retired U.S. Air Force Maj. Bill Maroon has more than 4,300 hours volunteering at our Museum. A Vietnam veteran with 260 combat missions and 13 Air Medals, Bill said “When at Kunsan Air Base, I got two rides in the back seat of the F-16, which was a highlight until my ride in the open cockpit of the PT-17.” Many thanks to Bill and the rest of you whose 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.

Thank you for your support!

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Col. Diego X. Alvarez  
Mr. Richard Bauermeister  
Mr. Thomas F. Bayard  
Mr. Derek Beckman  
Mrs. Virginia Behan  
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Lt. Col. James G. Wilhelm  
MSgt. Gene D. Williams  
Lt. Col. Clarence Wolgemuth  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Zahn

Fly safe! — Don
Restoration

Soviet Antonov-2 aircraft rising from the ashes at AMCM

Right now, it’s not much more than a metal hulk covered in faded gray paint, but a Cold War-era Soviet cargo aircraft soon will take its place beside similar, American-built planes at the Air Mobility Command Museum.

The Antonov AN-2 “Colt” was delivered the museum’s restoration hangar on Dec. 4, having been brought in from an airfield near Townsend, Del., where it and a companion AN-2 had rested for a decade.

The planes were donated by Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame member Dave Cannavo, a master mechanic who built a flying replica of Charles Lindberg’s “Spirit of St. Louis” when he was 24.

Cannavo obtained four AN-2s from a customer who had bought and then abandoned them. “They were delivered here and that’s where they sat,” Cannavo said. Eventually two of the non-flying aircraft carcasses were sold, but these two continued to sit, eventually becoming home to a number of birds, insects and small animals.

Cannavo said an AMCM representative first called him early in 2013, but little else transpired for about seven months. Eventually a deal was struck and the two planes were soon on their way to Dover.

Multinational workhorse

The AN-2 was the only large, metal biplane put into production after World War II. The type first flew in 1947, and, although specific numbers are not available, more than 5,000 are thought to have been built in the Soviet Union up until 1960. Production continued in Soviet satellite countries and the aircraft have been flown in Albania, China, Cuba, Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam and more than 15 other countries.

In all, it is thought at least 18,000 AN-2s were built from the 1960s, and many still are in service.

The AN-2 has been favorably compared to the Douglas DC-3 and its military counterpart, the C-47, for its ability to perform any number of tasks, from flying personnel and cargo to remote villages inside Russia to crop spraying duties. They also have been adapted for passenger use and on some models the wheeled landing gear have been replaced with skis.

But you won’t see too many of the Colts flying around U.S. airfields: they don’t meet Federal Aviation Administration standards and as such AN-2 owners in the United States only may fly them within a restricted radius of their home field.

Just the same, they’re pretty tough airplanes -- big, slow, and simple, Cannavo noted.

The AN-2’s top speed was only 160 mph and it normally cruised at about 115 mph. A gas-hog, the Colt had a range of only 525 miles, and could carry only about 1.5 tons of cargo.

But that was enough, he said.

The technology already was 20 years old when the AN-2 was designed, so they’re not very sophisticated, Cannavo said. “Simple was the name of the game,” he said.

The Soviet way of building airplanes was similar to its approach when, during the space race, they had to find a writing instrument that would function in the weightlessness of space, Cannavo said. The Americans came up with an expensive pen that used pressurized air to force the ink to the writing end.

The Soviets, he said, just gave their cosmonauts pencils.

“They built their airplanes the same way,” he said. “We’d do a lot of engineering to

Much of the cockpit’s instrumentation has disappeared and must be replaced.
save weight. They just built a bigger airplane.”

“Their whole philosophy was to make it so someone who wouldn’t need a whole lot of specialized training could go up and fix it,” said volunteer Don Steenhagen, one of the Museum’s volunteer restoration crew members.

The AN-2’s power plant was a nine-cylinder radial engine, developed under license from the Wright R-1820, which also powered the DC-3. Curiously, even though the Soviets modified the engine from its original design, all specifications and tolerances are in standard measurements, while everything else on the aircraft is metric.

Restoration crews also have not found a single Phillips-head screw on the aircraft, Steenhagen said. Every screw on the aircraft is of the slotted variety, which makes it harder to take the plane apart.

Teamwork makes the difference

Steenhagen and Konesey are but two of about a dozen people working on the AN-2 project. The restoration crew is a mixture of civilians and military vets from all branches of the service, those who served a single hitch 40 years ago, to those who made the military a lifelong career. They range from former infantrymen to senior officers, all working together with a common purpose.

“If it wasn’t fun, we wouldn’t be out here,” Konesey said. “Everyone does everything, and no one says, ‘I don’t want to work on that.’

“They could, of course, but they don’t. It’s the kind of job where, if we get tired, we can just stop and take a break,” Steenhagen said. “We’re all out here because we love doing it.”

The restoration crew is creating a single, displayable aircraft out of the two hulks Cannavo donated. Parts that aren’t useable on the main aircraft hopefully can be pulled from the other one. Missing pieces either are fabricated in the Museum’s machine shop or can be had using the military’s tried-and-true system of swap and trade.

“Right now, for example, we need a tail wheel,” Steenhagen said. “We’ve found someone out in California who has what we need, but he needs a landing gear.”

“Well, we’ve got two. That’s how you fix an airplane when you don’t have any money.”

Working on something like the AN-2 can be like assembling a jigsaw puzzle working only with the blank side.

“Because all the labels are Cyrillic, we don’t know what they say,” said volunteer Les Stiller. “We don’t know what’s written on the walls or on the parts.”

“We also don’t have any operating or repair manuals,” chimed in retired Air Force navigator Dick Marks.

In some respects, however, that doesn’t matter. These seasoned restorers know all airplanes have similar characteristics, no matter where they’re built or what language is on the instrument panel.

“A plane is a plane and a pilot is a pilot,” Stiller noted. “All of the instrumentation is pretty intuitive for anyone who flies an airplane.”

And while the United States and Soviet Union usually were at odds for more than 60 years, the eventual inclusion of the AN-2 at the AMC Museum is indicative of the fraternity shown by men who fly, regardless of the flag they fly under.

That’s particularly true when it comes to the Museum, said Stiller. The AMCM is dedicated to preserving the history of airlift and air cargo, and that was one of the missions of the AN-2.

“I don’t think it’s all that unusual for us to display another country’s airplane,” Stiller said. “To me, it’s just an airplane.”

“It just shows the difference between what we used and what they used to do the same type of mission,” Marks said.
Joseph H. “Hal” Sellars has been coming to the Air Mobility Command Museum for most of his life, but it’s not because he’s just wants to look at all the exhibits.

It’s because he’s had a hand in creating and explaining for Museum visitors almost everything in those exhibits.

Sellars, the son of Museum Collections Manager Debbie Sellars, is the AMCM’s graphics designer. He’s responsible for taking ideas on how to present the various items put out on display and then turning them into visually interesting artwork, photographs and text.

It’s a job practically tailor-made for the 27-year-old, who is as familiar with just about everything in the Museum as some of its oldest and longest serving volunteers.

Sellars combines an equally strong background in computer technology -- he built all of his home computers -- with his graphics knowledge and artistic skills to build the eye-catching and informative displays that give Museum visitors a basic knowledge of what they’re looking at and yet invites them to learn more.

As a youngster, Sellars was accompanying his mother to the Museum, “just to do something,” he said. He watched Debbie Sellars working on various exhibits and displays, occasionally pitching in to help.

As he got older, Sellars entered Polytech High School in Woodside, Del., a school specializing in applied arts and sciences. The curriculum, where he majored in visual communications, taught him about art, but also about how to create artwork using computers.

His senior project was an exhibit of World War II leather patches, which was on display for more than 10 years.

“He did what we call a technical exhibit out at the Museum,” said Robert McMullen, Sellars’ former instructor who still teaches visual communications at Polytech.

“A technical exhibit project is really extensive because students have to do research on the background of a particular subject and they have to write a paper on the research they’ve done. Then they get up in front of the class and give a presentation.

“Hal learned a lot from that, and that was the beginning of his work out at the base.”

McMullen remembers Sellars as a quiet student, “one of my stable, solid kids,” who has expanded on what he learned in school.

“We didn’t have a lot of the equipment they have now when he was here,” McMullen said. “Hal’s taken his background in color and typesetting and photography and built on that.”

After graduating in 2004 and attending Delaware Technical Community College for a semester, Sellars went to work at the AMC Museum.

Perhaps his biggest challenge has been creating informational displays to please a wide range of visitors, ranging from people who have no knowledge of a particular aircraft to veterans who could take aircraft components apart and reassemble them from knowledge they gained decades earlier.

“You’re trying to capture different audiences and work on how those audiences use the information,” he said. “People like to see pictures and then the three-dimensional object and that gives them a good idea of what’s going on.”

Sellars particularly enjoys working with historic subjects because “it’s fun to see the things that used to make the world turn back in the day.”

Although he’s been known to work with his own hand-drawn art, Sellars prefers to create via software and photographs. Some of his more interesting works have involved recreating the lettering and the artwork for the Museum’s F-101 Voodoo, including the orange and black 98th Fighter Interceptor Squadron patch that now adorns the plane’s tail.

Sellars also has restored control panels for Museum aircraft.

“We recreated the cockpits, right down to the missing gauges,” he said.

“We’d take a photo of the panel, research it, and would measure it all out, then pro-
vide a vinyl decal,” he said. “They’d take the original panel and scrape it down to bare metal and apply the decal so it would look factory fresh.”

When it comes to putting together a new display exhibit, Sellars relies on his computer skills, an eidetic memory and music -- the louder the better.

“When I need to think, I put on incredibly fast music,” he said. “To others, it’s just noise and banging things, but to me it’s normal music.

“I think, in the end, it just drowns everything else out. I can tune it out, but it allows me to think.”

A favorite is Canadian metal rocker Devin Thompson, who plays everything from new age to progressive metal.

“He’s fabulous,” Sellars said. “He has a fantastic screaming voice and a fantastic, soft, very subtle voice. It’s fascinating to me.”

When working on a new project, Sellars often can draw on inspiration and ideas he’s memorized from just kicking around the Internet.

“When I’m online, I’m always looking,” he said. “Some people just gloss over stuff, but I stop and I keep a visual memory of it in the back of my head. To me, it’s all up here,” he said, tapping the side of his head.

“Somehow that all meshes together into something interesting.”

As the Museum broke into the digital age, Sellars designed the website in 2008, and has been the AMCM’s webmaster since.

Most recently, he’s updated the design and implementation of the online Museum store and its first virtual display, the TSgt. William J. Brady exhibit.

For Sellars, the best part about doing a project isn’t actually producing the finished product. He likes to dig down deep, researching everything he can access.

The most recent example would be the Museum’s new Vietnam display; it was a daunting task to assemble bits of knowledge from a war that ended before he was born.

“With the Vietnam exhibit, there wasn’t a giant book that had everything we needed in it. I had to figure out what airlift in Vietnam was all about, and I asked a lot of the guys around here about their personal stories.

“Then it was figuring out the best way to present that information to people so they can learn something,” Sellars said. “It wasn’t possible to put in every little story, every factoid. The job was to summarize it into something meaningful.”

Not surprisingly, Sellars takes it easy by firing up his computer at home.

“I like actiony, fast games, similar to my music. It’s something I grew up doing and it’s something I still enjoy doing,” he said.

“A lot of the games I play, I play with others online. It’s more of a community, playing with friends, and that’s a lot more fun than playing the game by yourself.

“I just like to play games. They’re entertaining, they’re fun, and they help keep me sharp.”

Sellars draws a great deal of satisfaction from letting people know the Air Force is more than just fighters and bombers. He wants to bring the airlift and air refueling mission of the Air Mobility Command to the forefront of people’s minds and imaginations.

“AMC isn’t something you always see in the news and it’s not something people are always talking about,” he said. “It’s interesting when people visit the Museum and they walk away having learned there’s a whole another sector in the background that makes it all happen.

“It’s just fun enlightening them to a whole, new aspect of the military.”

**Collections**

(Continued from page 5)

manpower and the resources to put them out.”

For Sellars, who in 2014 will observe her 25th year working at the Museum, her job as collections manager has been incredibly fulfilling, even if it might seem a little mundane to the outside observer.

“This can be an incredibly boring job for people who don’t know about it,” she said.

“It’s not the most glamorous job in the museum world.

It may not be glamorous, but it is vitally important a good museum be able to do more than just take an old piece of memorabilia and put it in a glass case, Sellars said.

“It’s not the stuff that’s in a museum, it’s the story behind the stuff,” she said. “That’s the important part of a museum to me.

“When people give us items, I try to get them to write down everything they remember about each article. These things become important when you know the story behind them. It’s very important to tell the story of the people who owned them.”

Sellars’ work at the AMCM has been recognized throughout the museum system.

“It’s a tribute to Debbie’s abilities and enthusiasm that the pros at the National Museum love to work with us,” Leister said. “They know this complex and challenging job is being done right.

“You can’t ask for a better endorsement than that.”
November 9, 2013 was a historic day at the Air Mobility Command Museum as the Museum officially received the first C-5A Galaxy aircraft ever to be retired and put on public display. The 42-year-old aircraft, nicknamed Zero-One-Four, which had almost 20,000 recorded flight hours, became part of the museum’s exhibition of more than 30 aircraft. The ceremony attracted numerous dignitaries and military officials, but most of those on hand seemed to be former Galaxy crewmen and maintainers, all of who expressed great delight at seeing the C-5 enter honorable retirement.
Rebecca, Daniel and Stephen Anderson, of Lincoln, Del., examine the towing mechanism on the Museum’s CG-4A Waco glider.

In future years, Taryn Kurfis, 6 weeks, probably will regret sleeping through her first visit with Santa, who talked to good little boys and girls aboard the Museum’s C-5. Taryn is the daughter of Nick and Kaymi Kurfis of Dover, Del.

Retired C-5 loadmaster Chris Buckheister prepares to shoot a photo of the Museum’s B-17. Buckheister came to the Museum as part of a photography class.

Blake Delardge, of Rochester, N.Y., delights in the Christmas train exhibit in the AMCM’s holiday display. Blake admitted he loves trains and is a big fan of Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends.

In future years, Taryn Kurfis, 6 weeks, probably will regret sleeping through her first visit with Santa, who talked to good little boys and girls aboard the Museum’s C-5. Taryn is the daughter of Nick and Kaymi Kurfis of Dover, Del.

The Shoreline Garden Railroad Club, which features trains in G-scale for railroad enthusiasts in southern Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland, once again set up their train layout around the Museum’s Christmas tree inside the main hangar. Garden scale trains are meant to be run outside in large backyard layouts, but there was plenty of room in the Museum for the club to put on their fourth annual exhibition. The layout, which allowed four trains to run at one time, was on display from Nov. 24 until Jan. 2.
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