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.

One of the reasons your AMC Museum continues to provide a great educational experience is that we stick very closely to our reason for being.

So exactly what is our “mission”? Broken down by numbers our mission is 70 percent airlift and air-refueling, 20 percent Dover AFB history and 10 percent Air Force general history. Our aircraft and artifact collection sticks very closely to that breakdown. But we work hard to be much more than numbers. We tell the stories of the people who have served in our nation’s Air Force, and we offer the only opportunity for many visitors to see the actual aircraft and meet the people who have served our country.

Hangar 1301 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

Although located on Dover AFB property, 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, Christmas and New Year’s Day. For more information, call 302-677-5939.

We like to say we are a window to your Air Force. Let us know how we can continue to improve our outreach and family friendly experience.

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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From the Director

Goodbye and farewell — at least for now

I’ve told friends for years I would know when it was time to retire. I love this job, the people I work with and the work we all do together, so coming to work was a joy. But I don’t belong in today’s totally automated, online workforce. I’ll leave it at that.

The good news is that the museum has grown in the right way to be a tremendous asset to the U.S. Air Force, to Delaware, and to the American people. The aircraft collection make us the place to go if you want to learn about airlift and air refueling history.

Speaking of which …

Our team is scheduled to travel to Edwards Air Force Base, California, in the middle of November to start taking apart the very historic C-119 in existence and a veteran of some very historic airlift missions in Korea including the famous bridge drop enabling the U.S. Marines to get their trucks and armor over a blown causeway during the Chosin Reservoir operation. It was the first time a bridge had been air-dropped. Our crack team of “detectives” has located some sections of that type of portable bridge so we hope to acquire one or two to display with the plane.

It will complement the C-119G we already have in our collection.

Since our last issue the AMC Museum has been given permission to acquire the world’s oldest air refueling tanker from its current static display location at MacDill AFB, Florida.

The KB-50 was used by the Tactical Air Command to refuel early jet fighters and bombers. From 1956 until 1965 these planes, which were obsolete even then, provided the best available means to air refuel TAC fighters.

The Strategic Air Command had priority on newer KC-97 tankers, forcing the KB-50s and their crews to work in the shadow of SAC until corrosion problems in the KB-50s forced their retirement. Our KB-50 is one of only two remaining; the other is an older airframe but ours was converted to be a tanker first.

Both of our current tankers (the KC-97 and the KC-135) use a flying boom system to refuel planes. The KB-50 used the older, slower probe and drogue system.

We could write a whole article about the differences but one big distinction was the KB-50 could refuel three aircraft at a time: one from a hose on each outboard wing and one from the center aft fuselage. The good news is that all the original refueling equipment still is installed in the aircraft, but the bad news there is quite a bit of corrosion to remove and the repair process will take lots of time and effort.

Our new leadership team will continue the progress we have made together and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for the best field museum in the U.S. Air Force.

After taking some time off to catch up on personal projects I’ll most likely be back as a volunteer. I enjoy taking people on tours of the Museum and there are a few other things I can help with that will be fulfilling. So I’ll be back, but most importantly your AMC Museum will continue to grow and the staff here will take care of our artifacts -- and of you.

So come out and visit, maybe I’ll be your tour guide.

— Mike

New names added to AMCM’s Commemorative Garden

An additional 18 memorial bricks are being added to the walkway at the Air Mobility Command Museum’s Commemorative Garden in conjunction with Veterans Day 2016.

The bricks, which are inscribed with names, organizations or other tributes, are added to the garden each Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

AMC Museum Volunteer Stephanie Garber, 1,000-plus hours
Sgt. 1st Class Here Suydam, 26th BDE FWS ETT, Afghanistan
E.W. Olszewski, GENEO, 12-7-1942 – 2-11-2015
William F. Cathell Sr., MMS USN 1957-1959, USS Forrestal
Doriso and Geneo, Together Forever
William L. Cline, USAF, World War II, 1945 - 1948
Henry M. Lewis, Service Pilot, ATC-CBI, “The Hump,” Curtiss C-46 Commando
Richard S. Marks, Lt. Col., USAF, Ret. AMC Museum Volunteer
Col. Kevin Gordon, 436 AW/CV, 2014-2016, Wingman, Leader, Friend to All
Frederick E. Breakey, SMSgt., USAF, Vietnam, 7 Nov. 1940 – 24 June 1988
MSgt. Ron Gough, Veterans Day Guest Speaker, 11-11-2016
A.I. DuPont Middle School Student Ambassadors, Red Clay District and Pritchett Associates LLC (Two bricks)

Because of formatting requirements, the information presented in this listing may not exactly match the inscriptions on the bricks.
Mike Leister likes to travel, and as a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve and Air Mobility Command Museum, he’s done his fair share.

But beginning in November, Leister’s journeys will be for personal, not business reasons.

Leister, 67, recently announced he is stepping down as director of the airlift museum at Dover Air Force Base.

“I plan to travel with my wife, Claudia, take some time to enjoy our grandchildren and maybe develop some new hobbies,” Leister said.

**Shoo Shoo Baby flies again**

Leister grew up in Millers, Maryland, where his family owned a farm machinery store. But fixing tractors and tillers wasn’t part of Leister’s career plans. Vulnerable for the military draft, Leister enlisted in the Air Force in March 1970 and was one of the first trainees to work on the C-5 Galaxy, which was just coming into service. After his enlistment was up, he became a fulltime member of the Air Force Reserve, still assigned to the C-5.

Although the AMC Museum officially came into being in October 1988, its story actually begins in July 1978 when, needing both a recruitment tool and a means of training budding mechanics, Leister cast about for a suitable project to satisfy both.

“It led me to think about restoring an airplane,” Leister said. “We didn’t collect things that aren’t part of that mission.”

**A husband daycare center**

Since officially coming into being in October 1986, the AMC Museum has evolved into Kent County’s most popular tourist attraction.

That status is no accident, Leister said. Although he and Deputy Director John Taylor run the museum on a day-to-day basis, he credits the museum’s corps of volunteers with keeping things going.

From guiding museum visitors to restoring broken airplanes to sweeping hangar floors, the museum could not function without this cadre of about 180 aviation enthusiasts, most of who have a background in military aviation.

“When we started out, we had less than a dozen volunteers,” Leister said. “We put a lot of effort into building a volunteer base and treating people like they were staff members. Everyone rose to the challenge.

“I make the joke that we’re really a husband daycare center, and in some cases there’s a lot of truth to that,” Leister said.

In October 2008, Leister was inducted into the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame for his efforts in building the AMC Museum. He considers it a singular honor for someone who did not have a flying career.

“The thing is that I was very pleased because I’m not a pilot,” he said. “You know, aviation is not just about pilots. At the museum, we work very hard to help people realize there are many people who make the Air Force work who are not pilots.

“We just loan the pilots our planes and allow them to fly them.”

His decision to retire now, he added, grows from an increasing sense of frustration when dealing with today’s military bureaucracy. He decided a long time ago it would be time to quit when the job wasn’t fun anymore.

That time has come, he said.

But Leister still had a few things to finish before November, including the AMC Museum’s official 30th anniversary celebration.

The three-day “Festival of Flight” event began Sept. 23 with a fund-raising party that included a number of prizes including an airplane ride around the Statue of Liberty. The following two days featured free events, including static displays of the C-5M SuperGallaxy and C-17 Globemaster III, both on loan from the 436th Airlift Wing.

But as he began packing up his office, he also was thinking about the future.

“I’m going to miss being able to shape the course of this museum,” Leister admitted. “I’m going to miss working with people who do this because they love it.”

But then he smiled.

“One thing I’m not going to miss is getting up at 5 o’clock every morning!”

“Honestly, I don’t think it will be difficult letting go because I’ve had a wonderful run,” he said. “I’ve had a unique opportunity, and I’ve enjoyed virtually every minute of it.”
Shivering Boneheads: the 95th FIS’s TDY in Alaska

By Sam Christensen
Special to the Hangar Digest

“Even with blood as thick as crankcase oil, I would have been cold,” wrote Capt. Stan Usinowicz in the Feb. 28, 1969, issue of The Airlifter, the unofficial base paper at Dover Air Force Base.

Usinowicz, who was serving as information officer for the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, was referring to his temporary duty tour at Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. Although they only had been stationed there several weeks, it was more than enough time for the Alaskan winter to leave its mark on the men of the 95th.

Countering the Soviet threat

The flight of four F-106 Delta Darts from Dover to Elmendorf was an historic one; it was the first attempt to send interceptors from the East Coast all the way to Alaska. In fact, the mission was something of a feasibility test of some recent F-106 modifications, namely the addition of probes for in-flight refueling, but also for the sleek new drop tanks slung under the Darts’ wings. There was also a tactical reason, as Aerospace Defense Command had recently deactivated the last interceptor squadron based out of Elmendorf. The Elmendorf unit, the 317th FIS, had recently suffered some embarrassing episodes highlighting the inadequacy of their F-102 Delta Dagger fleet’s performance. They needed better fighters, but the Air Force did not have enough F-106s to send a full time unit to Alaska, nor could they spare an F-4 Phantom squadron from the war in Vietnam. Several F-106 units, including the 95th, would temporarily man Alaska’s air bases to fill the gap in defense until an F-4 unit was permanently established in 1970.

95th Squadron Commander Col. Robert Sowers led the four ship formation to Alaska. The flight itself took about seven hours and three tanker refuelings courtesy of Strategic Air Command KC-135s. Although this was a great deal longer than normal intercept missions, Sowers recalls being “far from bored,” particularly on a hectic refueling that took nearly two hours to complete. Sowers was joined by Maj. Finis E. “Drink” Drinkwater, Maj. Frank Walters, and Capt. Steve Hinman. A relief crew, including Usinowicz, would arrive via C-141 several weeks later to trade places with their squadron mates. Once in Alaska, the squadron operated out of Elmendorf, as well as nearby Eielson AFB and King Salmon AFB.

Air defense was always a serious business, but the size of the airspace and the frequency of Soviet incursions made Alaskan air defense especially challenging. While at Eielson and King Salmon, the pilots were on five minute alert, meaning they had only that much time to get airborne and bound for the target. Their alert shack even had fire poles so the pilots did not have to waste time running down stairs. Since most alerts occurred at night, Usinowicz notes the challenge of transitioning from a dead sleep to flying a supersonic fighter. Even under these circumstances, he proudly reported that no 95th pilot took more than the mandated five minutes to get into the air.

Technically, these alert missions were not much different from when the 95th flew out of Dover, but the Alaskan winter seemed to make everything that much more difficult. Usinowicz said that it frequently was 10 degrees below zero with a wind chill of 40 degrees below zero. He sarcastically writes about the “morale builder” that was the Chill Factor Chart, which provided the wind chill along with red and yellow danger zones. These informed the air crew how long they had before exposed flesh would freeze: yellow indicated several minutes, while red meant about 30 seconds. If nothing else, these charts probably reminded pilots that they flew single engined airplanes over extremely remote areas. Besides freezing to death, another concern for the 95th’s air and ground crew was maintaining the aircraft in the cold. Although there are no records of the in commission rates for the 95th’s aircraft while on TDY, other squadrons in Alaska had trouble keeping even one or two aircraft on alert status during the Alaskan winter.

Inside the icebox

If there were any outdoorsmen among the 95th members, the TDY’s timing could not have been worse. While interceptor crews in the summer might enjoy Alaska’s bountiful hunting and fishing opportunities, the 95th spent most of the Alaskan winter trying to keep warm in their scramble shacks. Usinowicz writes that they spent virtually all of their down time in these shacks eating, sleeping, studying, reading and watching movies. This monotony, transposed with the need for quick action, was incredibly taxing on the air and ground crew of the 95th, but they held their own against the boredom and cold.

Weeks later, a new group of 95th pilots came to replace Usinowicz’s crew. It is easy to imagine Usinowicz writing some of the article’s saltier bits on the eight-hour C-141 flight back to Dover. These include extended rants against cold, debunking of old wives’ tales about the merits of “dry cold,” and the remarks on the absurdity of taking polar bear swims in freezing water. To Usinowicz, cold was cold and he had no further questions on the matter. Bearing this in mind, he probably was disappointed when he landed at Dover, opened the Starlifter’s hatch, and found the base in the midst of a blizzard.

Sowers noted that while he was pleased with the 95th’s performance in the Alaska, he was ready to “... leave the Arctic to the Eskimos, missionaries and Admiral Peary!”

When the last 95th crew came back from Alaska, fire trucks greeted them with sirens and flashing lights, a traditional welcome for pilots returning from their 100th mission in Vietnam. It was well earned: the 95th not only filled an important gap in American air defenses, but also proved the feasibility of using interceptors on long range deployments. This capability would (Continued on page 10)
AMCM at 30
From historical center to full-fledged museum

By Mike Leister
Director, AMC Museum

We pick up our story in 1991 with a little drama.

A C-119 was flown in to us after being retired from a civilian forest fire-fighting service. Little did we know at the time that a shady deal had been made between some officials and a company including kickbacks and payoffs. The AF Museum system was not aware of backroom deals and was cleared of any wrongdoing but some outside the museum system ended up in jail. As a result of a long drawn-out court case the plane had to sit for years without any work being done on it. We finally petitioned Pentagon officials to allow us to do some stabilization work before it deteriorated beyond economical salvage. We got that permission and the plane has become one of the jewels of our collection due to the meticulous restoration work done by our volunteers. After years of wrangling it was finally officially free and clear. It went from a derelict junker to a meticulously restored Korean War airlifter.

The AMCM’s beautifully restored C-119

In 1993 we experienced both extremes with two of the aircraft we obtained. The first, the donation of a PT-17 biplane from Al Johnson, a local flying legend, was an “aerial applicator” better known as a crop duster. With this aircraft we had to build, from scratch most of one wing and many panels. We also had to buy and install all the metal bracing rods, known as flying wires that support the wings. Quite a project for a relatively small plane. Also it was our first real attempt at doing fabric covering on an entire aircraft. This project stretched the scope of the work we do at the museum and we have not slowed down since.

The second plane was a World War 2 B-13 trainer that was brought in on a trailer and assembled by the contractor who delivered it as part of their exchange with the US Air Force. Here was a freshly painted self-contained aircraft that need nothing more than a sign placed in front of it. Wonderful!

Our third aircraft that year was a T-33 we retrieved from the parade ground at Lackland AFB in Texas. Taking it apart was a piece of cake since we had disassembled and reassembled another T-33 as a favor for an American Legion post in Maryland. There was however one short delay when we could not get one of the wing tip tanks to release. After trying various methods to free the stubborn tank one of the volunteers we brought along to help took a few steps back and ran into the tank at full speed. I’m not sure if he really expected that to help but we were all shocked when the tank popped off and bounced on the ground. One tiny dent was a small price to pay to get that tank free. A Dover C-5 brought the T-33 home and in less than a week it was assembled, the dent repaired and on display.

The P-51 Mustang was more difficult. It had not even been close. Jim Leech, the curator and I were both Type-A personalities and working together every day it made for an interesting dynamic. We did different parts of the overall job and the outcome was always positive but sometimes sparks flew.

Also in 1994 we received three aircraft that no longer are at the Museum: a P-51 Mustang, a T-6 Texan and a replica Sopwith Pup. These were all planes that were going to eventually go to a proposed Air Force ceremonial hangar in Washington DC. While awaiting the construction of that building these three aircraft we supposed to go into storage. As a growing young museum we thought that it would be more appropriate for those planes to be on display and it was agreed that we go into storage. As a growing young museum we thought that it would be more important for those planes to be on display and it was agreed that we would arrange for them to be transferred to DC.

The funding for the extra work came from the project managers in DC and our folks did the work. First step was the Sopwith from the museum at Castle AFB in California. I arranged to fly on a C-5 bound for Japan that was stopping at nearby Travis AFB in California. I rented a car and drove to Castle to prepare the Pup for shipment. On its return trip the C-5 was going to stop and pick up the plane and me for a return flight to Dover. We estimated I had four days to disassemble the plane and palletize it. If it was not ready we were out of luck. I started early in the morning and by that evening I had dropped the propeller, engine, horizontal and vertical stabilizer, rudder and elevators. After careful measurements I figured we could load the aircraft sideways inside the C-5 with no further disassembly. When the C-5 arrived the whole flight crew just picked up the plane and walked it inside the C-5 cargo compartment. Nice to have that huge cargo compartment available. We were soon on the way back home.

The P-51 Mustang was more difficult. It arrived on a trailer in what was supposed to be display-ready condition. What we actually received was a mass of fiberglass, Bondo and corroded metal heavily painted and awful. The 512th Airlift Wing, the reserve
half of the Dover Team stepped up again and spent the next two years rebuilding virtually every part of the plane including reconstructing an entire cockpit because all that was left when we received it was the frame. We actually were able to keep the plane on display for more than 10 years before it was sent to another base. The ceremonial hall never was built and all three of those planes eventually found other homes.

Full time museum
In 1995 we completed a Women’s Airforce Service Pilot exhibit since Delaware had the first operational WASP base at New Castle Army Airfield. It boasted mannequins wearing WASP uniforms donated by Ethel Findley and Scotty Gough, two Delaware WASPS who also were the first two life members of our Friends group. The PT-17, which is a plane the WASPs used to train male pilots, was the centerpiece of the exhibit.

In September 1995 we received notification we had been granted status as bona fide field museum within the USAF Museum program. We had been calling ourselves the Dover AFB Museum for some years but now it was official.

In Spring 1996 we got a lucky break for the Museum, but not for McGuire AFB in New Jersey. A C-141B assigned to McGuire was passing through Dover on a mission when the post-flight inspection team from Transient Maintenance discovered a large crack in one of the main landing gear struts. This was a big deal.

There was an extensive field repair process that would allow the aircraft to be flown to the boneyard at Davis-Monthan AFB in Arizona where all old Department of Defense aircraft go to await their fate or we could attempt to acquire it for museum. In some kind of world record we managed to have the plane accepted into the USAF Museum program. We allowed the crew to keep their baggage but not much else. Obtaining the C-141B was a real coup for us. We later learned that the very C-141B we had was the last one that had been assigned to Dover AFB before all Dover’s Starlifters had been transferred to McGuire. Double bonus points! We had our first true strategic airlifter, and it was a Dover plane at that!

Twice while we were growing we had temporary custody of F-16s that had been converted to be hauled on a trailer and set up in parking lots for recruiting purposes. Everything has been stripped out of them and the wings had been converted to be installed with quick detach fittings. Even though we had no real association with F-16s officials at the Pentagon asked us to manage them to be used at various static display sites and we did. The public loved them but after a while they found other homes. If you have an old photo of an F-16 at this Museum it’s real, just another chapter in our growth.

A major event in our continued progress occurred in the fall of 1996. We moved from the three old hangars on the main base to our present location in one nicely refurbished hangar. Much like moving to a new house when you are still working full time, it took us a long time to unpack, then we had to create new exhibits and move things around until we got the best fit.

In early 1997 Gen. Walter Kross, the same Walter Kross who had urged us to start a museum was serving as commander of the Air Mobility Command. He asked for records from the various official and unofficial museum sites in MAC and decided that MAC could only fund one museum within the command and that it should be a professional, ethical, educational operation. After having staff members examine the records it was decided that the Dover AFB Museum would become the Air Mobility Command Museum. After our name changed our mission expanded to cover all airlift and air refueling aircraft. It was left to us to figure out how we would define out new broader responsibility. We determined that we would strive to present exhibits and aircraft that were 70 percent airlift and air refueling focused, 20 percent Dover AFB and 10 percent Air Force general history. This was the first time a field museum had enumerated its mission focus and the Museum still adheres to this standard very closely. It is one of the reasons the AMC Museum has gained the support and respect of our major command and the National Museum of the USAF.

We don’t collect SR-71s or F-4 fighters; ours is a special niche and we do it well.

In 1997 we received word a Super Constellation aircraft that had been put up on pylons and used as a lounge/restaurant near Philadelphia was going to be donated to a museum or sold for scrap. Along with a bunch of other museums and attractions we drafted a letter asking the Amoco Oil Company, the new owners of the property, to donate the plane to us and we laid out why we would be the best home for this iconic American aircraft. One restaurant wanted to cut the nose and tail off and make it look like it had crashed through their building. After some nail biting we were allotted the plane. It already had been disassembled and put in a holding lot awaiting disposition. At that time we did not have much funding so the AMCM Foundation board asked Amoco if they would mind paying for the trucking firm that took it apart and moved it to the storage yard to bring it to us. After all if you don’t ask the answer is always no! To our surprise Amoco agreed and soon a tractor trailer hauling a 90-foot-long fuselage was speeding down the highway with a police escort bringing us our next giant restoration project. The plane had to wait its turn until 2003 before we had the resources to start work.

Dart on board
Shortly after the original Historical Center opened in the mid-1980s we put in a request for an F-106 because it was the last type of fighter assigned to Dover AFB. We were told we could not have one then because as they were being retired from the Air National Guard were going to be used for drone programs. Every year we renewed our request and were told none were available for the museum program. Finally in early 1998, the final year of the drone program, we were told we could have an F-106 from the remaining dozen-plus aircraft. That required a waiver from AF level because there was a moratorium on at that time preventing field museums and airparks from acquiring new aircraft. Dover’s reputation for excellent maintenance of our artifact aircraft allowed our request to be approved. The first aircraft they offered us was a wrecked plane that had crash landed upon returning from an unmanned mission. The nose of the aircraft forward of the windscreen was bent 90 degrees from the impact. A second time a Dart was offered but its fuselage had been cut in half to make a billboard. We were offered a third time but it had been completely dismantled.

Our F-106 proudly displays the “Mr. Bones” insignia of the 95th FIS.

Our C-121 once served as a cocktail lounge in a Pennsylvania restaurant!

(Continued on page 10)
On behalf of the AMC Museum Foundation, I’d like to thank Rich Harper for his excellent leadership in making the 30th Anniversary celebrations such an outstanding event. The weekend was one of the best in all of those 30 years, (or at least the 15 in which I’ve been involved), thanks to hours and hours of dedicated hard work by all of our volunteers, the Museum staff, and Rich and his committee.

Here’s his synopsis:

The kickoff event for a weekend of celebration activities for the AMC Museum’s 30th Anniversary took place at the Museum on Friday Sept. 23, 2016. Former Foundation board member/vice president, retired USAF Col. Rich Harper chaired the committee which planned and organized the very successful Festival of Flight.

The committee was made up of community members and Museum members: Tom Byrd, Andy West, Heather Cregar and Tonda Parks (the Delaware State News), Deb Jewell (Dover Federal Credit Union), John Doerfler (Delaware Tourism Office), Dave Skocik (Delaware Veterans Coalition), Mike Leister (Museum Director), John Taylor (Assistant Museum Director), and Don Sloan, Mike Phillips and Jon Andrews (AMC Museum Foundation).

Our sponsors were the Delaware State News, Dover Federal Credit Union, NKS Distributors, Bill Hare (Always Advertising), Massey Air Museum, GEICO Local Office, iHeart Radio, Delaware Electric Co-op, Dover Motor Speedway and Mitten & Winters. Those sponsors and successful ticket sales helped to raise about $20,000 for the Foundation.

More than 300 attendees celebrated the Festival Friday evening. They heard some history from retired USAF Lt. Gen. Bill Welser as he spoke about his time as commander at the 436th Airlift Wing and his efforts to move the Museum into the hangar it now occupies.

Delaware State Reps. Jeff Spiegelman and Trey Paradee presented a Legislative Proclamation and local artists (and a great friend of the Museum) David Godek presented his latest painting, Flare Angel, to the Museum, accepted by Mike Leister. As Mission BBQ was catering and the Milford Community Band Jazz Quartet was providing music, there was a raffle and auction of more than a dozen terrific prizes. The grand prize, a flight up New York’s Hudson River and around the Statue of Liberty, was won by Clyde and Loretta Seibert of Lewes, Del.

Seasonal weather and the opportunity to tour at least twenty open Museum airplanes (and a C-5M and C-17), brought 5,000 visitors to the Museum. There were bouncy houses for the kids, food vendors, World War II re-enactors, iHeart Radio broadcasting from on site and lots of things to see.

The entire weekend was a very successful collaboration of the committee and the many, many Museum volunteers who worked Friday night’s event, prepared the aircraft for display, gave tours, worked the store and countless other tasks. It was a wonderful Festival of Flight Celebration of our Air Mobility Command Museum’s 30th Anniversary!

In other news, Foundation Board Member elections took place at the September meeting, as per our Constitution and By-laws. The following members were elected (or re-elected) for a three-year term:

As a Dover attorney, we continue to be able to make significant use of David Bever as a counselor. A long-time World War II aviation enthusiast, David earned his private pilot rating four years ago and is close to finishing up his instrument rating.

As a budding thespian, he’s involved with other local attorneys doing comedy musical theater, raising money for various charities.

David, his wife, Megan, and children Alexis and Michael, live in the Dover area and stay actively involved in local events.

You’ve likely seen retired U.S. Air Force Reserve Chief Master Sgt. Ed Perkowski at one of our annual Veterans Day ceremonies. Ed conceived the idea and has run hard with it since, making it one of the Museum’s premiere events.

Ed spent more than 6,500 hours flying as a loadmaster in C-124s, C-141As, C-130s A & E, and C-5s during his first 19 years of service, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and three Air Medals. He then cross-trained as an air transportation specialist within the aerial port community here at Dover AFB, gaining expertise in all aspects of logistics and transportation, including warehouse, distribution, shipping, receiving, and inventory management, computer tracking system, hazardous material handling and documentation. He managed mobile terminal operations including terminal services, ground handling and storage of cargo, maintenance of traffic records, documentation of cargo, aerial delivery, mobility plans, training of employees and administrative functions.

Ed retired with nearly 39 years of continuous dedicated service. Chief has a Bachelor of Business Administration/Aviation Management from Wilmington College and is a graduate of the United States Air Force Reserve NCO Academy. Ed lives in Dover.
A native of New Jersey, retired U.S. Army Col. Bob Leicht was a career soldier, having served in infantry and Special Forces assignments across the United States as well as three tours in Asia.

Post-military, he worked at the Department of Energy’s Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee before retiring to Delaware.

With both he and his son being former members of the 82nd Airborne Division, Bob’s passion at the Museum is helping to restore the Turf and Sport Special to its 6 Jun 44 configuration, from which 17 All Americans jumped into history.

Bob and his wife Nancy reside in Middletown, Del., and have two adult children, Major Rob Leicht, U.S. Army, and Deborah Mungin, a school administrator.

Retired Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Jon Andrews spent 24 years as a loadmaster, flying on C-141As, C-130Es, C-5As and C-5Bs. Combat airdrop and special ops qualified, instructor/examiner qualified, Jon was a unit chief loadmaster. A Vietnam, Panama and Desert Shield/Storm veteran, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Medal with eight oak leaf clusters. Jon was an honor graduate at the NCO Leadership School, a Distinguished Graduate at the NCO Academy, the first Air Force Distinguished Graduate at the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy, the senior Air Force enlisted advisor and command loadmaster at U.S. Central Command, the only loadmaster to serve at the HQ Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, the Chief Loadmaster Functional Manager at the Air Force Military Personnel Center and the first loadmaster to serve on the Pentagon Enlisted Rated Distribution Management committee.

He earned his associates degree in Applied Sciences in Transportation and Traffic Management at the Community College of the Air Force and a Bachelor of Science in Business Management at Wilmington University. He serves as a board member of Jobs for Delaware Graduates and works as a volunteer, tour guide mentor here at the AMC Museum. Finally, he is a member of the Museum aircraft towing team, and an important member of the Aircraft Recovery Team, who are sent to disassemble and prepare aircraft for shipment to our Museum. He was instrumental in the movement of both the C-60 Lockheed Lodestar and the L2 Grasshopper and is already working on getting us our new C-119.

We’d like to welcome our newest Board member – retired Lt. Gen. Robert R. Dierker.

After graduating from the USAF Academy, Bob served in the US Air Force from 1972 until 2004. He spent half of his 32 years of active duty service in the continental United States and the other half overseas. He had six tours in the Pacific and two in Europe.

Although he was a fighter pilot throughout his career, he jumped out of a lot C-7s, C-130s and C-141s during his four-year stint as a jump qualified forward air controller. Since his retirement, Bob has rekindled his love for gliders and renewed his glider flight instructor rating he first attained 45 years ago.

Foundation Board Officer Elections also took place at the September meeting; the serving officers were re-elected.

In the past, Foundation Board members haven’t been the “hands-on” volunteer workers who work on airplanes, give tours, work in the store or do the myriad of other chores that keep the Museum thriving. That is changing dramatically, especially when you look at the volunteer hours put in by Jon Andrews, Stephanie Garber, Paul Gillis, Bob Leicht and Mike Phillips. Board member Bob Mench has become a resident carpenter. The more traditional board member duties are like what Ed Perkowski does as he continues to make our annual Veterans Day program an outstanding affair. Or when Bob Berglund helps us conserve our dollars by carefully scrutinizing our advertising dollars and working closely with the Museum store. And it’s quite a phenomenon to have attorney David Bever available to help keep us out of trouble. Behind-the-scenes work, like that done by Secretary Phil White and Treasurer Carol Pearson takes many, many hours every month.

The purpose of 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. In short, we try hard to keep the dollars coming in and monitor the efficient use of those dollars. Our goal is for each of you to be able to enjoy a great aviation historical museum!

And lastly, Mike is leaving. As the Foundation Board president, working with him over the past several years has been greatly enhanced because of the fact that he’s become a close personal friend. We can air our occasional differences and fight like brothers and still know that we have the common goal of keeping the Air Mobility Command Museum the envy of the military museum world. He and John absolutely believe in the mission! We know we have one of the best volunteer forces in the nation – and we are very aware that it is those volunteers who are the key to this Museum’s success and we have to take care of them.

It’s a huge relief knowing that he’s not going far and he’ll be available to help us work through this transition. Or as Mike might say, “We’ll get there . . .”
degrees to the side and one main landing gear was ripped off. We had several large restoration projects going on at that time so we declined. After that, we were warned that may have been our last chance, but we told them we did not have the resources to go get a wreck and restore it. There were still more than a dozen aircraft in the program at that time.

About a month later we received an email offering an F-106 if it was flown in to the Museum. We immediately said yes. Soon after, the squadron commander of the Drone Test Squadron flew our plane up and did a little show before its final landing. We have pictures of that landing in our archives. By sheer good luck it turned out the plane we received was one of those formerly stationed at Dover with the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in the mid-1960s.

We were frantically working to put together funding to move our newly allocated C-133 from Offutt AFB in Omaha, Nebraska to Dover. The C-133 was the largest military turboprop the USAF ever operated and having one at the Museum would be another milestone. It was going be funded in part by the Museum’s budget, partly by our supporting foundation and partly by a donation from the C-133 veterans group.

This acquisition would prove to be one of our most challenging yet.

Also that year security was tightened up. Visitors still were allowed to drive the two miles from the main gate to the Museum, right through the middle of the base, but they were issued a pass and a map and told to stay on that route. We had fewer visitors because of the bottlenecks. In the spring we reopened our “Community Appreciation Day” program, which allowed us to tow a C-5 from the main ramp. Crew members from the base would be on hand to show visitors the cargo compartment and explain the mission of Dover AFB. It was a win-win for the base and the Museum.

During the same time period we were given permission to acquire a KC-97 air refueling tanker from the museum at Beale AFB in California when that facility closed. The Museum hired Worldwide Aircraft Limited to disassemble the KC-97 that could be loaded onto a C-5.

As a side note, all of the AMCM’s earliest acquisitions had been taken apart by our own crews but as aircraft got bigger the challenge became much bigger as well. Worldwide is really professional operation that treats its customers like family. They’ve moved a number of aircraft for us and we have learned much from watching and helping them strip down aircraft in the field.

Once the KC-97 was disassembled it was up to the C-5 crew, the Beale AFB Aerial Port and me to get all of those pieces safely loaded. I went along on the C-5 mission to provide on-scene advice. Sometimes expedient methods had to be used with unusual loads. Once in the past I had to cut off a piece of a wing because it had been incorrectly measured and it would not fit in the plane. On this trip, because of several size and loading challenges the Dover loadmasters had to improvise and adapt. This is exactly why moving artifact aircraft is great “real-world” training for aircrews. After a very long day the KC-97 was safely inside the C-5 and we were ready to go home. The KC-97 was our first air refueling tanker.
The AMC Museum celebrated its 30th anniversary in style with a three-day event that included a gala party on Friday, Sept. 23. The festivities included guest speaker retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. William Welser and a tribute from the Delaware General Assembly.


The hangar floor was crowded with those celebrating 30 years of the AMC Museum. More than 300 people attended the first night of the celebration, and contributed almost $20,000 for the Museum Foundation.

Dressed as a World War II Women’s Air Service Pilot, Tricia Upchurch talks with Ken Vernon, a former fighter pilot with the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. Upchurch ran the Air Mobility Command Museum’s 2016 Summer Camp program.

Families in the 1960s loved to see the outdoors using vehicles like Casey Masterson’s 1967 VW Camper. Masterson, a former security policeman stationed at Dover Air Force Base, has owned the camper for about four years. Masterson, who now lives in New Jersey, returned to Dover to take part in the annual Volksbash event, a two-day gathering of Volkswagen auto aficionados.

Joyce and Rocky Humbertson of Middletown, Delaware, happily showed off their 1974 Beetle, nicknamed Bella, at the Volksbash 2016 event, held Aug. 28 at the AMCM. The car was a junkyard find and they’ve spent more than three years restoring her and adding a few extras.

Max Coughlin of Queens, New York, gets a lesson in simulator flying from volunteer Marty Ogorzalek. Max’s family drove all the way from New York just to take part in the Museum’s Aug. 20 Open Cockpit Day.

Dover’s Jenny Schieder chats with Museum volunteer John Masters on Aug. 20. Schieder and her husband had been in Delaware only two weeks, having recently transferred from Ramstein Air Base, Germany.
The Air Mobility Command Museum again was the site of the annual Wings and Wheels festival, sponsored by the Del Rods car club of Delaware. Held July 16, car enthusiasts from all over the region brought their classic rides for a day of fun and camaraderie; hundreds of spectators journeyed to the Museum to admire everything from a Model T to modern-day tricked out autos.

Mason Gaudioso, 3, of Lewes, Delaware, tries out the big seat on the AMCM’s restored 1956 International Harvester fire engine, on display in the cargo compartment of the Museum’s C-133 Cargomaster.

Erica Santos of Newark, Delaware, snaps a photo of companion Kevin Walsh, who’s feigning a nap in one of the Museum’s display jump seats. The couple like to take each other on surprise dates, Santos said, adding “This is where I thought I’d take him.” Walsh seemed pleased with the choice: “She nailed it,” he said.

Members of the Sussex Aeromodelers Club show off their a display of flying models July 16 in the shadow of the real thing: the AMC Museum’s B-17 Sleepy Time Gal. The club was formed in 1990, the club is based in Seaford, Delaware, and fosters the enjoyment of radio-controlled model aircraft.
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THANK YOU!
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<td>Flight crew member benefits plus recognition in the Hangar Digest newsletter, name engraved on plaque</td>
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<td>$250</td>
<td>Squadron commander benefits plus two museum coffee mugs</td>
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<td>Wing Commander</td>
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<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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