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.

Cover: Staff Sgt. Bret Gratien removes cleaning compound from the leading edge of the right wing of the AMC Museum’s VC-9C. Gratien, along with other members of the 436th Maintenance Squadron’s hydraulic section, volunteered to strip, clean and polish the shiny aluminum skin of the aircraft formerly designated as Air Force Two. (Photo by Roland Balik)
Volunteers from the 436th Maintenance Squadron aircraft hydraulic section gave a McDonnell Douglas VC-9C a much-needed exterior cleaning Aug. 25-26 at the Air Mobility Command Museum.

During its time in service, the VC-9C was known as “Air Force Two” when it served to transport vice presidents Walter Mondale, George H.W. Bush, Dan Quayle, Al Gore and Dick Cheney.

The last time the aircraft received a similar exterior cleaning was in mid-2016, which was done by one museum volunteer working twice a week for four months.

The 11 volunteers stripped and cleaned the old polish and wax from the shiny aluminum exterior sections of the leading edges of the aircraft’s wings, lower fuselage and both engine nacelles.

“My shop showed an interest in wanting to volunteer, and I figured the AMC Museum would be a perfect opportunity for the camaraderie and esprit de corps,” Tech. Sgt. Don Caber, 436th MXS aircraft hydraulic section chief and volunteer project lead said. “Also, to show them some of the history of AMC, and it’s right here on base.”

On the first day, a team of five volunteers spent six hours working on the right side of the aircraft, and on the following day, a different team of five worked on the left side.

“Everybody was onboard right from the start, and I wasn’t expecting 100 percent of my shop to volunteer but they all came as soon as I mentioned it and stepped up,” Caber said.

Work on the VC-9C was accomplished on days the museum was closed to the public due to Phase II restrictions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“By not contracting a commercial company to do the same work, the volunteers saved the government approximately $5,000,” John Taylor, AMC Museum director said. “About $500 in cleaning materials was used.”

Taylor also mentioned the same contractor that washes C-5M Super Galaxies and C-17A Globemaster IIIIs on the base has now been hired to wash the VC-9C and the 21 other aircraft of the AMC Museum fleet. The VC-9C was the first aircraft to be washed by the contractors in preparation for the polishing by the volunteers.

According to Caber, “A little team rivalry started between the two teams boasting on which side of the aircraft looked better.”

The volunteers returned later in September to finish up their work.

“They did a fantastic job, and we hope they will continue to offer their services,” Museum Operations Manager Mike Hurlburt said.

Other than Caber, other volunteers were Master Sgt. Jason Brede, Tech. Sgt. Ryan Bailey, Staff Sgts. Kolland Browning, Bret Gratien and Peter Schmitt, Senior Airmen Kevin Aguilar, Thunderiel Cardoza and Elizabeth Sanchez, Airman 1st Class Weston Rose, and Airman Ian Wargo, and Brian Hence.
Historic preservation

Mannequin replacement project gets started

Chemistry is at the heart of our everyday lives, and when chemical reactions go well, we all benefit.

But when they don’t, it can be destructive and expensive.

Case in point: the many mannequins found at the Air Mobility Command Museum. Over time the chemicals they’re made from have been deteriorating and threatening to contaminate irreplaceable artifacts.

Museum Deputy Director Eric Czerwinski said some of the mannequins are between 20 to 30 years old. Their age means they’re becoming chemically unstable, he said.

“That’s why the Museum is going through the process of replacing them,” he said.

A legacy at risk

In July 2020, Museum Director John Taylor told the AMCM Foundation board of directors the mannequins in use did not meet recognized institutional specifications for artifact preservation.

The Museum started a replacement program but had exhausted available government funding, leading Taylor to look to the board for additional capital to complete the program.

“This legacy issue puts our artifacts at risk of deterioration as the mannequins break down,” Taylor wrote in an email to the board.

Organic polymers—oils—are used to make mannequins with realistic heads and hands, but those plastics break down chemically with age, a process known as ‘sweating,’” Taylor wrote.

“Once this begins, there is no reversal, and the oils can soak the garments, ruining them in the process,” he added.

Other mannequins, made of a gray foam, emit gases over time that react with fabrics and metals, he said. The Museum uses both, Taylor said.

The answer was to replace many of the Museum’s mannequins with ones made of Ethafoam, the current industry standard, he said.

These are the only kind that can be used with original garments and equipment, Taylor said, and have proven to be a safe conservation material that will extend long-term protection of artifacts and exhibits.

In August, the Foundation’s board of directors authorized Taylor to spend up to $20,000 to fulfill his request.

To preserve Col. Gail “The Berlin Candy Bomber” Halvorsen’s original K2-B flying coveralls, worn during the Berlin Airlift, the AMC Museum replaced a lifelike mannequin with an Ethafoam figure. Because it does not leach oils, the new mannequin helps guarantee Halvorsen’s flight suit will be preserved for years to come.

What’s ‘closed-cell’?

The new mannequins are provided by Dorfman Museum Figures Inc., of Baltimore, Md. The firm, founded in 1957, has served companies and organizations up to and including the Smithsonian Institution.

Ethafoam, a registered trademark, is defined as a “closed-cell” foam product. It’s created by injecting a chemical powder or gas such as nitrogen into a standard rubber compound. Under heat or pressure, the powder or gas mixes with the rubber leaving balloon-like cells filled with gas.

The result is a polyethylene foam that’s less susceptible to damage from fungus, mildew, and similar environmental conditions. The foam is recyclable, chemically inert and moisture resistant, and energy absorbent.

Closed-cell foams are used in many ways, including the manufacture of surfboards, boats, and kayaks, and packaging or insulating materials. The foam can be produced in sheets, rolls, and strips, or by using custom-made molds.

Most consumers have encountered closed-cell foams when unpacking their newest digital televisions or similar electronic equipment.

Swapping out

Czerwinski learned about the mannequin problem in 2019 when he and Operations Manager Mike Hurlburt were briefed during a trip to the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The AMCM is a subsidiary field museum of the NMUSAxF, located at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio.

“They have hundreds [of mannequins] they’ve had to swap some out in the past years,” Czerwinski said. Exhibit staffers at the NMUSAxF had found the plastic-based, realistic-looking mannequins—the ones

A new Ethafoam mannequin now rides in the Museum’s World War II C-2 life raft. These rafts were used extensively by the Army Air Force during the war and are credited with saving the lives of many downed airmen. The Ethafoam figure helps preserve the original materials in the raft and the pieces of equipment it is wearing.
with human-looking heads and hands -- had started leeching oils into vintage clothing items.

“Once the oils soak in, you can’t do anything with the fabric,” Czerwinski said. “You have to leave it in.”

The residue from the oils ruined several original decades-old items at the NMUSAF, and the staff at the AMCM didn’t want that to happen to anything in its collection, Czerwinski said.

Twenty of the AMCM’s mannequins will be replaced, with the Foundation paying for 13 of those, Czerwinski said. The Museum ordered four seated figures -- three male and one female -- and nine additional standing male figures. The AMCM Foundation was asked to pay for these as the NMUSAF is not allowed to provide direct financial support to its field museums, he said.

In July, Museum Director John Taylor reported to the Foundation his staff had begun installing the Ethafoam mannequins. These include the figure representing Gail “The Berlin Candy Bomber” Halvorsen, and a seated image in an emergency life raft.

Czerwinski said the figures in the various display rooms must be replaced as well as those on display in the HH-43 helicopter and the B-17’s turret gunner.

Czerwinski singled out the Museum’s collections manager and exhibit specialist, Hal Sellars, for his work on the proposal.

“Hal took the lead in sourcing suppliers for the mannequins and swapping them out, doing a bit of an overhaul on the exhibits as he went. “He has done an incredible job in every phase of the project.”

Not all of the Museum’s older mannequins need to be changed out. Some will be dressed in newly-fabricated uniforms that mimic the originals, which can be replaced as needed.

**Something old, something new**

The problems with the mannequins are a lesson in what it’s like in maintaining something the AMC Museum, Czerwinski said. Even though the staff is dealing with what’s old, they’re always learning something new.

“These are some of the numerous issues we’re dealing with now that no one thought about 20 years ago,” he said.

But it’s vital that significant pieces of the past be saved and placed where modern generations might see and appreciate them, Czerwinski said.

“You have written history, and you have material history. Having original items gives people the context for the written history,” he said.

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**B-17F Sleepy Time Gal’s bombardier gets a new look**

One of the first figures to be changed out under the AMC Museum’s mannequin replacement effort was a gray urethane foam figure posed years ago over the Norden bombsight in the Museum’s B-17F, Sleepy Time Gal.

Initially, the mannequin had been positioned as if it were looking into the bombsight, but over time it had settled onto the mechanism itself.

As a result, the figure’s foam head had a bombsight impression in the middle of its face.

The clothing on the mannequin — all vintage equipment — also was starting to fall apart, Museum Deputy Director Eric Czerwinski said.

“The sheepskin jacket and pants were dried out and had started cracking, and the gloves are discolored,” Czerwinski said. “It was in very poor shape.

“The flight suits are almost impossible to preserve,” Czerwinski said. “They weren’t made to last 70 years or more. They were made using some harsh chemicals that affected the leather.”

Different kinds of plastics and rubber — especially rubber — used in clothing and aircraft are particular problems.

“It’s terrible,” Czerwinski said. “Being petroleum products, they break down and there’s nothing we can do about it.”

The B-17’s figure was swapped with a realistic plastic mannequin. This one, however, was dressed and equipped with reproduction gear as worn by a World War II bombardier.

“We don’t have any problems with them with reproduction gear,” Czerwinski said.
Like many of his contemporaries, Bar-
nard George “Barney” Welton Jr. was only in his early 20s when he found himself command- ing a C-47 Skytrain in World War II. For almost 18 months, he dropped para-
 troopers, towed gliders, and carried vitally needed supplies – even Christmas presents – to Allied troops. As did many others, Welton and his crew dodged murderous anti-aircraft fire and attacks by German pilots above Hitler’s Festung Europa (Fortress Europe) in carrying out what eventually totaled 130 missions.

Born Oct. 22, 1919, in Chicago, Ill., Welton was the third of six children. His father had been killed in 1930, leaving his mother to keep the family together during the Depression. One time, writing while between missions, Welton spoke of Jen-
nie Welton’s love, penning what “a grand gal Ma is and what a fine life was made for me and the other Weltons by mother’s tireless efforts and hard work. Mother – God bless her!”

Before the start of World War II, Welton was working as an ordnance inspector at a Detroit, Mich., defense plant. Perhaps seeing the inevitability of war, he entered the military in January 1941 and soon was sent to pilot training.

In January 1943, while at Goodfellow Army Airfield outside San Angelo, Texas, Welton wed Peggy Blum, beginning a 65-year marriage that produced three children.

Shortly before he left for Europe, Peggy gifted him with a diary, asking him to record his time overseas. Welton faithfully kept this personal logbook, making entries while in the air, on his cot at an RAF airfield, in a tent at a former Ger-
man airfield, and aboard a Liberty ship headed back to the United States. The last entry, dated August 1945, was written at the family kitchen table back home in Flint, Mich.


Two shots of whiskey

Welton’s wartime story began on Christ-
mas Eve, 1943, as he and other newly-
graduated C-47 pilots started their journey to England. The trip involved at least a dozen hops down the South American coast, across the Atlantic Ocean, and up the African coast, finally to arrive at their first base, RAF Bottesford, on Jan. 4, 1944.

Welton was assigned to the 79th Troop Carrier Squad-
ron of the 436th Troop Carrier Group. The 436th TCG, the first Army Air Forces unit to arrive at Bottesford, is a direct precursor to today’s 436th Operations Group at Dover AFB.

One of Welton’s first entries at Bottesford noted how everything was rationed. Airmen were allowed only seven packs of cigarettes, two candy bars, two razor blades, one bar of soap, and two whiskey shots per week.

“It’s going to be plenty rugged,” he noted dryly, adding the flyers also were restricted to a single shower per week. Facili-
ties in nearby Not-
tingham kept the Americans occu-
pied spending their pay, with dancing, drinking – and sex.

“The women are really uniformly hap-
py and to call them promiscuous is one example of gross understatement,” Wel-
ton opined.

Much of the time at Bottesford was spent training before the 436th trans-
ferred to RAF Membury on the English coast, about 200 miles to the south. There they underwent constant practice for the upcoming attack on Europe, towing gliders and dropping paratroops.

Welton shared a three-man room, well equipped, he wrote, with a phonograph, record collection, and walls covered with photos of pin-up girls and “saucy cartoons.”

“This makes a pleasant setup,” he wrote.

There often was time for real food and stays in good hotels nearby while still
copied with almost nightly German air raids.

After many long months, with rumors flying about the imminent invasion, Welton said the men of the 79th looked forward to putting their training to the test.

“The real flying overseas or across the channel should be coming up soon,” he wrote. “We’re all anxious for a whack at it. OK, D-Day, let’s go.”

But as the end of May 1944 approached, the pace picked up. There was more training and an increase in security, including going to the mess hall under guard. Welton knew the real action was coming when, on Jun. 3, he and his crew spent the day painting black and white invasion stripes on their C-47.

‘Well boys, this is it’

At 11 p.m. Jun. 5, the 436th took off on its first combat mission: the invasion of France.

“There wasn’t a happier bunch in the world than the crews on that mission,” Welton wrote. “A little excited perhaps – but not a man afraid to go.”

The action was fierce. Welton spotted the concentrated fire from anti-aircraft batteries below, with tracers leading into the sky before the explosives detonated.

“We could smell gunpowder, and the flashes were intense,” he wrote. Finally, at 1:04 a.m., the C-47 unloaded its stick of paratroopers and headed back to base. There were no casualties among the 436th, although plenty of aircraft had been repeatedly reamed by flak and shells.

Considering this had been their inaugural taste of combat, the mood was quite festive, Welton wrote.

“The gang met in operations with broad smiles, hearty handshakes, and brisk pats on the back,” he wrote. “We had had a hell of a good time.”

Breakfast was followed by two ounces of bourbon and bed at 5 a.m.

Later in the day, the 436th towed a group of British Horsa gliders while furiously combating on the ground below. Welton’s crew cut loose their glider and almost immediately hit by a shell – fired by a US Navy ship.

Welton was indignant.

“I didn’t mind Jerry so much,” he wrote, using the wartime nickname for the Germans, “but our Navy is trying to shoot us down after what we had just been through was the last straw.”

However, Welton continued, “The second mission was more hazardous, more routine, and not quite as much fun as the first. But I would not have missed it for anything.”

Except for short local missions, Welton didn’t take to the air again until a resupply mission on Jun. 25. The crew landed south of Cherbourg to unload a supply of bombs and powder charges.

Enroute, Welton noted the beaches were strewn with half-sunken ships, and the land near the airfield was covered in bomb craters.

“Not a building escaped without some chunk blown off,” he wrote.

Much of the time after D-Day was spent flying these resupply missions into France and ferrying wounded soldiers to hospitals in England. Welton also found time to visit British pubs near Membry and restaurants near captured French airfields.

Throughout August, the 436th took part in many resupply missions for Gen. George Patton’s Third Army that was moving pall mall through the French countryside, rapidly outrunning its supply lines. French civilians ecstatically greeted the arriving Americans everywhere, he wrote.

Back into the war

The relatively easy flying after D-Day ended abruptly Sept. 17, 1944, as Welton’s C-47 took part in Operation Market Garden. The plan was to send in three divisions of troops, seize five major Dutch bridges, and then cut off German troops trying to escape back into the Reich.

All hell broke loose on their first mission as the Skytrains approached the drop zone, Welton wrote.

“You could hear it, staccato fire, and boom! Boom!” he wrote. Clouds of black smoke and white puffs of anti-aircraft fire blossomed in the sky around the aircraft.

“You could feel it as it rocked the ship, and fragments of flak hit the fuselage like hail on a tin roof,” Welton wrote. “We weren’t as scared as we should have been. We were nervous and uneasy, but actually too busy to be scared.”

Additional glider missions followed over the next few days, with the 436th taking its share of men and aircraft casualties. Welton reported C-47s and gliders exploding in mid-air or crashing into the English Channel.

“For the most part, it was fun,” he wrote, adding, “Combat is fun when you can come back and joke about it.”

Welton refused to worry about becoming a casualty during all the mayhem.

“I never for a minute thought that it was my time,” he wrote after the mission.

Perhaps somewhat bored with their continuing resupply missions, Welton and two buddies once tried to get in on a little more dangerous action: hitchhiking a ride on a B-17 bombing run over Berlin.

They were turned down flat.

“We are not a travel club,” the trio were told at the Flying Fortress base near London. “Go back to your troop carriers.”

Welton admitted to some apathy setting in while enduring repetitive cargo flights and dealing with the dreary English weather. He missed Peg, he missed his family, and he missed everything else about life in America.

He had “acquired the habit of letting things happen with a minimum of emotional effect, [because] way back in my mind I carry around a vision of a golden glow in the haze of the future, and it’s labeled HOME.”

But being bored was not a good habit in a war zone, as Welton realized after receiving a letter from home. A friend, listed earlier as missing, now was considered dead, Peg wrote.

“She’s all broken up about it because it strikes so close to home,” he wrote. “It appears as though she’s sweating me out. How can you explain that to someone to justify it?”

“Before this show is over, it might be me,” he realized. “I have no more reason...

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to survive than some of the great Joes I’ve seen go down.”

Some of Welton’s complacency was shattered when the Germans suddenly marshaled their forces and counterattacked in the middle of the Allied success. In what became known as the Battle of the Bulge, the 101st Airborne Division was trapped in the small town of Bastogne. The 436th was ordered to resupply the trapped Americans – and to do so quickly.

On Dec. 22, escorted by protective P-47s and P-51s, the 436th dropped ammunition packages to the waiting troops. Welton’s plane took a slug that just missed the fuel tanks in the right wing. The group made another run two days later, delivering food and gasoline.

“The flak was heavier and more accurate,” Welton wrote, adding dryly, “I began to think this job could get dangerous.”

Welton played Santa for a frightened English girl when a Christmas Day run was canceled due to weather. The next day, however, saw a wearying six-hour mission to drop fuel, ammunition, and other equipment – plus some clandestinely placed magazines and newspapers – into Bastogne.

From his cockpit seat, Welton spotted an ongoing tank battle near the town, American fighters engaging Luftwaffe aircraft overhead and heavy ground fire and flak. Most of the 436th’s aircraft took some damage, he said.

Welton disparaged the battle’s media coverage, which, he thought, seemed to downplay the distressing situation.

“We return to England to reload, but those ground men retire to their foxholes to sleep,” he wrote bitterly. “If our bit ebbs somewhat the desperate spot they’re in, they can have all the medals, backslapping, and ballyhoo in the world.”

The 436th’s last mission to Bastogne was Dec. 28; after that, the German offensive was spent.

‘I hated the war’

The dawning of 1945 saw Welton again flying resupply sorties throughout France. At Orleans, Welton and some friends avoided an encounter with military police when they violated curfew.

The French still were suffering from four years of German occupation. Welton wrote, saying very little was left in the town.

“It was pathetic to see an Army coal truck spill a few pieces of coal and watch the civilians make a mad scramble for the precious stuff,” he wrote. “There is no coal for heat in France.”

Although he had seen plenty of his fellow airmen fall during the war, the conflict dealt him a gut-punch Jan. 21. Welton wrote, when one of his best friends, “Mac” McMahon, was reported to have crashed upon landing. Final reports had not come in, but Welton was thinking the worst.

“I was shocked at the news,” he wrote. “I hated the Army, I hated aviation, and hated the war.”

His commander sent Welton out on a mission to help clear his head.

“At that moment, it was important that I fly,” he wrote.

McMahon’s death was confirmed a few days later.

“I have lost a lot of friends in the war,” Welton wrote afterward, “but nothing, even combat, affected me as much as Mac’s death.”

“The world won’t ever be quite so nice a place without McMahon,” but the war would go on, Welton conceded.

“We all kept waiting for victory, and we would be sent home,” he wrote. “But Mac was gone, and only those few of us who loved Mac noticed the difference in it all.”

‘That son of a bitch’

For Welton and the rest of the 436th, the war did indeed go on. They continued flying cargo and resupply missions, keeping the armor columns full of precious fuel. BBC radio boasted, “Patton’s tanks are rolling ahead on gasoline brought in by hundreds of C-47s of [the] Troop Carrier Command.”

Welton and other crews also flew personnel sorties to evacuate Americans repatriated from prisoner of war camps, with him describing the men as “emaciated, bitter and silent.”

The unexpected death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Apr. 12 elicited a “heavy feeling of depression,” Welton wrote. “The world had lost a great man. We soldiers felt we had lost a great friend.”

Conversely, Welton had no regrets upon learning three weeks later of the suicide of “that son of a bitch” Adolf Hitler.

The formal end of the war on May 7 found Welton and several other officers vacationing in Cannes, France, where there were no uniform requirements for the visitors.

“We lived like civilians and felt like civilians,” he wrote.

“I was on rest leave,” when the war ended, Welton later said. “Suddenly I heard the French troops shouting from the tops of the building, ‘La Guerre est fini!’”

“The whole town went wild.”

Although the shooting was over, Welton and his crew continued to fly, no longer needing to worry about getting shot down. They continued to return prisoners of war to friendly control and fly other missions as required.

By that time, Welton figured he and his friend Pete had amassed more than the necessary points needed for a discharge, but both were determined to remain on active duty until the Japanese Empire was defeated.

“It was no mock heroics for Pete and me,” he wrote. “I thought it over carefully and can honestly say I feel my debt.”

Despite his determination to remain in uniform, Welton learned he had been selected for discharge. After some hesitation, he decided to accept.

“Why argue with fate?” he wrote.


The Detroit Free Press newspaper reported his homecoming in Flint, Mich. Compared to what could have been expected, it was a bit of a letdown.

“All of the books say that a man’s faithful pal, the family dog, was supposed to meet you at the door, pitiful with joy,” Welton told a reporter. Instead, the paper reported the family mutt opened an eye, wagged his tail once, and went back to sleep.

Welton finished the war decorated with three Air Medals, a Presidential Unit Citation, the World War II Victory Medal, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with seven campaign stars.

After the war, Welton became an entrepreneur involved in several successful businesses in Detroit and Florida, lastly as the owner of a well-known St. Petersburg electronics store. He retired in 1997 at the age of 78.

Welton and Peggy had three children, six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Peg died in April 2005.

Writing in the foreword to “Come Fly with Me,” Welton observed his tour in World War II was “a long time ago, and I’m an old man now.”

“But I still remember the places and the smells. And I still see the faces as I read the names,” he wrote, adding he always felt the thrill of rumbling off to a new adventure aboard his C-47.

DAFB rabbi benefits from granduncle’s writings

Chaplain (Capt.) Rabbi Levi Welton was aware his granduncle had served during World War II, but what that meant didn’t hit home until he joined the military himself.

“I knew he had flown during the war, but I didn’t know any details, and I didn’t know he had a book,” Welton said. “Only after I joined did my aunt tell us he’d had a diary.”


“As a millennial, everything I knew about the war, the Greatest Generation, came from movies, documentaries or books,” he said. “I rarely came in contact with people who served from that generation.”

Welton, 37, hails from what he calls an intensely patriotic family, with American roots nine generations deep. Although it’s unusual for an Orthodox Jew to serve in the military, in 2018, Welton fulfilled a personal goal when he joined the 436th Airlift Wing as an Air Force Reserve chaplain.

After his commissioning, Welton dove into his granduncle’s writings, in part to learn more about the struggles of serving in combat.

“I feel very strongly our democracy has marched forward on the shoulders of those who came before us,” he said. “The people who made that happen in World War II -- I really wanted to know their stories.

“When I read the diary, I wanted to pick up on [my granduncle’s] resilience, his humor. It kind of helps me as a chaplain with insights into past generations,” Welton said. “I wanted to read between the lines for ideas and inspiration I could pull from it.”

David Welton, Barney Welton’s son, said it wasn’t until late in life that his father opened up about what happened during the war. “He talked about the enormous sense of pride that he and his fellow pilots felt as they obeyed orders, one mission after the other, knowing that there would be times when not all of the planes would be returning home,” he said.

His father felt a sense of duty and obligation toward his country, Welton said. Although the horrors of the Holocaust weren’t fully known when he enlisted, his father did so due to a deep feeling of national pride and a desire to help in the struggle against Adolf Hitler.

“He wanted to correct what he saw as a terrible wrong, and to play his role in stopping the Nazi regime,” he said.

“What impresses us most is how he goes through the war, one mission at a time with a sense of duty and obligation,” Welton said. “He led his men with the skill of a trained military leader, and all of this while very young, only in his early 20s.”

Although a transcribed version of his father’s diary is widely available through sources such as Amazon.com, his original, handwritten journal remains with his family, carefully stored in a safe place, where it has become a treasured family heirloom, Welton said.

John “Jack” Carpenter, 80, passed away June 30, 2020, in Wilmington, Del.

He was born Feb. 13, 1939, in Milford, Del.

Jack was a veteran of the Army National Guard, and had served during Delaware’s Ash Wednesday Storm of 1962 and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

He started working by helping his father at Carpenter’s Excavating, then at Boulevard Electric, and as a truck broker at Lady Bug Lines. His last business venture was that he held contracts for car services Pilots Association for Bay & River Delaware.

Jack volunteered for many years at the Air Mobility Command Museum, giving tours to elementary school field trips.

He is survived by his wife, Taube Carpenter, two daughters and their spouses, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Donald Clark, 96, died peacefully June 24, 2020.

During the Second World War, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps as a C-47 pilot.

Returning to the United States, he started a crop-dusting business, which he sold in the 1950s, founding the Clark Seed Company, which still is operated by his family.

Don was a pioneer in agribusiness on the Delmarva Peninsula. He served on the boards for two local banks, two school boards, and in numerous other public venues, including a 12-year stint in the Delaware General Assembly.

During his retirement, he served as a tour guide at the Air Mobility Command Museum.

Don was predeceased by his wife, Ruth. He is survived by four children, five grandchildren, and numerous other relatives.

Ronald Wilson Corwell, 82, of Camden, Del., passed away July 4, 2020, at the Delaware Veterans Home in Milford, Del.

Ron was born July 18, 1937, in Baltimore, Md.

After high school graduation, he joined the Air Force as a jet engine mechanic. He later worked in the insurance industry before owning Corwell and Sons Liquors in Severna Park, Md.

After his retirement, Ron enjoyed serving as a tour guide at the Air Mobility Command Museum.

He was a member of the American Legion, Knights of Columbus, and Chartwell Country Club. He enjoyed golfing and spending time with his many friends and his dog, Simon.

Ron is survived by his wife, Linda Corwell of Camden, Del., a son and daughter, two stepsons, a brother and sister, as well as eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
Inside the Hangar

The AMC Museum’s volunteers: time freely given

The past three months have seen work continuing at the Air Mobility Command Museum despite the restrictions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Museum underwent a partial reopening on June 18 – dubbed Phase 2 -- with a revised operating schedule. Although visitors were allowed, hours were curtailed, tours discontinued, and social distancing and protective masks were required. Since access is directed by Delaware Gov. John Carney’s ongoing emergency orders, the Museum must remain under those restrictions until they are lifted.

That doesn’t mean things are standing still, however.

Museum Director John Taylor held a special volunteer recognition program on July 29, 2020, the first of its kind under the Museum’s new entrance guidelines. It was an unusual gathering, with all participants wearing protective masks and sitting at least six feet apart.

Four individuals, Frieda Herman, Kelly Hurlburt, Judith Kroegman, and Patricia Coffman, were awarded Volunteer of the Month honors. At the same time, Bill Lee and Jeff Kirwan were given Volunteer of the Quarter awards.

Retiring librarian Bob Wikso, who had amassed more than 6,000 hours of volunteer service at the AMC Museum, was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Frieda Herman
Volunteer of the Month – March 2020

Frieda, who has been with the Museum since March 2014, took over as library chief when Bob Wikso decided to retire. With help from her husband, she did a fantastic job of inventorying hundreds of newly donated books and updating all of that information into the collection’s database. She has more than 900 hours of volunteer service.

Kelly Hurlburt
Judith Kroegman
Volunteers of the Month – June 2020

Kelly began with the Museum in June 2016 and has amassed more than 1,000 volunteer hours. She also served the AMC Museum Foundation’s store manager from January 2017 to December 2019.

Judith joined the Museum in February 2019, and has garnered more than 400 hours of service.

This team formed the AMC Museum’s new Restoration Graphics Team in January 2020. Using older equipment already identified as outdated and unusable, Kelly and Judith accomplished several unique projects for the aircraft restoration program. They created stunning instrument panel replacements designs for the KB-50J and C-119B aircraft. The panels, made of vinyl, look brand new inside both aircraft. They also replicated a one-of-a-kind C-5A graphics design for Crew Chief Rodney Moore.

Denise Miller, with assistant store manager Bettie Campbell, accepts the July 2020 Volunteer of the Month award on behalf of Patty Coffman.
**Jeff Kirwan**  
**April – June 2020 Volunteer of the Quarter**

Jeff is the crew chief for the Museum’s C-9 Nightingale and keeps that aircraft looking more than awesome. He’s been with the Museum since April 2017 and has more than 1,600 volunteer hours to his credit. Since Jeff also is younger than most of his volunteer crew members, he was able to return to duty during the second phase of the Museum reopening. His efforts during the pandemic have enabled work on many projects to continue despite very limited manning.

**Bob Wikso**  
**AMC Museum Lifetime Achievement Award**

Bob Wikso joined the AMC Museum in January 1999 and has more than 6,000 hours of volunteer time to his credit. Much of that time has been spent in the Museum’s library, which he has made over into a smoothly functioning repository of information vital to Museum workers, staff, and visitors.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Bob enlisted in the Air Force in 1953 as an airplane engine mechanic but retrained as a flight engineer in 1966. He’s flown the C-141 and C-5 out of Dover and continued to fly with the 512th Airlift Wing.

While working as the editor of the 20th Airlift Squadron Alumni Association’s newsletter, Bob came to the Museum to do some library research. It took little effort from former director Mike Leister to persuade Bob to sign on.

Bob researched and introduced the Dewey Decimal System -- the American standard for library organization -- into what then was little more than a disorganized stack of books. He coordinated with the Museum’s staff to input information about the books and magazines, videos, film, and periodicals into a computerized database that serves as an easily searchable inventory of the library’s holdings.

He has made the Museum’s library into the well-organized, well-functioning, and irreplaceable resource it is today.

**From the Director:**

In August, the AMC Museum was notified it had won the 2020 TripAdvisor Traveler’s Choice Award, honoring the Traveler’s Choice Best of the Best.

This award recognizes the most exceptional, highest-rated tourist destinations worldwide, ones that are among the top 10 percent of all listings on TripAdvisor, and is the highest honor the organization can bestow.

Director John Taylor released the following statement following announcement of the award:

“Volunteer Team, this is your award and accomplishment, and I am proud to be part of this outstanding team. All of us know your commitment to the Heritage Program and the AMC Museum, but to be recognized from the visitors, who you personally touch each day, through your hard work, personal devotion, and heart for life is to be commended. Whether you are restoring history, providing a tour, selling a souvenir, inventorying books, scheduling ceremonies, keeping the museum clean, your impact has been felt around the world through our visitors, who have acknowledged your outstanding performance. Thank you for who you are and what you do!”
September is the month in which we elect five members to three-year terms to the AMC Museum Foundation board of directors. We had four resignations from our “Class of 2017,” with the sole remaining board member being retired US Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Paul Roy. Paul has decided not to run for a second three-year term.

As one would expect from a Chief, (and a crew member for more than 22 years), these past three years have seen Paul perform in an absolutely outstanding manner, demonstrating to us what it means to be part of a team. Paul quickly stepped up to the panel after joining the board, anxious to learn first-hand how the Foundation operated. While Paul may tell you that he has limited knowledge of computers, it was certainly sufficient for him to chair two successful Annual Summer Fundraisers. Paul’s terrific attitude, combined with his ability to motivate others and his strong commitment to the Foundation in our support of the Museum, will undoubtedly leave a void on the Foundation Board.

Three years ago, Paul said, “I thought maybe I could contribute in some way . . . it’s a great museum, and if I can do anything to make it better, that would be my goal.”

Thanks for the contributions, Chief! You’ve met your goal – and you’ll be missed.

We did re-elect two other board members who were elected mid-term to be on the board.

An Air Force “brat,” retired US Air Force Reserve Col James “Jim” W. Schultz Jr., has served as the treasurer of the AMC Museum Foundation board since becoming a board member in 2018. Born at Cochran Army Air Field, Macon, Ga., Jim enlisted in October 1966 as part of the Delayed Enlistment Program while awaiting his scheduled Officer Training School class 67G, starting in January 1967. Commissioned as a second lieutenant on 17 March 1967, he went to pilot training at Reese Air Force Base, Lubbock, Texas, class 68G. A Vietnam veteran, Jim flew the C-123B and C-123K from Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon, from 1968 to 1969. Returning to the United States, he flew C-141s at Dover AFB from 1970 to 1972, and C-5s, also at Dover, until his retirement in April 2000. At the end of his career, Jim was the vice wing commander of the 512th Airlift Wing with 33 years of active and reserve service.

From 1976 to 2004, Jim flew for three airlines. At Trans America, from 1976 to 1986, he flew DC-8s, DC-10-30s, and L-382s, which is a stretched civilian version of the C-130. From 1987 to 1991, Jim piloted Pan Am B-727s, AB-310s, and AB-300s. Finally, flying for United Airlines from 1992 until 2004, he flew B-727s and B-777s. He retired from United in April 2004.

Since airline retirement, Jim’s become active in the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal, religious charitable men’s organization. He has been an elected board member and treasurer of Dover Council No. 4182 and the affiliated The Columbian Home Association Inc., since 2004. He’s also been a board member and treasurer of The Life Care Center of Dover Inc., another affiliate of Dover Council, since 2013.

In 2016 he was asked to become a member of an organizational meeting for what became the 512th Aircrew Reunion Association, a newly-formed Delaware non-profit association. He agreed to serve as a board member and treasurer. The association hosted the April 2017 reunion at the AMC Museum and Dover Downs Hotel and Casino, with approximately 300 people in attendance. In December 2017, after all their obligations had been met, the Association donated $2,437.95 to the AMC Museum Foundation!

Jim and Dorothy “Dottie” Jean (Childress) of Fairview, N.J., have been married 51 years. They have three children, Khristie Greiner, Stephanie Grambau, and Michael Schultz, plus eight grandchildren, ages 5 to 24. Jim and Dottie have lived in Dover since 1970.
And welcome back to retired **US Air Force Chief Master Sgt. George S. Roof**. George was born to a World War II B-24 flight mechanic/waist gunner and grew up with a love and admiration of flying machines. He enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from high school in 1964.

After basic training and jet engine technical school, he went to Naha, Okinawa, working on C-130s. While there, Vietnam began to heat up, so he volunteered for a concurrent assignment in August 1966 to Tan Son Nhut (and later Nha Tang) working on UH-1 and HH-3 helicopters.

In 1967, George returned stateside to Charleston, AFB, S.C., and worked C-141s until the C-5 project began. Since he was qualified to be on the C-5 Test Team, he was sent to Dover to prepare the TF-39 engine shop that was to be built. He worked on the aircraft at Charleston until they were transferred to Dover in 1973.

George became the Industrial Safety NCO for Maintenance until he was assigned to Kadena AB, Japan. Extensive training on the F-15 led him to become part of the advanced cadre for the F-15 and to serve as liaison for the F-100 engine to Pratt-Whitney and Kelly AFB, Tex.

He returned to Dover in 1980 and served in multiple positions in maintenance before being assigned as superintendent of Quality Control. He worked extensively with Public Affairs and was temporarily appointed as Community Relations Director, even coordinating with the US Navy during the USS Iowa and USS Stark incidents. In 1987, he was awarded the DOD Thomas Jefferson Award for military cartoons for his work as the cartoonist for the Dover AFB newspaper, the Airlifter. He helped establish the Dover AFB Chief’s Group and was one of its first officers and president. George’s design graced the first DAIB challenge coins.

Retiring from the Air Force in 1993, he resumed a profession of taxidermy and was elected to serve five terms on the board of directors of the National Taxidermy Association. For many years he wrote a weekly column for the Dover Post newspaper.

George retired again in 2017, closing his taxidermy business of almost 40 years. George still does a bit of freelance writing for outdoor publications and frequently contributes to the Delaware State News editorial page. He is a master instructor in the Delaware Hunter Education Program and a life member of several outdoors-oriented organizations.

George recently chaired a long-delayed project for developing new AMC Museum Foundation membership brochures. He was a key member of the committee charged with revamping the AMC Museum challenge coin, featured in the July-Sept. 2020 issue of the *Hangar Digest*, which now features the AMCM’s C-119B.

He lives in the small town of Magnolia, Del., not far from the southwest end of Dover AFB’s runway.

The Foundation is happy to welcome our **new store manager, Denise Miller**. Although a bit different situation, in that Denise did not come from our store volunteer pool, we’re excited to take advantage of her years of retail sales experience. Initially under the tutelage of Bettie Campbell, we’re looking forward to her leading our Museum Store, mobile store, and eStore to new heights, especially after the Museum attendance restrictions are lifted.

**And now, a word from our sponsor . . .**

It’s time for our Annual Fundraising Campaign to start. As you can imagine, with the Museum Store closed and no visitors allowed in the Museum to fill our donation boxes, our budget was a bit behind schedule this year. The mobile store and eStore have provided some income. We applied for and received a Small Business Administration COVID-19 loan.

So, the message is *help us if you can*. Be assured we continue to work hard to take good care of those dollars you provide to keep your Air Mobility Command Museum one of the best in the nation.

*Fly—and stay—safe! Don Sloan*
Kaitlyn de Wit of the 436th Contracting Squadron and George Molina of the 436th Civil Engineering Squadron inspected the ongoing renovations in the AMCM’s restrooms. They were conducting a pre-final inspection to ensure the work is completed in accordance with the approved contract. The upgrades were temporarily halted during the Museum’s closure during the coronavirus pandemic.

US Marine Corps veterans José Mercado and Domenic Legenski decided to spend part of the Labor Day 2020 holiday visiting the AMC Museum. The Marines traveled from southern New Jersey to tour the static displays outside the Museum hangar, as the building still was closed due to the coronavirus. “It’s a beautiful day to ride, so we decided to come to the Museum,” Mercado said. “We’ve never been here, so we decided it was about time we checked it out.”

Thomas Mormile, 6, and brother Joseph, 3, of New Jersey, look over their new helicopter toys bought Sept. 12 at the AMCM Foundation’s mobile trailer store. Their grandparents, Ed and Anne Mendez, of Dover, Del., brought the boys to the Museum to see the static aircraft displays. It was the family’s first trip to the AMCM. For the record, Thomas said he liked the C-5A best.

Daniel “DJ” Barclay and his grandfather, Joe, of Harrington, Del., took a tour of the Museum’s outside ramp on a sunny Thursday morning. This was the fourth Museum trip for two-year-old DJ, his grandfather said. “He just loves airplanes!” DJ also got to watch from the Museum ramp as a C-17 Globemaster III did several touch-and-go landing approaches.

NOTE: background cloud photographs on Page 14 and Page 15 were taken at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France
Andrew and Zoie Bowen and their family came down from West Point, N.Y., in March to visit their grandparents in Magnolia, Del. The COVID-19 pandemic shut down the AMCM just a few days later.

Students Josephine Wright and Antoine Ellis were on spring break when they visited the AMCM on March 12. Their tour guide was Mike Keesler.

Members of Rob Grant’s extended family from Rome, New York, stopped by the AMC Museum in mid-August during their trip to Ocean City, Maryland. “We wanted to get out and stretch, and we love airplanes,” he said.

Here’s an unusual sight: a view from the Dover AFB traffic control tower of an empty base flight line. The base’s contingent of C-5M Super Galaxy and C-17 Globemaster III aircraft were evacuated to other locations in August as Tropical Storm Isaias dumped 1.4 inches of rain on the base, accompanied by wind gusts of up to 60 mph. At least one tornado was reported nearby.

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When the AMCM Foundation’s Board of Directors went looking for someone to run its Museum store, they had one overriding goal.

“We needed someone with lots of marketing and sales experience,” Board President Don Sloan said, “We needed a person who could manage a gift shop that is a prime source of the Foundation’s annual revenue.

“Those dollars help us pay for everything from the AMC Museum shirts worn by our volunteers to supplies and parts used to restore our fleet of historic display aircraft,” he added.

In Denise Miller, who was hired for the position in June, the Foundation found the person it needed, Sloan said.

A nice place

Miller came to the Foundation with almost a lifetime of business know-how to her credit, including 24 years of experience with the A.C. Moore arts and crafts retail chain.

With that kind of background, running the Foundation’s Museum store would seem a natural fit for Miller’s talents.

But she also brought something else to the table: the knowledge of what it’s like to be part of the military.

“I was born on an Air Force base,” Miller explained. “My father was in the Air Force, and after he was discharged, he started working for the Federal Aviation Administration.”

Her father’s job meant she moved around a lot as a child.

“I grew up in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and ended up graduating from a high school in Illinois,” she said. “I wasn’t a military child, but I can relate.”

Miller met her husband, Ted, while attending Illinois State College. Her groom had his eye on a military career and soon joined the U.S. Navy. The couple, who soon were joined by three sons, traveled up and down the East Coast for the first decade of Ted’s career.

“We’d travel between Norfolk, Philadelphia, and Groton, Conn., and so we’d come through Delaware,” she said. “We’d stop in Dover, we’d get some of the newspapers, and we’d look around. We decided it was a nice place.”

Nice enough to settle down, she said, “And now we’ve been here over 30 years,” Miller said.

Her oldest sons live in Dover, and the youngest in Lewes, Del. She also has two grandsons and a granddaughter.

‘You know everything!’

Although it was good to be part of the Navy family, Miller felt there was more.

“I didn’t like being an extension of [Ted’s] Social Security number,” she said. “I enjoyed the camaraderie, the people, the other wives. In the Navy, you had family wherever you went, wherever you’d go.”

After settling in Dover, Miller got her retail experience at several local stores.

She began at A.C. Moore as a cashier but decided to learn everything possible about the store.

“I made it a point to work in all the departments,” she said. “I’d go in, and I’d train and learn all the stuff in each. The others told me, ‘You know everything!’”

Miller took on the job as assistant manager when her youngest, who had joined the U.S. Army, was assigned to a post in South Korea.

“I needed something to keep my mind off the fact that my baby and his family were in Korea, just 60 miles from the Demilitarized Zone.”

Although she gave up the assistant manager’s job when her son returned from Korea, Miller had learned a lot.

“I had soaked up everything I could about everything,” she said. “I was in charge. I helped train people, I fired people, I did writeups, and I learned how to direct people.

“When you’re the only manager on duty, you pretty much run everything.”

‘Family is important’

While Miller was flourishing at A.C. Moore, the firm itself was in financial trouble. A merger failed to keep the company above water and it shut down in November 2019.

“I’m not good at being unemployed,” she said. “I’m an antsy person. I move a lot, and I have to be busy.”

Then the opportunity at the AMCM Foundation came to her attention.

Under the tutelage of assistant store manager Bettie Campbell, Miller immediately set out to learn the ins-and-outs of running an operation that was both familiar and somewhat unfamiliar.

“With all the stuff going on and the kids are home, I’ve never been more busy,” she said.

“Now I’m home for dinner, I get to babysit my grandkids, and I get to visit my 80-year-old mother,” she said. “Family has to be important because you only have the ’now.’”

But it’s been a bit of a challenge – in a good way, she said.

Ready for more

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum hangar and the store itself hasn’t welcomed visitors since June. Miller has been manning the Foundation’s mobile storefront since then.

Getting used to working outside in a small trailer has taken some getting used to, she admits.

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Air Mobility Command Museum Foundation Store Manager Denise Miller takes a break during a busy day at the mobile store.

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“I’m having a good time,” she said. “I don’t work if I don’t have fun, and I wouldn’t be there if I didn’t have fun.”

Visitors are pleased to find there’s a way to buy souvenirs of their trip to the AMCM.

“When you go to a museum, you want to take something home, and most of the people who come through appreciate the fact the trailer is open,” she said. “A lot of other museums are completely closed.”

As much as she enjoys working outside, Miller is ready to see the inside store open up and to work with the many store volunteers.

When that happens, Miller and the volunteers will be ensuring safety precautions are in place and strictly observed. Plexiglas barriers will be in use, store workers will be wearing masks and practicing social distancing, and cleaning supplies will be on hand.

“I’m looking forward to getting over this COVID and seeing the store at full capacity,” she said. “Once I get it that far, I want it to continue to grow. I’m hoping to improve on what people have to choose from.”

The pace at the AMC Museum is not quite as hectic as running a full-size retail operation and supervising dozens of employees, Miller said, and she relishes that part of her job.

But she also enjoys another aspect – meeting the families who come by. Many are promising to return when they can see everything – inside and out.

“I like seeing the kids looking at the airplanes, their eyes wide, and with the older people telling their stories,” she said. “A lot of grandparents are bringing kids, and a lot of them are veterans. I think it’s just a nice place to be.”
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WING COMMANDERS & ABOVE,
SHIRT SIZE:
☐ S  ☐ M  ☐ L  ☐ XL  ☐ XXL

NAME (MR, MRS, MS, RANK)

ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP

PHONE (if credit card purchase)

E-MAIL

NAME EMBROIDERED ON SHIRT

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

SIGNATURE (please sign for credit card payment)

EXP DATE  CVV CODE

☐ I do not wish to receive any benefits

PAYMENT METHOD
☐ VISA
☐ MASTERCARD
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members@amcmf.com

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