**Air Mobility Command Museum**  
**Mission Statement**

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

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**What is the Air Mobility Command Museum?**

Located in 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, Wilmington, Del.*

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*A fleeting deck of clouds scatters the light of the sun rising over the Air Mobility Command Museum the morning of Oct. 18. This photograph was taken from the passenger ramp outside the flight deck entrance to the AMC's C-5A Galaxy. The plane is scheduled to be repainted in the white over gray paint scheme it carried while stationed at Dover AFB.*
From the Director

Let there be light!

Paul Gillis is one of our volunteers, but that is an understatement. He has so much energy and he does so many things he makes me look like I’m snoozing.

Paul is vice president of the board of the AMC Museum Foundation where he can be counted on to volunteer for any job that needs doing, especially the ones that are not fun. Among other things he can be counted on is to shop for the food for some of our events that need snacks and then set it up so we are prepared and then clean it up afterwards. He follows up on suggestions; he is the kind of board member most nonprofits only wish they had.

But that’s just a start. Paul is a retired C-5 instructor and examiner pilot, an electrical engineer, a volunteer for his church — and he takes people in his neighborhood to their medical appointments because he’s that kind of person. He is so busy he has to keep a schedule of his volunteer commitments.

Paul’s current project here, and it keeps growing, is to add lighting to the inside of our exhibit planes that are part of our Open Cockpit Tours. His first plane was the C-47. For years we had a rudimentary lighting system installed so people could safely walk inside the plane. Paul replaced it with an LED light system that produces much less heat, draws less power and puts more light where it is needed. In fact, it caused us to do a good housecleaning inside the plane because after he finished, we could see all the dust we’d missed.

Now, too much light around artifacts is worse than not enough light. Light energy actually damages paint and fabrics among other things so it was important to get the right balance. I can tell you it’s a major success. To make the job harder, everything needs to be installed without modifying the original aircraft and to blend in the wiring and the light fixtures so it does not detract from the original. Paul ran the wiring parallel to the original wiring and installed the lights in the existing fixtures so everything looks as it should. On the outside he installed a small spotlight away from the plane that lights up our new airdrop system and it needed to be highlighted. Job Well Done.

Next he illuminated the bomb bay and gunner’s compartment of our B-17 using strip lighting and small individual lights. Our B-17 is configured so people can walk into the bomb bay and also look in the rear entry door to see the ball turret and waist gunner positions as well as the tail wheel. It was available before but now people can actually see the details and learn more about what they are looking at, it’s taken a “6” display up to a “10.”

Finally, our C-5 competes with our VC-9, i.e., “Air Force Two,” as the biggest draws in our open-aircraft tour program.

The challenge is that for safety reasons we have to have light inside the C-5 cargo compartment when visitors are there. It would be loud, expensive and impractical to run an Air Force power unit to provide lighting so we had a contractor install some basic interior LED lighting that runs off a little whisper generator. Paul has taken that basic capability and bumped it up by adding more lights in the cargo compartment where they were needed and installing additional LEDs in existing light fixtures in the flight deck. We only can open the flight deck on the third Saturday of the month because it requires an external set of steps that are safe for visitors. Everyone wants to look in the bunkrooms and the bathroom but before it was too dark to see. Now people snap photos of the bunk beds equipped with seat belts. Paul still has more ideas and more aircraft to upgrade.

Let there be light — and, thanks to Paul, the light is good.

— Mike

ERRATA ...

Our July-September issue contained a spelling error in the Page 5 listing of names of those who have become lifetime members of the Museum. The entry should have read William Welser Jr. We regret the error.
The bridge at Koto-ri: the C-119 proves its mettle in Korea

By Bob Leicht, U.S. Army (Retired)
Special to the Hangar Digest

In my article about the C-47 in the July-September 2014 issue of the Hangar Digest, we traced the development of a first generation aerial delivery (AD) system, the ‘paracrates’ and ‘pararacks’ which permitted dropping out-sized equipment to airborne forces. Created from on-hand bomb release equipment, they were add-ons to the U.S. Army Air Forces’ primary tactical air mobility platform; although they worked well, the system was not an optimal solution to the challenge. Future airlift aircraft design requirements dictated an integral aerial delivery capacity, to include heavy drop.

As we’ve seen in the history of the C-119, this aircraft was the primary tactical aerial delivery platform at the beginning of the Korean War in 1950, and its systems would get a full operational test supporting United Nations forces on the Korean peninsula over the next three years.

The primary delivery system was an Army/Air Force arrangement by which troop-prepared assault containers (named ‘paratainers’) would be dropped through the C-119’s forward cargo deck floor, after which troops would jump from the aft doors.

The system included a top-mounted monorail in the cargo bay, on which would ride upwards of 20 trolleys, each carrying a container with an attached parachute, and a well in the forward deck of the cargo bay through which the containers would be released on command. Near the drop zone, the internal and external well doors would be opened, and the trolleys would be pulled forward by a cable until each one hit a trigger, which opened a bail on the trolley and dropped the container through the well.

The paratainers were duffle bag-like canvas bags with parachutes on top, suspended from the trolleys. The canvas curtains on either side prevented lateral sway, although the jumpers crammed in abreast of the bags achieved much the same purpose.

It was also a complex system, perhaps too complex given the narrowness of the aircraft. Having two rows of combat-loaded jumpers with the paratainer system between them almost guaranteed that Murphy’s Law would apply. The size of the containers also limited the type of equipment that could be delivered.

On a side note, and from personal experience, I can guarantee what’s on the mind of every man in this situation: “Let me out of this airplane!”

In time, however, the Air Force would separate the jumpers and the containers, putting them in different aircraft, ensuring that both would be delivered on time and on target. This later evolved into what would become the standard delivery method of roller-mounted containers, a practice that continues today. In the near future, a modern-day container delivery system load will be displayed aboard the Air Mobility Command Museum’s C-130 in a project being led by Jon Andrews.

 Visitors to the Museum’s C-119 will see an original A-4 container with parachute, suspended from the trolley above the well doors as originally designed, and as restored by Charlie Tanner and his talented crew.

The parachutes’ static line was attached to an anchor line cable rigged on the deck, from where they would be retrieved after all containers were free and clear of the aircraft and both sets of well doors closed. This integrated aircraft/container system served as a model of design ingenuity even though the system evolved over time.

The Bridge at Koto-ri

Operations in Korea provided a key test environment for perfecting established aerial delivery capabilities and procedures, and creating new ones to answer the call of critical combat requirements, one of which will be explained in a future Hangar Digest entry.

In perhaps the most famous equipment airdrop in history – until the Museum’s C-5A airdropped a live Minuteman ICBM from its cargo bay in October 1974 – C-119s of the 374th Troop Carrier Group (ironically, the same unit to which the AMCM’s ‘Turf and Sport Special’ C-47 was assigned in the European theater in World War II), delivered equipment to beleaguered American forces that literally saved them from capture or worse in the early days of the Korean conflict.

In December 1950, a U.S. Marine division with accompanying Army elements was retreating from overwhelming Chinese forces from the Chosin Reservoir in the Taebek Mountains of eastern North Korea.

Conducting a fighting retreat (or “attacking in a different direction,” as the 1st Marine Division commander described the action), more than 12,000 Marines and soldiers, with combat vehicles and rolling stock were in danger of being cut off and surrounded.

Near disaster struck when Chinese sappers blew away a section of mountainside roadway at a pumping station that would prevent the more than 1,000 vehicles and the many casualties they carried from continuing their southward exodus.

Marine and Army combat engineers surveyed the site, and radioed a one-of-a-kind request: could the Air Force drop enough sections of steel bridging to allow the 15- to 20-foot gap to be spanned?
Koto-ri: C-119 units awarded first Air Force DUC in Korea

The challenge to the Army’s aerial delivery specialists and Air Force aircrews is that it had never been done before, as heavy drop operations were in its infancy. But the clock was clicking and doing nothing was not an option.

The engineers calculated that with wooden abutments on either end of the gap, four bridge sections were needed, but the commanders on the ground requested eight, a 100 percent backup plan that would prove prophetic.

Back in Japan, riggers and aircrews immediately began working two major issues: first, could the C-119 lift the bridge sections and, second, could they be delivered by parachute.

The answer to the first question was an unqualified yes, but no guarantees could be given for the second.

Given the time constraints and the small number of Treadway sections in theater, only one test airdrop could be conducted. Using six personnel parachutes rigged to a Treadway section, a drop was conducted that ultimately proved to be a failure: the parachutes entangled and the section was destroyed in the resulting uncontrolled fall.

With no more time for experimentation, the test team went full bore. They turned to G-5 cargo parachutes rigged fore and aft on each section, and prepared them and the delivery aircraft for the mission. Time had run out for the RETREATING Marines and soldiers.

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1950, eight C-119s each dropped a 4,500 pound package of a Treadway section and wooden packing material in a narrow valley at a place called Koto-ri.

While one section was damaged in the drop and another fell behind Chinese lines, six serviceable packages were recovered and placed on waiting trucks for movement to the bridge site.

After two days of fighting to reach the location, on December 9, Marine and Army engineers constructed the rudimentary bridge, which enabled the entire force of troops, vehicles, and equipment to continue their southward movement to the port of Hungnam, from where they were evacuated to fight another day.

The 21st Troop Carrier Squadron and the 314th Troop Carrier Group were awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for this effort, the first to be awarded to U.S. Air Force units in Korea.

All told, this mission was a testament to the tactical brilliance of the aircraft design, the aerial delivery specialists, and the aircrews who improvised in real time to respond to a critical combat requirement. It was an amazing display of tactical and technical competence which those involved – especially the Marines and soldiers who escaped Chinese captivity or worse – would never forget.

Stop the presses! Rare Lockheed Lodestar C-60 arrives at AMCM

The Air Mobility Command Museum was proud to receive a rare World War II Lockheed C-60 Lodestar aircraft, delivered on Oct. 6. The classic aircraft was brought to Dover Air Force Base aboard a C-5M Galaxy, a plane also built by Lockheed.

The addition of a C-60 now gives the AMC Museum a complete set of every significant Lockheed airlifter built since World War II, the only museum in the world that can make that claim.

The Lodestar was transferred from the Robins Air Force Base, Ga., museum as part of a downsizing plan. As the plane fits the mission of the AMC Museum, the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force approved the transfer. The 436 Airlift Wing provided the C-5M airlift as part of their aircrew training program.

The entire fuselage of the C-60, complete with both engines and the inboard wing, fit inside the C-5’s massive cargo compartment.

It was a close fit but professionally planned and executed.

The Lodestar series of aircraft was developed to compete with the Douglas C-47/DC-3 Skytrain. Slightly smaller and faster, the Army Air Force purchased about 400 of Lockheed’s last twin engine airlifter in comparison to more than 10,000 C-47s.

Some were assigned to the Air Transport Command and used for paratroop training, while others were used to haul freight and passengers or for general utility service. They were retired after World War II and fewer than a dozen remain flying today. Only four are known to exist in museums.

The aircraft will be reassembled and ready for display before the end of November.
In accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws, The AMC Museum Foundation elects five board members every year, with each board member serving a three-year term. This year Bettie Campbell chose to not run for re-election – we certainly owe Bettie a huge “thank you” for the outstanding support she’s provided to the Board, and hence to you, our members. Here is an introduction to our board members who will serve from Oct. 1, 2014 through Sept. 30, 2017.

**Bob Berglund**, born and raised in Dover, is the retired owner of the former Dover Hardware store. A longtime community volunteer, Bob’s starting his seventh year as a Museum Foundation board member. He has served as state president of the Air Force Association and has been a board member of Bayhealth, Bayhealth Foundation, and the Cancer Institute at Bayhealth, as well as other health-related charitable organizations. He’s also served as a city of Dover planning commissioner, president of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Dover Development Corporation. For fun, he likes to dine with friends and talk politics. Bob continues to be a central figure in saving your Foundation dollars by closely monitoring our advertising budget – we survey visitors and have found most of them hear about us by word-of-mouth, road signs, and increasingly, online. We also continue to tap his retail experience by his continued capacity as store committee chairman, whereby he works as our liaison with the manager of the Museum store/eStore. Bob continues to spend time helping with most of our AMC Museum and Foundation functions.

We welcome our newest Board member, **Carleton E. Carey Sr.** A native Dover resident, he’s been married to his wife, Blanche, for 50 years. He was employed by Chesapeake Utilities Corporation and retired after 25 years of service in the marketing department and sales development; he has been in sales and marketing for 48 years. Serving in Dover’s city government for 22 years, he spent five years on the utility committee, followed by 10 years on the city council and most recently the past seven years as Dover’s mayor.

Carlton is a Civilian Police Academy graduate. He was the Delaware Volunteer Fireman’s Association’s Fireman of the Year in 1999 and inducted into the Delaware Fire Service Firefighters Hall of Fame in 2000. He was the honorary commander of the 436 Civil Engineering Squadron at Dover Air Force Base in 2005 and 2006. As a member of Robbins Hose Co. No. 1, for 52 years, he has served as assistant chief, deputy chief, fire chief, vice president and president. He also served on the board of directors for several years and served on the building committee for Dover’s two fire stations.

Carlton is affiliated with the Delaware State Fire Chief’s Association, Delaware Volunteer Fireman’s Association, the Kent County Fireman’s Association and the Kent County Fire Chief’s Association. He’s president of the Delaware League of Local Governments and the Delaware Economic Development Council. He’s a board member of the Blood Bank of Delaware and a member of the Council on Police Training, the Delaware Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness, the Delaware Prostate Cancer Coalition and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce. Carlton has been recognized as an honorary wing commander of Dover Air Force Base.

**Mike Frebert** was president of Dover Litho Printing Company for 24 years, a company founded by his father, George Frebert, in 1957. Mike, born in Dover, graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Maryland. He worked for Tetra-Tech Architects in Wilmington, Delaware, on large commercial projects for five years and continued his education in business administration at Goldey Beacom College and accounting at Delaware Technical Community College.

His aviation interests started as a child, flying with his dad. As actual planes were being worked on in their garage, Mike was building model planes. He enjoyed flying with his dad in their 1966 Alon Aircoupe and his love for aviation has never ended – he still flies at a much smaller scale, teaching his youngest son, Noah, on remote controlled planes.
Mike is very involved with our local community, helping with many local projects and fundraisers. He has served on the board of directors for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, as a past president of the Capital City Rotary, on the board of directors for the Capitol Theater, and as an honorary commander for the 436th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base. The National Republican Congressional Committee, in Washington D.C., appointed Mike to its business advisory council, representing small business for the state of Delaware. After a day is done, Mike enjoys time with his wife, Diane and three children Matthew, Rachel, and Noah. Matthew, soon to be promoted to captain, is stationed at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea. Adding to the fun is his German shepherd, Bailey who often goes to work with Mike. Mike has been a long-time Friend of the Museum, frequently supporting our printing needs, from raffle tickets and brochures to publishing The Hangar Digest. We’re looking forward to another three years of his expertise and support.

Bob Mench, of Smyrna, Delaware, is a retired business owner whose career spans six decades of multiple successful businesses founded and sold. In January 2011, he sold his latest business, Bob’s Bird House, of Townsend, Delaware, an international mail-order business supplying restoration parts and services for vintage Thunderbirds. He is an avid aviation and military enthusiast with memberships to over a dozen museums including the Air Mobility Command Museum, the Massey Air Museum of Massey, Md., the Golden Age Air Museum of Bethel, Pa., and the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum. Congratulations are in order for Bob since he recently received his pilot’s certificate, with more than 100 hours in a Piper Tri-pacer, Piper Warrior and others. He collects classic cars and Ford Thunderbird memorabilia, large and small model aircraft, ships and trains, and aviation art. He volunteers with the American Hero Memorial in Concord Township, Pa., and the Sons of American Legion in Middletown, Delaware.

Don Sloan spent most of his Air Force/AF Reserve career at McGuire AFB, N.J., flying 12,500 hours in C-141s. In 2001, he moved to Dover to become commander of the 512th Operations Group – the best job of his career. Impressed with the AMC Museum during his units’ promotion ceremonies and changes-of-commands, he soon had the opportunity to become a Foundation Board member. Don began his general aviation flying in 1994, in his 1969 Piper Arrow. A couple of thousand Arrow hours later, and about a year before retiring, he met World War II pilot retired U.S Air Force Maj. Bob Bean, who had a 1941 Stearman for sale. Bob also introduced Don to Massey Aerodrome, a local grassroots aviation sod air strip where they’re constantly doing aircraft restorations. What an opportunity! He bought the open-cockpit biplane in December 2005, began the restoration, making the first flight in April 2007. First passenger? Maj. Bean! Biggest thrills? Flying World War I veterans who began their military flying careers in Stearmans. Now he’s also flying his recently purchased 1947 Aeronca L-16 Grasshopper, his “finally–restored” Bellanca Citabria and is working toward his glider rating.

Don is a Life Member of the John H. Porter Jr., First-State Chapter Tuskegee Airmen, a Kentucky Colonel, a member of Chapter 240 Experimental Aircraft Association, and has been a member of the Delaware’s USO Council for 13 years. Looking forward, he’d like to see more Museum members, always more volunteers and an increase in base participation at the Museum.

Well, there you have it – you’ve met some of your Board. I’ve often touted that our Board goes against the conventional wisdom that 90% of the work is done by 10% of the members – thankfully, that’s not the case here. The only purpose of The AMC Museum Foundation is to support the Air Mobility Command Museum in its mission as an aviation and aerospace, education, scientific, cultural, historical and inspirational facility for the general public and the Air Force community. There’s a lot of behind-the-scenes activity that goes on to keep the Foundation capable of supporting that mission, our terrific base of volunteers and in turn, you, our customer.

Fly safe!
Don Sloan

Photos submitted by individual concerned
Of all the aircraft in the history of the U.S. Air Force, the Fairchild C-119 proved to be one of the service’s most adaptable airframes.

Designed as a cargo carrier, it hauled troops and cargo, snatched returning satellites out of the air, and, armed with cannons and armor plating, served in a close air support role during the Vietnam War. After their military service, several, including the Air Mobility Command’s C-119F, saw service as civilian firefighting aircraft.

The Air Mobility Command Museum’s C-119 was one of 72 aircraft built by Kaiser Motors at its Willow Run, Michigan, plant. Although it is painted in U.S. Air Force colors, it bears a fictitious serial number because the plane actually served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1953 to 1965 under serial number 22118. During that time, it also flew under United Nations colors during the 1956-1957 Suez Crisis in Egypt.

The aircraft eventually was sold to the former Hawkins and Powers Aviation company, of Graybull, Wyoming, where it served as a firefighter with a jet engine installed on top of the fuselage.

It was flown to the AMC Museum in October 1991, where it since has undergone a complete restoration.

From C-82 to C-119
The C-119 was the ultimate development of the World War II era C-82 Packet cargo plane. Fairchild Aircraft designed the C-82 with ease of cargo loading and unloading as the top priority. The fuselage was a pod containing the flight deck and cargo compartment whose floor was at truck-bed height for the first time in an American cargo aircraft. The back of the pod was equipped with clam-shell doors which were removable for air-dropping cargo, and troop doors on both sides. The 2,000-horsepower Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines were placed in long booms joined to the fuselage pod by the high, inverted-gull wing and were also connected aft by a long horizontal stabilizer. A tricycle landing gear made for a level cargo floor while parked on the ground. An-
other novel feature was a paratainer delivery system that was rigged in the cargo compartment similar to a bomber’s bomb bay.

But there were problems with the C-82. It was underpowered and visibility from the flight deck was poor during the approach to drop zones and on landing. Numerous changes, including moving the flight deck forward and widening the cargo bay, plus new engines resulted in the improved aircraft being designated the C-119.

With the new designation came a new nickname: The Flying Boxcar. The first of six C-119 variants flew in December 1947.

**Baptism of fire**

The C-119 soon found itself in high demand as war broke out in Korea in June 1950. The 314th Troop Carrier Group became the first of many C-119 units to support the airlift to Korea, flying their first missions to Taegu AB, South Korea on Aug. 11. In September, 70 C-119s delivered a 740 ft. long pontoon bridge to Kimpo Airbase to replace the destroyed Han River Bridge in Seoul in support of the Inchon amphibious assault.

Many more times the Flying Boxcars were called on to resupply a cut-off unit or perform an airdrop in Korea. Two problems dogged the C-119s during the war: there were never enough aircraft to go in-theater to deliver the Army infantry regiments in one airdrop; and parts shortages grounded many aircraft from time to time. In spite of these problems, the C-119 remained one of the most valuable aircraft of the United Nations forces in Korea right up to the armistice in July 1953.

No sooner had the Korean War armistice taken hold than 35 C-119Cs were loaned to the French to support their attempts to retain Indochina as a French colony. A ragtag mixture of French and civilian crews from Claire Chennault’s airline, Civil Air Transport, performed airdrops in support of the final French operations at Dien Bien Phu. A few USAAF crews also flew these aircraft, albeit unofficially. Between March 13 and May 7, 1954, 7,000 tons of supplies were airdropped to the garrison at Dien Bien Phu; of these, 5,000 tons were dropped by C-119Cs, with the loss of two aircraft. Nineteen others suffered damage from flak that was as dense as some remembered from the German Ruhr Valley during World War II. On March 23, the French

**By the numbers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fairchild C-119F</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - crewmembers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - stretcher patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 - paratroopers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32,000 -- pounds of cargo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,183 -- total aircraft built (of all variations)</td>
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Flying United Nations colors, 22118 is deiced at Stewart AFB, Tenn. The plane took part in the Suez Crisis of 1956-1957.

By the numbers:

**Fairchild C-119F**

- 5 - crewmembers
- 35 - stretcher patients
- 62 - paratroopers
- 32,000 -- pounds of cargo
- 1,183 -- total aircraft built (of all variations)

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Even used all available C-119s as bombers, dropping napalm on Viet Minh anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Unfortunately, the rain-soaked jungle refused to burn. One of these aircraft crashed on takeoff.

The other aircraft lost had a CAT pilot named James B. McGovern Jr. from Elizabeth, N.J. At 6 feet tall and weighing 260 pounds, McGovern was better known by his nickname, Earthquake McGoon. McGovern was a classic, seat-of-the-pants flier who had become legendary throughout Southeast Asia for his incredible luck as well as his piloting skills.

McGovern’s luck ran out, however, on his 45th mission on May 6, 1954. Flying a C-119C over the French garrison, his left engine was hit; McGovern kept the aircraft flying for more than 75 miles until it lost altitude and hit the ground in Laos, killing the 31-year-old McGovern and his copilot, Wallace Buford; McGovern reportedly radioed another pilot, “Looks like this is it, son,” as the plane went down.

His loss greatly upset the CAT crews and they decided to go on strike, but weather grounded the Boxcars on May 7 and the French garrison surrendered the next day. In 2007, the crash site was located and McGovern’s remains were interred at Arlington National Cemetery. The remaining C-119s were soon returned to the U.S. Air Force.

**Around the world**

The C-119 also performed vital services with United States Air Forces in Europe. Shortly after the Korean War ended, USAFE commander Lt. Gen. William H. Tunner, the mastermind of the World War II Burma ‘Hump’ Airlift and the 1948-1949 Berlin Airlift, faced a growing problem with the units in his command having parts shortages. He identified the problem area as being the ground transportation system which resulted in slow delivery of critical parts and excessive pilfering. He quickly used his C-119 troop carrier units to form the Air Logistics Service which established routes within Europe to deliver priority parts and supplies to their destinations in a timely manner. Later, Belgian, Italian and Norwegian C-119s joined the ALS. Before this, it took an average of 45 days to obtain requisitioned parts; the ALS cut this to 28 days. At the ‘end of the line’ in Turkey, it dropped from 150 days to 20 days. Priority parts that had taken 16 days now took six days. C-119s of the 322nd Air Division served until the unit was discontinued Jan. 8, 1961.

(Continued on page 12)
C-119F now amazes visitors at AMC Museum

(Continued from page 11)

Within the continental United States, the Tactical Air Command had eight troop carrier groups during the 1950s. These units supported airborne troop training and exercises, performed numerous humanitarian airlifts following floods, snowstorms, tornadoes and other natural disasters, and occasionally deployed to Alaska for cold weather training. They also supported the overseas forces in Europe and the Far East. An unusual mission for the Flying Boxcar was that of aerial recovery of reconnaissance balloons and satellites. Under Project Drag Net, the 456th Troop Carrier Wing’s C-119s were modified with beavertail doors in the rear of the fuselage which could be opened in flight. A recovery line would be placed between two long poles in the airstream behind and below the aircraft. After spotting the balloon, the aircraft would fly just over the balloon. The line would then snag the payload and it would be winched into the cargo bay. Between April 1955 and March 1956, this unit, attached to the Strategic Air Command, recovered balloons launched from Turkey for overflights of the Soviet Union and China. After this operation, the 456th was disestablished and six of the C-119Js went to the 6593rd Test Squadron of the Air Force Systems Command at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, where they later recovered reconnaissance satellite film capsules in mid-air. The first successful recovery, Discovery 14, occurred 360 miles southwest of Hawaii on Aug. 19, 1960.

Vietnam: a new mission

Like two other transports, the C-47 which the C-119 replaced and the C-130 which replaced it, the Boxcar found a new lease on life in Vietnam as a gunship. Under Project Combat Hornet, 26 C-119Gs were equipped with four 7.62mm miniguns and relabeled AC-119G Shadow, while 26 other C-119s gained four miniguns, two 20mm Vulcan Gatling guns and two underwing jet pods as AC-119K Stingers. Both versions had elaborate sensor and fire control outfits and proved to be very effective gunships from 1969 on.

One AC-119K flew a very successful truck-busting mission in Laos on May 8, 1970, in which it was badly damaged and only made it back to base through the herculean efforts of its crew. This crew was awarded the 1970 Mackay Trophy for the most meritorious flight of the year.

On another night, an American doctor was operating on a South Vietnamese soldier at a base camp when the camp came under attack. The generator hit, plunging the camp and the operating room into darkness. An AC-119G illuminated the base camp with its million-candlepower illuminator, despite enemy fire. The operation was successfully completed and the aircraft made it back to base.

On Sept. 1, 1971, these aircraft were transferred to the South Vietnamese Air Force and continued to fly support missions until the country fell in 1975. As Americans were being evacuated from Saigon by helicopter, a lone AC-119K and some A-1 Skyraiders of the VNAF provided close air support. The AC-119 was eventually struck by an anti-aircraft missile and went down, losing one of the crew. The North Vietnamese forces captured at least 36 C-119s and AC-119s which flew on for some years with the 918th Transport Regiment of the Vietnamese People’s Air Force.

Workhorse of the National Guard and Air Force Reserve

The Air Force Reserve flew C-119s from 1952 to 1972. As the active squadrons converted to other aircraft types in the late 1950s, the numbers of Flying Boxcars in the USAFR swelled to a peak of 669 aircraft in 1962. Many of these units had been fighter wings whose missions were changed when the USAFR transferred all fighter missions to the Air National Guard. In time of war, these units would be assigned to the Tactical Air Command, as some were called up during the 1961 Berlin Crisis and 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. In the Air National Guard, 12 squadrons from 10 states flew the C-119. All but three of the units were aeromedical evacuation squadrons that only operated for a few years before transitioning to the C-121 Constellation when the C-119 was found to be unsuited for the air evacuation role. The other three units were air commando squadrons, later renamed special operations squadrons, that flew the Boxcar between 1961 and 1975, when their aircraft became the last U.S. Air Force C-119s to be retired.

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps also flew Flying Boxcars between 1950 and 1975, with the Navy versions initially redesignated as the R4Q-1. In May 1961, several of these aircraft were airborne on a support mission for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba when they were recalled.

Fourteen countries also flew the C-119: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China (Taiwan), Ethiopia, France, Greece, India, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Norway, South Vietnam and Vietnam (post-1975 with captured C-119s). Most nations used their Flying Boxcars as regular cargo aircraft, while the Royal Canadian Air Force sometimes used theirs in support of United Nations forces, particularly during the 1956-1957 Suez Crisis.

After the Flying Boxcar was retired from military service, some found their way into service with civilian cargo airlines while others were converted into fire bombers to drop fire retardants onto forest fires. Many of these aircraft had a jet engine installed in a pod above the fuselage for additional power. Hawkins & Powers Aviation owned 23 former USAF and RCAF C-119s, including the AMC’s C-119. They served until the late 1990s when it became too expensive to keep them airworthy.
Ayden Galloza, of Lincoln, Del., shows off his newly acquired P-47 model while touring the AMC M Aug. 30. “I picked it out,” he said.

Brandon Dashnaw, of Summerville, S.C., flew the Museum’s simulator during his family’s July 27 visit to the AMCM. Brandon made two perfect landings.

Ulrike and Larry Mates, of West Chester, Pa., visited the AMCM Aug. 30. “We came down just for the day,” Larry said. “We’ve driven by many times, but never stopped.”

Cousins Joyce Metz and Olivia Horvath got some nifty souvenirs they showed off while standing on the steps of the Museum’s VC-9, “Air Force Two.”

A tour of the Museum’s air traffic control tower gave Raymond P. Franze III, of Falling Waters, W.Va., a chance to use the tower’s high-powered binoculars to look over Dover AFB’s airfield on Aug. 31.

A group of Air Force Reserve enlistees toured the AMC Museum July 20: back row, from left, Mark Miles, Brad Whitney, Tyler McPhail, brothers Peter and Eric Russell, and Aaron Anderson; in front are Frank Gregorios, Nicole Seawright, and Tatum Ryan.

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<tr>
<td>Crew Member</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>Membership certificate, member card good for 10% off purchases in the Museum store, quarterly Hangar Digest newsletter and challenge coin*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Crew Member</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>Crew member benefits plus challenge coin* for each family member (maximum five)</td>
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<td>Squadron Commander</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Flight crew member benefits plus recognition in the Hangar Digest newsletter, name engraved on plaque, free admission to annual Foundation mixer</td>
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<td>Group Commander</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Squadron commander benefits plus two museum coffee mugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wing Commander</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Group commander benefits plus one crew member membership for friend, signed and numbered aviation print, museum golf shirt personalized with name and donor category</td>
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<td>Eagle Donor</td>
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*Initial and 5-year anniversaries

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Museum volunteers Bob Leicht, Daniel Soto and John Zistel discuss restoration work for a vintage U.S. Army howitzer, soon to be part of the Museum’s display.