



Hangar Digest

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From the Editor

She's up on her gear! Ben Natrass and his crew from Worldwide Aircraft Recovery completed the major reassembly of the C-124 and our restoration crew has begun the arduous task of repairing, cleaning and installing the many parts. There's no question that our crew's job is secure for the next few years.



The Friends of the Museum reelected Brig. Gen. Michael Quarnaccio and Col. Donald Sloan to the AMC Museum Foundation's Board of Directors. Col. Arthur Erickson, CMSgt. Donald "Doc" Adams and Mr. Robert Berglund were elected as the board's new members. To the new members and to those reelected, congratulations! The officers appointed for the forthcoming year are: President, Brig. Gen. Michael Quarnaccio; Vice President, TSgt. Jay Schumkler; Secretary, Lt. Col. Phil White and Treasurer, MSgt. Harry Van Den Heuvel. A special thanks to Lt. Col. Gerald Foss and SMSgt Hank Baker who withdrew their nominations prior to the election in order to pursue other interests. And, to Mrs. Mary Frey-Foss for her many dedicated years of service.

The holidays are approaching rapidly - the time for celebrations, family get-togethers and a time for giving. If you are thinking about an airplane related item be sure to visit the Museum's gift shop. And, don't forget about a Museum membership. For as little as \$20.00 a year the recipient receives a member's certificate, 10% discount off of all museum store purchases (including mail orders) and this quarterly newsletter. As always, a membership form can be found on the inside cover of the last page.

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

Harry E. Heist, Editor

LOOKING BACK

Twenty-six members of the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, an international organization of female pilots, recently took an orientation flight on a C-124 belonging to the 940th Military Airlift Group, McClellan AFB. While the girls were over northern California, one commented, "It's rather different than flying a Piper Cub, isn't it?"

Source: MAC Aircrew Newsletter, Nov. 1971

From the Director

Flexible Response is the Key to Airpower. Usually we hear someone say that old Air Force catch phrase when they want us to do something—at the last minute.

We received word that the C-9 Nightingale aircraft would be delivered on the 16th, then the 25th. It finally arrived on the 30th of August. Short notice, but our team swung into action. Tow bar adapters, parking plan, defueling arrangements, assignment history, sign text, all had to be ready when the plane arrived. And they were! Naturally it rained buckets right at landing time but that did not dampen our spirits. Our great staff and volunteers were ready, but then can always be counted on to make things happen no matter what the obstacles.

When you look at the sleek lines of the C-9 (DC-9 is the civilian designation) its hard to imagine that it is 37 years old. Our thanks to the 932nd Airlift Group, Scott AFB, for delivering such a jewel to add to our collection. We will now be able to tell the story of aeromedical evacuation, a vital but little told story.

Speaking of obstacles, the crew of the C-124 has done an absolutely phenomenal job of putting the ol' girl back together. It has been wickedly hot, the air tools have been balky and the crew has run out of fasteners more than once but keep moving forward by leaps and bounds. They used to say that a C-124 was 10,000 rivets flying in close formation, well, about 5,000 of those have already been replaced. In spite of working on C-5s the young maintenance troops still walk by and think the C-124 is a huge aircraft.

Jim has been busy moving all the planes on the parking pad so they are more aligned with the prevailing winds, important when you are dealing with machines that like to fly. He also developed a plan to incorporate the aircraft that will be coming out of restoration within the next few years. Perhaps we will be able to wrangle some additional ramp space or pave some of the remaining grass triangle by our ramp to accommodate the new arrivals.

MSgt Rick Veller took a beaten-up piece of scrap and actually rebuilt it into a KC-135 refueling boom. He had to manufacture some parts from scratch and repair some seriously damaged panels. With help from Deborah Sellars, who created all the proper decals for the boom, he has made an exhibit that is quite impressive.

A little advance notice. Next year will be our 20th anniversary, expect some very special events.

Mike

Cruisin' with the Curator

Howdy all — it's time for another installment of "Cruisin' with the Curator".

In our last episode, we started out at Hangar 1301 with plans in hand for moving our airplanes to new parking spots. Well folks, it's a done deal! The C-133 is now sitting on our newest "paved" area alongside the C-54. The other airplanes, with the exception of the C-141s, KC-97, C-131 and the C-54 have all been scrambled around to new roosts. Believe me, there is a meaning to the madness in all of this but I'm just not sure of how to put it into words.

(Continued on the following page)



Mike Leister accepting the C-9 from it's 73rd Airlift Squadron crew: (R to L) LtCol Robert Witzel, aircraft commander; Maj Scott Pattison, pilot; TSgt John Hebert, crew chief.

Cruisin' with the Curator (Cont.)

One of the reasons for shuffling the aircraft was to prepare room for our latest acquisition, a C-9 Nightingale. After anxiously awaiting its arrival since early August, we learned that the paperwork wasn't quite ready for its transfer to the AMC Museum. Finally that was all squared away and, as Mike noted, it arrived on 30August. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the plane will have been prepped and open for display.

Moving to the inside of the hangar we find that the KC-135 refueling boom that Rick Veller was restoring has indeed been suspended from the ceiling. If you weren't here for the hanging, don't ask how we did it or how long it took. We didn't hurt anyone, all toes and fingers were accounted for and not a bad word was spoken. Well, none that could be heard. The boom is a great addition to our refueling exhibit and when you see Rick, give him a pat on the back for a job well done.

Ok, everybody pile in, click it and off we go to our restoration Hangar 789. Geez would ya look at the C-124! Last issue of the Hangar Digest it was scattered in pieces all over the ramp and now it looks like an airplane. Yes, Ben and the boys arrived in June and working well into July, reassembled "Old Shaky". What an operation it was! Bill Hardie and his volunteer crew kept busy assisting, as required. As I pen this article, the smaller pieces of this enormous puzzle continue to be put into their respective places and many, I mean MANY, hours have been spent by the 124 crew diligently restoring the plane. Thanks guys for all you are doing on this project.

Heading into 789 we see the C-121 Connie's restoration crew still at it. It's hard to explain what keeps bringing the restoration volunteers back week after week. Ask one of them the next time you see him. It takes a special kind of person to subject himself to this kind of work knowing that it may take years to see the final project rolled out for display. We're privileged to have these folks working for us.

Ok, back to the car, Since the price of gas is soooo high, no sightseeing on the way back to the museum. Speaking of gas, it sure hasn't slowed down the museum's visitorship this summer. It's good to see so many folks stopping by. Jay Schmukler is doing well in the store as a result and that's a good thing!

Not much more to add to this addition, Stay healthy and safe and remember.....click it or ticket!

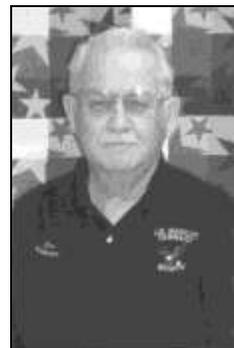
Jim

Meet Museum Volunteer Dan Jenkins

Dan was a member of the C-133 Cargomaster and KC-97 Stratofreighter restoration teams and is now a volunteer in the museum's gift shop. He has been with the museum since 1999.

He entered the Air Force in 1952 and his first operational assignment was with the fire department's crash crew at Sheppard AFB, Texas. From Sheppard he went on to serve at RAF Croughton, England as fire chief; Dover AFB, Delaware, cross training as a C-133 loadmaster and then off to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam as a C-123 Provider loadmaster. He returned to Dover in 1965, again assuming duty as a C-133 loadmaster, then retiring from active duty in 1970 with the rank of Tech Sergeant.

When Dan is not volunteering, he enjoys collecting stamps and coins. He resides with his family in Milford, Delaware.



Remember: if you are planning a move, please take the time to send a post card, letter, FAX, phone call or email 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.

Atlantic Crossing by: Harry Welch

The KC-97 refueler was a lumbering mutation of a cargo aircraft. It enjoyed a love/hate relationship with the B-47. The B-47 crews hated us for making them fly just ahead of, but right on the edge of, the power curve and loved us for always being able to find them despite the limitations of the scan radar assisted by Very pistols. This relationship carried us through several world crises from Lebanon to the initiation of the beloved alert barracks.

Limitations induced by the difference in speed between the two aircraft were offset by staging refueling squadrons at forward stations such as in the United Kingdom, Spain, North Africa and other locations—depending on the tide of international diplomacy. Strategic Air Command was fond of using temporary duty personnel to man overseas stations. A squadron would man a station for one to three months and when leaving would be replaced by another squadron. This effectively produced a stable force close to the target area without having to go into the cost of moving families around the world. This procedure was carried on throughout the Cold War and was used extensively by SAC in Southeast Asia.

Accordingly, our squadron, the 380th Air Refueling Squadron, found itself operating out of Mildenhall Air Base in England for a month while our families pined away in Wichita Falls, Texas. As our tour in England was drawing to a close, my crew was given the mission of flying to Lands End, UK and maintaining visual conditions by staying on top of the clouds. This way we could act as a relay between some incoming B-47s and Peppercorn, the local GCI radar. Then when the B-47s drew close enough they could communicate directly and not have to relay through us. Attempting to stay on top we found that the clouds were building up and this caused us to keep climbing while we maintained our orbit point. Eventually we reached an altitude of 32,500 feet which, I believe, is some sort of a record for the KC-97 aircraft.

At this altitude those old B-29 engines were almost impossible to keep in sync and the turbos were peaked out attempting to jam more air into the carburetors. Finally we heard an explosion and the number two engine ceased to operate—so the pilot gang-barred the engine, sealed off the fuel flow and feathered the propeller. This forced us to set up a descent and head back to our home station at Mildenhall.

On the ground we discovered that we had almost blown the wing off the aircraft. The turbo in number two engine had disintegrated like a bomb, taking a large chunk out of the superstructure of the left wing and slicing the gear lowering cables so that the gear could not be manually lowered. Thank God that the hydraulic system still worked. It also took a large chunk of rubber out of a left main gear tire but did not deflate it. In short, when they finally had the aircraft repaired she had sixteen patches on the skin. When I saw this, my knees got all rubbery and for a moment I thought I would collapse. We were all that close to dying and didn't know it until we got on the ground.

The worst part of this was that the squadron was homeward bound and we had to wait until our aircraft was repaired. This delayed us almost a week. Flying home was a singular experience for a young crew. We had to fly from England, across Ireland and then across the North Atlantic at a fairly high latitude. About four hundred miles out of Goose Bay, Labrador, we were to make a 30-degree turn to the left, head into Lake Melville and thence to Goose Bay Air Base. This flight was made at night so that we could make maximum use of all the available navigation aids. At best this was a real test for a young second lieutenant just out of navigator training at Ellington Air Force Base.

The flight went well crossing England and Ireland. At coast-out I made sure I had a good radar fix and planned to pick up Rockall Island out in the Atlantic for a final position as we headed across. Dutifully, I read all of my instruments at coast-out and even though I had no faith in this new system called pressure pattern navigation, computed readings (differences between radar altitude and pressure altitude), I logged this along with all my other readings. Then, I soon discovered that the Loran (long range navigation) had failed so I could not use it to fix our positions.

(Continued on the following page)

Atlantic Crossing (Cont.)

As we were crossing at night this should not have been a problem, for celestial navigation is easier at night. I pre-computed some star shots and included Polaris so that I could at least get our latitude. Here nature gave us another blow, as we were overcast without a prayer of being able to climb into the clear, especially after what our airplane had gone through already. So I thought that if I displaced us a little further north of course I might get a radar fix off of Iceland. I never did see Rockall Island on radar, as the sea was so rough that I could not distinguish the island from the waves.

Carrying dead reckoning (DR), I watched for but never saw Iceland on radar. Inasmuch as Greenland extends further south, I felt that I should certainly pick Greenland up. Just to be safe, I plotted a DR position and altered even further to the north, so that Greenland would be close enough to get a fix. This was to be an eight-and-a-half-hour crossing but it seemed like it would be eight-and-a-half-days with no way to obtain a definite position. I did keep up my readings every time I plotted a position. As we approached the point where I was supposed to alter to the left for Lake Melville, I should have seen Greenland on radar about 150 miles off to our right. I never even saw so much as a ghost. Now I was really getting worried. I thought that we were way too far to the north and I needed to make a major turn to the left if we were to get home. Now I was really struggling with myself. Do I alter course and hope this is the right decision? If I missed Goose Bay we would be certain to die somewhere in Hudson Bay and never be found. On the other hand if we crash-landed and I survived to meet the accident investigation board, would I tell them that it was equipment failure and I had done all that I could? Would I tell them that I went on a gut feeling or that I used all available information that I had? What would they like to hear?

It suddenly became clear that I had better do some pressure pattern navigation — whether or not if it worked. Going back over the route, I plotted my readings and surprisingly they placed me way to the left of course. South of the planned course! That couldn't be right. According to my newly plotted positions, we were already on a good course for Lake Melville and too far to the left to be able to see Greenland on the radar. Knowing that I had to be able to tell the accident board that I had used all of my available information if I survived, I told the pilot to maintain his heading. He sounded doubtful but did as I requested. After another thirty minutes I started picking up what I assumed to be the coast of Canada on radar. Feverishly and with my heart in my throat, compared it with my charts and almost went into shock as I recognized the inlet to Lake Melville with the certain knowledge that Goose Bay Air Base was just beyond the range of my radar but dead on course. My only concern was that I was a bit early but soon discovered that the pack ice conformed to the land there and I was not only on course but almost right on my ETA.

From this day on, I have been a strong proponent of *Believe Your Instruments!* You may not like what they say but believe in them and use them all if you want to live in the air. This attitude stood by me well in another 8,000 hours of flying as a navigator and approximately 1,000 hours of pilot time. It is not always easy to believe in your instruments when they are telling you one thing and your body is telling you something else.

About the author:

Harry Welch received his commission and navigator rating through the Aviation Cadet Program and was a June 1955 graduate of Ellington AFB, Texas. Following his first operational assignment with the 380th Air Refueling Squadron at Wichita Falls, Texas, he went on to serve as a KC-97 navigator at Plattsburgh AFB, New York. Future assignments took him to Westover AFB, Massachusetts; Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico and Southeast Asia (Young Tiger) where he logged 137 combat refueling missions flying the KC-135. Upon his retirement from the Air Force he spent more than twenty years as the captain of the 230 foot, 800 ton fresh water cruise ship, the M/S Mount Washington, plying the 72 square mile waters of Lake Winnepesaukee in central New Hampshire. In his spare time he enjoys pursuing maritime history.

Harry's article "Atlantic Crossing" first appeared in "DR AHEAD", the Air Force Navigator /Observer Association's newsletter.

Museum Aircraft of the Quarter: KC-97L “Stratofreighter”

As big as the Boeing B-29 bomber was, by adding a larger diameter fuselage from the Boeing B-50 to the top, the United States Army Air Corp created the whale shaped C-97 “Stratofreighter”.

Ordered in January 1942 along with the original order for the B-29, the C-97 did not fly until well after the B-29 due to war-time priority of building bombers first. The XC-97’s first flight was on 15 November 1944. When it began testing, it shocked many with its speed and versatility. On

9 January 1945 it flew from Seattle to Washington, D.C., nonstop, in six hours and four minutes, while carrying ten tons of cargo. Up until then, a similar trip for cargo of that size took three days.

Boeing had experimented with aerial refueling as early as 1929. The rather primitive method used at that time involved a “donor” aircraft that would unwind a hose that the crew of the “receiver” would grasp from midair and stick into their aircraft’s fuel filler pipe. The tests soon stopped but the idea never died.

Continuing their refueling efforts and eventually inventing the “flying boom”; Boeing, in 1950, introduced the tanker version (KC-97). All subsequent contracts for the C-97s were for tankers. In all, 890 aircraft were ordered, 74 C-97s and 816 KC-97s.

After 1956, USAF KC-97s were gradually replaced by the KC-135 jet tankers but some KC-97s were modified for continued use in other roles. In 1964, selected aircraft were returned to a tanker configuration (KC-97L) primarily for the Air National Guard. Two jet engines were added to increase speed and altitude, making the tanker more compatible with high performance jet aircraft. Although the last USAF C/KC-97 was retired in 1973, examples remained in use with the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard as tankers or air-sea search and rescue aircraft.

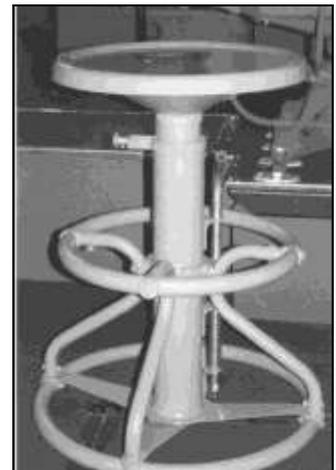
The museum’s KC-97L, S/N 53-230 was manufactured by Boeing in Seattle, Washington and was delivered to the Air Force as a “G” model on 28 July 1955. Its first operational assignment was with the 384th Air Refueling Squadron (Strategic Air Command) at Westover AFB, Massachusetts. It went on to serve at Harmon Air Base, Newfoundland, Lajes Field in the Azores and finally was reassigned to the 134th Air Refueling Group (Tennessee Air National Guard) at Mcghee Airport in Knoxville. In 1964, with the addition of its two jet engines, it was redesignated as a KC-97L. Following its service with the 134th, in 1976, it was declared excess and relocated to the Military Aircraft and Disposition Center at Davis Monthan AFB in Arizona. In 1980, it was dropped from the USAF inventory. It was received by the AMC Museum in October 1999.



Name the Artifact by: Deborah Sellars

Can you guess the purpose of the item in the photo? Here’s a hint: you’ll find it located somewhere on board the AMC Museum’s only air refueler.

The answer appears on page 12.



Airlifts Remembered: Operation Fiery Vigil

The Background: In June 1991, Mount Pinatubo erupted on Luzon in the northern Philippines with a magnitude over seven times that of Mount Saint Helens in 1980. An estimated seven billion tons of ash spewed out of the volcano and a series of earthquakes shook the area. On June 15th, the day of the worst eruption, Typhoon Yunga passed near Mount Pinatubo, dumping torrential rain that mixed with huge clouds of ash that descended like wet concrete on three U.S. military bases in the area: Clark Air Base, Subic Bay Naval Base and Cubi Point Naval Air Station. The weight of the ash accumulating on roofs collapsed many structures.

Earth tremors around the volcano, a few days before the eruption, had warned personnel at Clark AB of the impending disaster. Clark was situated about ten miles west of Pinatubo. The Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) began evacuating aircraft from Clark on June 8th. That same day, a Douglas C-9 Nightingale evacuated some patients and personnel from the base hospital to Kadena Air Base in Japan. Most of the Clark personnel were evacuated by land to Subic Bay, about 30 miles to the southwest before the first violent eruption on June 12th. The remaining personnel left for Subic on June 15th.

The continuing eruption rained ash on Subic Bay and Cubi Point NAS as well as Clark AB. Clouds of abrasive ash in the atmosphere forced cancellation of flights at the military installations and at Manila's international airport. As conditions worsened at Subic Bay, the Navy began, on June 16th, to evacuate thousands of military personnel and their dependents by ship to Mactan International Airport on Cebu Island, 350 miles from the volcano in the southern Philippines. From there, Air Force and commercial aircraft flew evacuees to Anderson AFB in Guam as the first stage in their return to the United States. The Air Force and Navy's evacuation of U.S. military personnel and their families from the Luzon bases was known as Operation Fiery Vigil.

The Airlift: The Military Airlift Command's 374th Tactical Airlift Wing (TAW)¹ directed the airlift from Mactan. For a time, the Navy ships delivered evacuees to Mactan faster than the aircraft could airlift them out but an increase in air missions eventually shortened the waiting times on Cebu. One hundred C-141 flights and six C-5 flights airlifted more than 14,000 passengers from Mactan to Anderson AFB in June. In addition, commercial airliners transported thousands of evacuees from the Philippines to Guam.

After the ash rain decreased at Cubi Point, by the end of June, engineers cleared Cubi Point's runway and the 374th TAW began transporting U.S. citizens from there to Mactan and Anderson AFB. The wing's C-130s evacuated more than 1,400 passengers from Cubi Point to Guam.

Fifty-nine flights — 57 by C-141s and two by C-5s — airlifted more than 7,900 passengers from Anderson AFB to the United States in the second stage of the Operation Fiery Vigil. The evacuees traveled via Hickam AFB, Hawaii, Yokota AB, Japan or Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. The Military Airlift Command's 834th Airlift Division² coordinated the trans-Pacific flights. Commercial aircraft transported about 11,000 additional passengers from Guam to the United States. The evacuees landed at one of three Air Force bases designated as repatriation centers: McChord AFB, Washington, Travis and Norton AFBs in California. More than half of the evacuees went to McChord AFB.

Fiery Vigil was the largest evacuation operation to the United States since the fall of Vietnam in 1975; transporting more than 18,000 U.S. citizens, including more than 14,000 civilian dependents of military

(Continued on the following page)



The Philippine Islands

Airlifts Remembered: Operation Fiery Vigil (Cont.)

personnel. Fiery Vigil demonstrated the ability of different branches of the armed forces and the commercial airlines to work together and reduce the suffering of thousands of people.

The Americans were not the only beneficiaries of the Air Force airlift missions. When conditions improved enough on Luzon for the C-5 to land, two Galaxies transported 34 pallets of excess Desert Storm rations from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia to the stricken areas to help feed the people who were forced from their homes by the eruption.

Mount Pinatubo closed the oldest and largest U.S. overseas base. On July 17, 1991, the United States announced the Clark AB would not reopen. The cost of rehabilitating the field exceeded the anticipated benefits as the Cold War drew to a close

¹ The 374th Tactical Airlift Wing was redesignated the 374th Airlift Wing and was reassigned to PACAF on 1 April 1992.

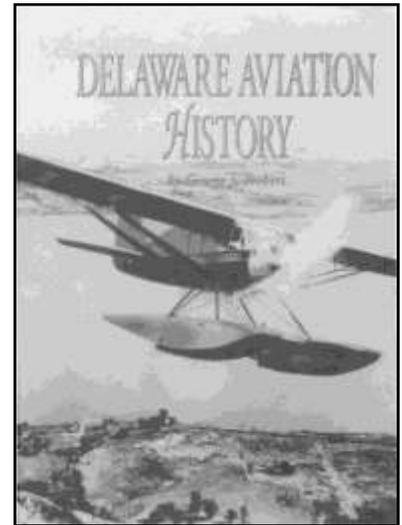
² The 834th Air Division was headquartered at Hickam AFB, Hawaii and provided a single commander for MAC airlift units in the Pacific theater. It was deactivated on 1 April 1992.

Source: Haulman, Daniel, *Humanitarian Airlift Operations*; AFHRA Maxwell AFB.

Recommended Reading: Delaware Aviation History

For over eighty years the history of Delaware aviation lay dormant. In spite of many world records established by Delaware-built airplanes, no one seemed to care. Tucked away, in the archives of the Hagley Museum & Library, Delaware Public Archives and the Wilmington Historical Society, were scattered fragments of memorabilia. When author George Frebert registered as an aviation researcher, the staff in charge of the archives appeared to be astonished at the subject matter that he requested. Apparently, few requests had been made for Delaware aviation information. In addition to archival sources, additional material was located in cardboard boxes stored in attics of families whose kin were part of the era.

This is one of the best written and complete books on the history of any State's aviation history and is available only from the museum's gift shop. It can be purchased for \$35.00 including shipping and handling, payable by check, VISA, MasterCard or American Express. You can order yours by calling (302) 677-5992 or email jay.schmukler@dover.af.mil.



George Frebert passed away on 10 November 2002. The remainder of his books were donated to the museum by his family. Proceeds from the sale of "Delaware Aviation History" benefit the museum's many ongoing projects.

Pictured on the cover page is the insignia of the United States Transportation Command. USTRANSCOM's mission is to provide air, land and sea transportation for the Department of Defense. It currently controls a fleet of military assets valued well over \$52 billion, including: 87 ships, 1,269 aircraft, 2,150 railcars and assorted equipment and \$1.4 billion in infrastructure as well as access to more than 1,000 aircraft and 360 vessels in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) and the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA). USTRANSCOM's transportation component commands are the Air Mobility Command, Military Sealift Command and the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command.

“Name the Plane”

The airplane that I asked you to identify in the July’s issue of the Hangar Digest is the Bellanca C-27 “Airbus”.

Like many of the early “C” Planes, the C-27 Airbus had evolved from a montage of different models and modifications.

Initially, the military version was taken from the company’s Model SP-200 civil airliner and was designated the Y1C-27. In all, the Army bought fourteen and used the aircraft from 1932 through 1939. The plane was characterized by an extremely long nose with the engine mounted far forward of the cockpit. The landing gear struts and primary wing braces were covered with streamlined and wide chord fairings which contributed to the plane’s stability in flight. The plane could carry up to 15 passengers or about a ton of cargo.

The initial two Airbuses were bought “off the shelf” and were eventually converted to C-27C versions. The C-27A carried the 650 horsepower R-1860-19 engine. The C-27B had a more powerful R-1820-17 engine which was rated at 675 horsepower. The C-27C configuration showed the final engine change with the use of the 750 horsepower R-1820-25 powerplant. The maximum speed was 139 mph with a cruising speed of 121 mph, a range of 500 miles and a service ceiling of 15,000 feet. The aircraft was manufactured in New Castle, Delaware.

This must have been a toughie. However, of the few readers submitting an entry, all identified the aircraft as the C-27. Our randomly selected winner of the “Name the Plane” contest is Mr. Jack McKillop of Edison, New Jersey and he will receive the book “Delaware Aviation History”. Congratulations!

This time I ask that you identify the airplane depicted below including the manufacturer, mission, design and series (if applicable); i.e., Boeing B-17G. Please send your entry 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 answer 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)



The Hall of Heroes

Second Lieutenant David R. Kingsley, a B-17 bombardier assigned to the 97th Bombardment Group, received the Medal of Honor for his actions near Ploesti, Rumania, on 23 June 1944. On the bomb run intense flak severely damaged his aircraft forcing it to drop out of formation. The pilot continued to the target and Lieutenant Kingsley accurately dropped his bombs. Then, three Me-109s aggressively attacked the stricken aircraft while it lost altitude and fell further behind the defensive formation. In the attack, the tail gunner received serious wounds to his head and upper arm. During a lull in the fighting, the waist gunners carried him forward to the radio room. The radio operator and engineer notified the pilot, stating that they needed assistance to treat the wound. After hearing the plea, Lieutenant Kingsley crawled aft to the radio room. He succeeded in stopping the tail gunner's bleeding, then attempted to make the injured crew member comfortable for the long flight home. He removed the gunner's bulky parachute harness and heavy flying garments, then covered him with blankets.



At this point the B-17 lagged far behind the formation, leaving it vulnerable to attack. Eight Me-109s furiously attacked the bomber, causing further damage — imminent destruction. This time the ball turret gunner was wounded by 20mm shell fragments. He went forward to the bombardier's station so Lieutenant Kingsley could administer first aid. Quickly losing speed and altitude, the pilot engaged the automatic pilot and gave the order to bail out. Lieutenant Kingsley immediately went aft to the gunnery section. He assisted the ball turret gunner, then turned his attention to the tail gunner. He could not find the gunner's parachute amidst the bundle of clothing and blankets. According to the tail gunner: "after everyone had cleared the airplane, the Lieutenant attempted to locate my parachute harness. He discovered that it had been ripped by cannon fire. He didn't hesitate a minute and took off his own and placed it on me. Carrying me in his arms he struggled to get me through the door into the bomb bay and told me to be sure to pull the rip cord after I had cleared the ship. I did and as I was floating down I saw the B-17 fall off and go into a spin. It crashed, exploded and burned." All eight crewmen who jumped from the plane made it to the ground safely. Seven were captured and held as POWs, while one was hidden by civilians sympathetic to the Allied cause.



The aircraft crashed near the village of Suhozem, Bulgaria, a tiny remote village. A Bulgarian air commander on the ground watched the plane go down and went to the crash site. He found Lieutenant Kingsley's body in the cockpit. Witnesses on the ground said the airplane circled before coming down, indicating Lieutenant Kingsley may have tried to save his own life by making a crash landing in a field.

Bulgarian villagers buried Lieutenant Kingsley in a makeshift grave and his remains were subsequently returned to the United States where they are now interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Two months after the crash, Russian forces captured the heavily damaged oil field at Ploesti. The captured members of the crew were held as prisoners until their release on 10 September 1944. Second Lieutenant Kingsley was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on 4 May 1945 in Portland, Oregon.

The Klamath Falls municipal airport, located five miles south of Klamath Falls, Oregon, which had served as a naval air station during World War II was taken over by the Air Force in 1957. It was named Kingsley Field on 3 July of that year. The U.S. Department of Defense closed Kingsley in 1978, but the Oregon Air National Guard reopened the facility in 1980. Klamath Falls Airport/Kingsley Field is now home to the 173rd Fighter Wing of the Oregon Air National Guard.

Sources: www.altus.af.mil; www.arlingtoncemetery.net; www.orklam.ang.af.mil

Around the Bases: Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

Located adjacent to the city of Anchorage and the largest Air Force installation in Alaska, Elmendorf AFB is the home of the Headquarters, Alaskan Air Command, Alaskan NORAD Region, 11th Air Force, the 3rd Wing and the **732nd Air Mobility Squadron (Air Mobility Command)**.

Construction on Elmendorf Field began on 8 June 1940, as a major and permanent military airfield near Anchorage, with the first Air Corps personnel arriving on 12 August 1940.

On 12 November 1940, the War Department formally designated what had been popularly referred to as Elmendorf Field as Fort Richardson. The air facilities on the post were named Elmendorf Field in honor of Captain Hugh M. Elmendorf, killed in 1933 while flight testing an experimental fighter near Wright Field, Ohio. After World War II, the Army moved its operations to the new Fort Richardson and the Air Force assumed control of the original Fort Richardson and renamed it Elmendorf Air Force Base.

The first Air Force unit to be assigned to Alaska, the 18th Pursuit Squadron, arrived in February 1941. The 23rd Air Base Group was assigned shortly afterwards to provide base support. Other Air Force units poured into Alaska as the Japanese threat developed into World War II. The Eleventh Air Force was formed at Elmendorf in early 1942. The field played a vital role as the main logistics center and staging area during the Aleutian Campaign and later air operations against the Kurile Islands.

Following World War II, Elmendorf assumed an increasing role in the defense of North America as the uncertain wartime relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated into the Cold War. The Eleventh Air Force was redesignated the Alaskan Air Command (AAC) on 18 December 1945. The Alaskan Command, established 1 January 1947, also headquartered at Elmendorf, was a unified command under the Joint Chiefs of Staff based on lessons learned during World War II when the lack of unity of command hampered operations to drive the Japanese from the western Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska.

The uncertain world situation in the late 1940s and early 1950s caused a major buildup of air defense forces in Alaska. The propeller-driven F-51 Mustangs were replaced with F-80 Shooting Stars, which in turn were replaced in succession by F-94 Starfires, F-89 Scorpions and F-102 Delta Daggers. The Air Force built an extensive aircraft control and warning radar system with sites located throughout Alaska's interior and coastal regions. Additionally, the Air Force, of necessity, built the White Alice Communications System (with numerous support facilities throughout the state) to provide reliable communications to these far-flung, isolated and often rugged locales.

Air defense forces reached their zenith in 1957 with almost 200 fighter aircraft assigned to six fighter interceptor squadrons located at Elmendorf and Ladd AFBs. Eighteen aircraft control and warning radar sites controlled their operations. Elmendorf earned the motto "Top Cover of North America" and AAC adopted the motto as its own in 1969.

The late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s brought about a gradual but significant decline in air defense forces in Alaska due to mission changes and the demands of the Vietnam War. The Air Force deactivated five fighter squadrons and closed five radar sites. In 1961, the Department of Defense consigned Ladd AFB to the Army which renamed it Fort Wainwright. The Alaskan Command was disestablished in 1975. Elmendorf began providing more support to other Air Force commands, particularly Military Airlift Command C-5 Galaxy and C-141 Starlifter flights to and from the Far East.

Despite a diminished number of personnel and aircraft, a turning point in Elmendorf's history occurred with the arrival of two F-4E Phantom squadrons, the 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) from MacDill AFB, Florida in 1970 and the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) in 1977.

(Continued on the following page)



Around the Bases: Elmendorf AFB, Alaska (Cont.)

The strategic importance of Elmendorf AFB was graphically realized during the spring of 1980 when the 18th TFS deployed eight of its F-4Es to Korea to participate in exercise Team Spirit. It was a historical first and underlined an increasing emphasis AAC placed on its tactical role. The strategic location of Elmendorf made it an excellent deployment center, a fact that validated the contention of Billy Mitchell whom, in 1935, stated that "Alaska is the most strategic place in the world." Deployments from Elmendorf are now conducted on a routine basis.

The 1980s witnessed a period of growth and modernization of Elmendorf AFB. During 1982, the fighter wing converted from F-4 Phantoms to F-15 Eagles. The 18th TFS was assigned to Eielson AFB where it was equipped with the A-10 Thunderbolt II. The 54th TFS, of the Aleutian Campaign fame, activated once again in 1987. Rounding out the modernization program was the construction of an enhanced Regional Operations Control Center (completed in 1983) and the replacement of the 1950s generation aircraft and control and warning radars with the state of the art "minimally attended radars." The integrated air warning and defense system became fully operational in 1985. Alaska's air defense force was further enhanced with the assignment of two E-3A Sentrys to Elmendorf in 1986. The Alaskan Command was reestablished at Elmendorf in 1989 as a sub unified joint service command under the Pacific Command in recognition of Alaska's military importance in the Pacific region.

That importance was further recognized when the F-15 equipped 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron was reassigned to Elmendorf from Clark Air Base in the Philippines in May 1991 just prior to the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in June. The Pacific Regional Medical Center moved from Clark to Elmendorf and the construction of a new hospital began in 1993. The early 1990s also saw major organizational changes and an expansion of Elmendorf's importance. In 1991, the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing was reorganized and all the major tenant units on Elmendorf were placed under it. The 21st TFW inactivated and the 3rd Wing was reassigned from Clark to Elmendorf also in 1991.

The Air Mobility Command maintains the **732nd Air Mobility Squadron**, the largest tenant unit at Elmendorf. As an integral portion of the Global Air Mobility Support System, the 732nd provides support to numerous airlift and air refueling missions transiting the Alaskan area of responsibility. The squadron is divided into four flights: Aerial Port, Enroute Maintenance, Command and Control and Plans and Readiness. The Aerial Port Flight is comprised of some of the best military and civilian personnel who work 'round-the-clock' to process passengers and cargo and perform fleet service on all Department of Defense airlift and air refueling missions transiting, originating or terminating at Elmendorf. The Maintenance Flight provides support for all AMC airlift including the C-5, C-17, KC-10 and KC-135 aircraft as well as other command and commercial aircraft including DC-10s and 747s. The Control Center is the focal point for aircrews destined for the Far East and the Continental United States. The center is comprised of operations, maintenance and transportation controllers. It is responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of all strategic airlift operations for PACAF C-130s. Operations controllers perform mission and aircrew management. Transportation controllers direct and coordinate air terminal operations and provide capability forecasting for all of Alaska's radar sites. Maintenance controllers coordinate aircraft maintenance, refueling operations, maintenance recovery teams and manage AMC aircraft parking.

Today, Elmendorf AFB continues to grow in size and importance due to its strategic location. It now has responsibilities far beyond the vast borders of Alaska.

Source: <http://www.elmendorf.af.mil>

Name the Artifact: The mystery artifact is a KC-97 navigator's stool. Located in the cockpit, it was used as a seat or as a stool to stand upon to reach the overhead sextant. This stool is not unlike the one that KC-97 navigator Harry Welch would have used on his Atlantic Crossing.

Deborah Sellars

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