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.

AMC Museum Staff
Director
John Taylor
Deputy Director
Eric Czerwinski
Operations Manager
Mike Hurlburt
Senior Archivist
Lt. Col. Harry E. Heist, USAF (Ret.)
Photo Archivist
Bill Whited
Collections Manager
Hal Sellars
Volunteer Coordinator/Scheduler
Paul George
Librarian
Frieda Herman

AMC Museum Foundation
Board of Directors
President
Col. Don Sloan, USAFR (Ret.)
Vice President
Lt. Col. Paul Gillis, USAFR (Ret.)
Secretary
MSgt. Jeff Brown, USAF (Ret.)
Treasurer
Col. Jim Schultz, USAF (Ret.)
Members
Mr. Robert Berglund
Mr. Roger Cox
Lt. Gen. Bob Dierker, USAF (Ret.)
CMSgt. George Roof, USAF (Ret.)
Mr. Kevin Taha
Mrs. Beverly Williams
Lt. Gen. William Welser III, USAF (Ret.)
CMSgt. Michael Wysong, USAFR (Ret.)
Chaplain
Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Groth, USAFR (Ret.)

Contact
Editor Master Sgt. Jeff Brown, USAF (Ret.) via email at hdeditor@amcmf.com.

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 proper, entrance to the Museum is 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 and all federal holidays except Veterans Day. For more information, call 302-677-5938 or 302-677-5991.

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.

The Hangar Digest is printed and mailed by Delmarva Printing, Salisbury, Md.
A quartet of the Air Mobility Command Museum’s top volunteers was honored during a special ceremony held Oct. 31, 2020, inside the Museum hangar. The awards were presented with all participants wearing protective masks and observing social distancing requirements.

Museum Director John Taylor reviewed recent accomplishments at the AMCM even while under restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s been a tough, tough year,” Taylor said. “But we at the Museum, along with the public health officers, managed to keep everyone safe.”

Projects during the year included completion of the POW/MIA exhibit, replacement of several display mannequins, continued restoration work on the KB-50J and C-119B, as well as a Scout Family Day. The Museum on Sept. 22, also hosted a visit from 18th Air Force commander Maj. Gen. Thad Bibb and 18th AF command chief, Chief Master Sgt. Chris Simpson.

In addition to having received the 2020 TripAdvisor’s Traveler’s Choice Best of the Best award, Taylor announced the AMCM also had been named to the Delaware State News newspaper’s Stars of Delaware 2020.

“I want to thank you all personally for what you did for this Museum this year,” Taylor told assembled awardees. “You are the heartbeat of this Museum, and we could not do what we do without you.”

Volunteer appreciation 100-hour shirts were presented to Patty Coffman, Bill Emory, Paul George, Don Hall, Kelly Hurlburt, Richard Johnson, Scott Kapes, Michael Keesler, Keith Kreisher, Judith Kroegman, Randy Kroegman, Bill Lee, Emily Malone, Tim Maurer, Rodney Moore, Mary Ogorzalek, Mike Phillips, Bob Reese, Bill Reilly, Bob Rossey, Brian Roth, Don Rynes, and Nick Saborio. Janet VanHoorik was presented her Museum jacket for having completed 2,500 hours of volunteer work, and Jeff Kirwan was recognized for having completed 1,500 hours of volunteer work for the Museum.

Emily Malone
Volunteer of the Month – August 2020

Emily spends much of her time guiding visitors through the static aircraft displays outside the Museum hangar, displaying a tremendous knowledge of aircraft and military history. At age 16, she is the Museum’s youngest volunteer and already had donated more than 150 hours of her time.

Emily also is part of the Museum’s Living History program by dressing in the uniform of a Woman Air Force Service Pilot and bringing her knowledge of military history to the local civilian community.

Nick Saborio
Volunteer of the Month – September 2020

Nick has donated almost 990 hours of volunteer service, all while working full time and earning his airframe and powerplant certification.

Lauded by Museum Director John Taylor for his “awesome knowledge of military history,” Nick was personally selected to provide Heritage Tours for Dover AFB’s 436th Operations Group members.

Nick portrays a World War II glider artilleryman, aircraft mechanic and test pilot as part of the Museum’s Living History program in the local community.

Randy Kroegman
Volunteer of the Month – October 2020

Randy, who has volunteered almost 550 hours to the AMC Museum, is well noted for his restoration work on the AMCM’s aircraft.

Randy was part of the rehabilitation crew for ongoing work on the KB-50J and was instrumental in repairing a circuit breaker panel in that aircraft.

He also restored a manifold and oxygen walk-around bottle, a propeller hub assembly, and a badly deteriorated C-119B crash ax.

Bill Reilly
Volunteer of the Quarter – July – September 2020; Volunteer of the Quarter – Wing Staff Agency; Volunteer of the Quarter – 436th Airlift Wing

Bill’s accomplishments are many, noted Museum Director John Taylor. Overall, he has volunteered more than 2,300 hours to the Museum, including 200 hours between July and September 2020.

A “jack of all trades,” he is known for helping anywhere and everywhere he can. Several previously unserviceable stair trucks are now in working condition thanks to Bill’s efforts, and he contributed to other restoration projects to include the KB-50J and the C-119B. His mechanical acumen proved vital to work on several Museum vehicles. He helped maintain the appearance of several static display aircraft by power washing them to remove bird and wildlife nests and corrosive environmental hazards.

Bill also provided an innovative solution that kept water out of the Museum’s new educational Quonset hut, a process that allowed the construction of new classrooms.
11th ARS

Dover’s ‘flying filling stations’ of the 1960s

At about 3 p.m. May 31, 1960, eight KC-97G aircraft touched down at Dover Air Force Base, starting a new chapter in the history of the Kent County, Delaware, installation. They were the first of 22 such aircraft to be stationed at Dover over the next five years. The planes were a bit of an oddity at the Military Air Transport Service base, as its primary mission was to move cargo to Europe and beyond. The former C-97 cargo aircraft, refitted to supply fuel to fighters and bombers along the southern and southeastern seaboard, were assigned to the Strategic Air Command’s (SAC) 11th Air Refueling Squadron (ARS).

‘The New Look’

The 11th’s assignment to Dover from its prior station at Dyess AFB, Abilene, Texas, came as part of a massive revamping of America’s strategic airpower posture. Initiated by the Eisenhower administration during the 1950s, what became known as the “New Look” approach placed heavy reliance on the Air Force, and SAC in particular.

Eisenhower focused on defending the country without taxing its post-World War II economy with the burden of maintaining a large sea and land fighting force. The war to defeat Germany and Japan less than a decade earlier was fresh on many Americans’ minds. The more recent memory of three years of bitter fighting on the Korean peninsula also weighed on the president’s advisers.

Eisenhower’s counselors said the answer was to invest in large fleets of bombers to carry nuclear weapons to the Soviet mainland, plus fighters and attack aircraft to protect the United States itself. The new strategy also recognized the need to refuel those aircraft, a problem ultimately solved by placing flying tanker aircraft at strategic points along the way.

Dover AFB occupied one of those points.

**KC-97G fills the bill**

The New Look strategy relied primarily on two large bombers: the B-47 Stratojet and the B-52 Stratofortress, both manufactured by Boeing Aircraft.

The Stratojet was brought into service in June 1951, and during the ensuing decade served as the Air Force’s main high-altitude, high-speed platform for carrying nuclear weapons. The Stratofortress, which debuted in February 1955, was larger, flew higher, and had a greater combat radius, although it was not as fast as the B-47.

For all the points in their favor, both aircraft had one major drawback: they could not reach targets within the Soviet Union with just the fuel they carried at takeoff. They would need additional fuel, which only could be supplied en route.

To ensure adequate supplies would be available for wartime as well as routine missions, the Air Force turned to the KC-97.

The aircraft was based on Boeing’s C-97 Stratofreighter, which had been in the Air Force inventory since 1947. To create the KC-97G, the Stratofreighter’s interior was gutted and refitted with fuel tanks, associated plumbing, and a specially-developed extension called a “flying boom.”

The boom itself was 27 feet long while retracted and 47 feet long when extended and could deliver up to 600 gallons per minute. It was manipulated by a single operator who maneuvered it with hand controllers while lying on his stomach.

Some aircraft later were fitted with outboard jet engines that allowed them to fly faster, thus making it easier for similarly-powered bombers and fighters to do their refueling. These aircraft, designated the KC-97L, never were assigned to the 11th, which flew the G model during its time at Dover.

Although many referred to the modified KC-97 as the “Stratotanker,” the Air Force never officially bestowed that name on the aircraft.

**Arrival**

The crews arriving at Dover on May 31 were not the first members of the 11th to reach the base. Under orders to move the entire unit from Texas, a cadre of about two dozen men had arrived on station in the weeks before. Their newly-appointed commander, Col. Gilmer E. Walker Jr., reached Dover on Apr. 29.

The rest of the unit, made up of 110 officers and 535 airmen, was to arrive in May and June. Some of the men’s families also had preceded them to the First State, but were frustrated to learn there wasn’t enough on- or off-base housing to accommodate them all.

In 1960, the 11th ARS was a relatively new unit, having been activated only five years earlier to fly the KC-97G.

The men of the 11th – there were no female aircrew members then – routinely deployed to bases in Alaska, Guam, and the Philippines. In 1957, 12 aircraft, crews, and support personnel supported Operation Power Flight, an exercise that saw three B-52s complete a flight to circumnavigate the planet while only using in-flight refueling.

The entire task took 45 hours and 19 minutes, with the bombers taking on fuel on at least three occasions.

But while the news media were effusive in their praise of the B-52 aircarfs, almost no mention was made of the Stratofreighter crews that made the pinpoint rendezvous...
with the bombers. The Air Force, however, helped make up for this oversight by presenting the 11th with its first Outstanding Unit Award for its part in Operation Power Flight.

Even as it transferred to Delaware, the 11th continued sending men and aircraft on temporary duty, first to Alaska and then to Labrador.

At Dover, the 11th’s operations and maintenance facilities were located in a series of buildings on the north side of the base, while the Mole Hole, the 11th’s 24-hour alert facilities, were on the south end, near the current site of the Air Mobility Command Museum.

Burma Shave

In 1960, Dover was a small base and only had been open a few years after being reactivated during the Korean War.

The 11th’s barracks were located where Dover’s recreation center and hobby shops now stand. Maintenance facilities were adjacent to hangars serving Dover’s C-133 and C-124 aircraft, only a short walk away from the barracks, said former Airman 2nd Class Linuel D. Hedspeth, now of Williamsville, Mo. Hedspeth, 82, worked as a reciprocating engine mechanic, charged with keeping the KC-97G’s Pratt & Whitney R-4360 radial piston engines in good condition.

The 11th’s commander had his offices near the hangars, Hedspeth recalled.

One of those commanders, Lt. Col. David F. Gray Sr., was inordinately proud of SAC’s always-ready, cocked-weapon reputation, Hedspeth said, and liked to remind Dover’s Military Air Transport Service (MATS) airmen that his was the only Dover unit with a “real” wartime mission. With typical SAC bravado, he had several signs installed outside his office, mimicking the Burma Shave company’s sequential highway signs.

“There were five of them, ‘SAC/says/take time/ out for/security,’” Hedspeth recalled.

The temptation to play copycat proved too strong for some unknown wannabe who found a real Burma Shave sign and put it up alongside the others, Hedspeth recalled.

“Col. Gray didn’t like that at all, so he took all the signs down,” he added.

Airman 2nd Class Mike Burns enjoyed his Dover assignment because it was relatively close to his home in central Pennsylvania. However, SAC airmen were not supposed to go more than 100 miles from the base unless they were on approved leave, a policy that wasn’t always honored, he said.

“Most free weekends, four or five of us—the rest were MATS guys—and I would drive home,” he said. “It was a seven-hour drive. We’d usually get back to Dover around 3 a.m.; I’d get a few minutes of sleep and then get back to work.”

Now 78 years old, Burns admits, “When you’re young and dumb, you do things like that.”

A naturally-gifted mechanic, Burns enjoyed working on the KC-97G.

“I remember working on the docks, changing rocker boxes on the engines, replacing navigation lights, things like that.”

Burns’ favorite activity was doing run-up engine checks.

“I worked after-flight on aircraft after they landed repairing discrepancies noted by the flight crew,” he said. “Plus, I directed the start-up of engines, directed aircraft to the runway and parked aircraft that returned from refueling missions.”

Not being on an aircrew, Burns rarely flew aboard one of the 11th’s aircraft. He did have one memorable experience when he hitched a ride on a routine sortie. He just asked me where I got sick, and I said, ‘About 10 miles back,’ not realizing he wanted to know where in the plane I’d gotten sick.

“The sad part was the pilot had requested to do ‘touch and go’ but had to stop to let me off the plane.”

Trips to Goose Bay Air Base, Canada, were part of the 11th’s schedule for most of its stay at Dover. Like other SAC units, this allowed the command to keep an alert force on duty overseas or at a forward base on a set timetable. The philosophy was to keep its aircraft strategically located around the world to accomplish SAC’s mission.

In some respects, Burns felt the Labrador missions were better than being permanent party at Dover, he said.

“I remember going through the chow line at Goose Bay, and I was asked how I wanted my eggs cooked.” Burns said. “At Dover, we only could have them scrambled. I don’t remember any other opportunity to select what you wanted at a standard chow hall.”

Former Airman 1st Class Terry Aiken, now of Underhill, Vt., however, enjoyed the living conditions at Dover.

“We had individual rooms instead of open bay barracks,” he recalled. “I think they could put three guys to a room, but basically we had only two. I ended up bunking with a guy from New Hampshire, who also was an aircraft electrician, so it was a pretty good deal.”

Like many in the 11th, Aiken did his share of deployments, including one to the Azores, where squadron refueled planes en route to Europe and North Africa.

Aiken once took the opportunity for some time off in the United Kingdom.

“I took R&R and spent four days in London,” he said. “I hardly slept the whole time.”

Aiken also was one of those airmen occasionally detailed for KP duty at the Mole Hole.

“A truck would pick me up in the morning and take me home at night,” he said. “I was basically in the kitchen the whole time.”

One of the 11th’s pilots, Capt. Jimmy Dugger, sometimes would take over the Mole Hole’s kitchen, Aiken recalled.

“On Sundays, he’d chase the cooks out and make breakfast for all the aircrews. It was really different that an officer would do

(See Filling Station on Page 6)
that. But he was a good cook, and the cooks liked it because they didn’t have to work.”

Former Airman 1st Class Jon Pearson also recalls Duggar’s culinary feats.

“He’d go into the kitchen and cook breakfast,” Pearson said. “I don’t know how long he’d been doing that. He also did the breakfast line when we were up at Goose Bay.

“No one complained, and he was a great chef.”

Deactivation

During its time at Dover, the 11th flew thousands of missions along the Eastern seaboard. In addition to its deployments to Labrador, Dover crews often pulled 90-day deployments to the Azores, with elements sent to Germany, England, Spain, and bases in Africa.

Personnel not assigned to SAC – nearly everyone at Dover other than those on the 11th’s personnel roster – sometimes found the squadron’s presence an irritant more than anything else. The relative tranquility at the base could suddenly be shattered by an alert notice from the command’s Offutt AFB, Neb., headquarters. Diners in mess halls, moviegoers in the base theater, and even patients waiting for appointments at the base hospital would bolt from their seats, heading for the cars and trucks that would take them to their alert duty stations.

The 11th also was well represented during Armed Forces Day celebrations in 1961, 1962, and 1965; the latter event had one of its KC-97s to depart Dover left on Jun. 3, 1965. Aircraft 53-306, which was the first Stratotanker assigned to the 11th when it was at Dyess, was the last of the 11th’s planes to leave Dover.

The 11th completed its deactivation on Jun. 15, 1965, 10 days early, when it completed the disposition of all facilities. But that was not the end of the 11th’s story. A year after it was deactivated at Dover, the 11th was reborn flying the KC-135 at Altus AFB, Okla. It served there until it again was deactivated in 1994.

A life after Dover

Those of the 11th’s cadre of KC-97Gs not sent to the Boneyard were reassigned to other units, including the Air Force Reserve.

But not all. Tail No. 53-306 was to have an interesting second career gathering intelligence data in Europe.

Very little information is available even now, but it appears the aircraft’s refueling equipment was stripped away, and the plane fitted out with sensitive electronic surveillance gear. Ostensibly flying as a cargo carrier out of Wiesbaden Air Base, Germany, it almost certainly made counterespionage trips through the air corridor over East Germany between West Germany and West Berlin. The plane continued in that role until it was sent to the 309th in February 1976. It was sold for scrap in April 1980.

An excellent record

While only at Dover for five years and never deployed in combat, the 11th left behind an enviable record: it earned an additional Outstanding Unit Award as well as maintenance awards and other types of recognition from the Strategic Air Command.

In its first 10 years of service, including its time at Dover, the 11th never lost an aircraft in a flying accident and never reported a serious personal injury to its personnel, compiling an enviable record as SAC’s best KC-97 refueling squadron.

In fact, the only aircraft loss at the 11th ARS occurred about 18 months before the unit was transferred to Dover. A number of KC-97s were on temporary duty Jan. 18, 1959, at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, when the incident occurred, retired Maj. Charles Caldwell said.

Caldwell learned afterward the aircraft was being refueled when a leak spilled fuel onto a portable heater being used to keep the engines warm. Local newspapers pegged the high temperature for the day at 13 degrees below zero.

“That was my airplane,” Caldwell said. “We were about a mile-and-a-half from the flight line and in the bachelor officer’s quarters when it happened.”

News reports placed the KC-97G at about 500 yards from Elmendorf’s jet alert hangar and about the same distance from about a dozen other tanker aircraft.

Thick, black smoke blanketed the Anchorage area for more than an hour, according to news reports. Local fire crews were called in to assist base firefighters in extinguishing the blaze.

The KC-97, Tail No. 53-308, was a total loss; however, there were no injuries, and no other planes were damaged. Unfortunately, Caldwell and his crew lost everything but what they’d taken to the BOQ.

“I had all my flight gear aboard that airplane,” he said. “Shocked? I was kinda shocked, all right.”

AMC Museum visitors today can get an idea of what the KC-97 was like during its heyday at Dover. The Museum obtained an L model of the aircraft in 1999; the plane had spent much of its career at Westover AFB, Mass., and had been on display in California for almost 20 years.
Over the years, the people of Kent County and throughout Delaware have been generous donors to the Air Mobility Command Museum Foundation through our fundraising efforts.

Despite the trials of 2020, the AMCM Foundation still went looking for sponsors for our annual Summer Fundraiser (which used to be our annual Golf Tournament). Board member Mike Wysong volunteered to lead the program, and gathered some very worthwhile donations. Many thanks to Mike for his efforts and of course, to our donors, most of whom are recurrent contributors.

We’re happy to recognize them in this issue of the Hangar Digest.

Summer Fundraiser
Community continues its support of AMCMF

Delaware State News Executive Editor Andy West, left, has been a longtime supporter of the AMC Museum Foundation’s Summer Fundraiser, while Walt Carroll, right, owner of They’re Action Figures in the Greentree Shopping Center, Dover, recently joined the fold. The AMCMF appreciates their continuing support.

Special thanks go out to American Dental Care, who more than doubled the Foundation’s requested donation; we also want to give a special shout-out to the Delaware State News and the Dover Post, who once again contributed in-kind advertising in their respective newspapers. Your support is greatly appreciated!

No doubt you’ve already received the Foundation’s Annual Fundraising Campaign letter. The fundraiser runs through March 2021, so there’s still time to help. With the Museum closed and the outdoor exhibits/planes only available three days a week, our Foundation dollars have become a bit tighter. The mobile store and eStore have been our major sources of income for the past several months, with expenses still ongoing.
At the December AMC Museum Foundation board meeting, we elected two more board members. As you can see in their bios, both bring a lot to the Foundation and hence the AMC Museum. We’re happy to welcome them both.

**Roger D. Cox** joined the U.S. Air Force right after graduating from college in 1968. After earning his wings, he went to Norton Air Force Base, California, where he became an aircraft commander, instructor, and flight examiner in the Military Airlift Command (MAC) flying C-141 Starlifters. Most of his flying was in the Pacific, including Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica, and the Pacific islands. Other notable assignments included Operation Deep Freeze flights to McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, and the Saigon evacuation in 1975.

He completed his MBA degree in 1973 with an emphasis on managerial accounting and strategic management. After leaving the Air Force, he flew corporate jets out of New Jersey and B-707s in the Middle East. He joined Braniff International in 1977, flying the Boeing 727 in the U.S. and South America. After Braniff’s demise, he flew Airbus-300s and B-727s at Eastern Airlines before joining America West Airlines (AWA) in 1987. At AWA, he was a captain on the B-737, B-757, and the A320. He also served as the air safety chairman and master council chairman for the Air Line Pilots Association.

Roger was fortunate to have had a unique perspective on safety management. Besides using scientific tools, data collection, and analysis, his past flying experience and management education gave him an understanding of people, culture, learning, and leadership. He had begun his career in an era when pilots hand flew jet transports and used autopilots as basic tools and then made the change to more automated airplanes as they were developed, and personally experienced how pilot skills had to change. He had flown military jets, corporate jets, foreign airline jets, and domestic jets. He flew to every continent in the world. He had served in management and in pilot unions and gained the perspectives of both. He had become highly knowledgeable about pilot contracts, people management, negotiations, and airline economics.

That background served him well when in 2006, he joined the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as an operational factors investigator, where he was exposed to an even broader cross-section of air carriers. He became a GS-15 national resource specialist and served there until 2016.

These jobs included research, documentation, and explanations of the operational functions of large airlines, small airlines, international airlines, and charter operators. He would conduct hundreds of interviews with accident crews, other pilots, management, and witnesses. He delved into flight manuals, procedures, training, and company policies affecting safety, working with experts in design, manufacturing, training, and human performance at the NTSB, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the major aircraft manufacturers. He attended training with and made multiple visits to companies like Boeing, Airbus, and Embraer and wrote reports, published articles, and made presentations to safety audiences.

Since his retirement from the FAA in 2016, Roger has been teaching aviation safety in the Aviation Technology Department at Community College of Baltimore County in Maryland. He lives in Annapolis, Maryland.

**William “Bill” Welser III** grew up in New York, receiving his commission in 1971 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Buffalo. He began his career as an aircraft maintenance officer before attending flight training and earning his wings in 1975. A command pilot, he has logged more than 3,500 hours in the C-5 Galaxy, C-141 Starlifter, KC-10 Extender, T-1 Jayhawk, and 20-plus other aircraft.

He has commanded at squadron, wing, headquarters, and numbered air force levels and held numerous key staff positions to include a tour on the Joint Staff. Especially noteworthy was his service as the director of Operations and Logistics for the U.S. Transportation Command, where he led transportation operations supporting the U.S. response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In 2003, he commanded 18th Air Force at Scott AFB, Illinois, where he was responsible for tasking and executing all worldwide air mobility operations. He completed a distinguished 34-plus-year Air Force career, retiring as a lieutenant general in December 2005.
In April 2006, Bill joined Northrop Grumman Corporation (NGC) in Melbourne, Florida, as vice president, Air Mobility Systems, and deputy program manager for the USAF Tanker Replacement Program. He later became vice president for business development for NGC’s aerospace systems sector’s mobility market segment. He then served as an independent consultant working with the Air Force Technical Applications Center.

Very active in the community, Bill is the past president of the Space Coast Honor Flight Board (2011 to 2018). Under his leadership, the program expanded significantly, making it possible to honor more than 1,300 World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans by providing them with an opportunity to visit their monuments in Washington, D.C. In 2018, he was elected to the National Honor Flight board of directors. He has served on the Brevard Habitat for Humanity board of directors (2011 – 2016) and was the chairman from 2013 to 2015. He served as the 2016 Flight Captain for the Space Coast Order of Daedalians, an aviation fraternity. Finally, he is an active member of the Patrick AFB St. Georges’ Catholic Parish and sings in the choir.

This issue marks 10 years since Jeff Brown took over the helm of the Hangar Digest. Over that decade, Jeff has used his expertise as an Air Force personnel superintendent and an award-winning news editor at the local Dover Post newspaper to upgrade and expand this newsletter. His 2018 article about Women in the Air Force at Dover in the 1970s was republished this year in the Friends Journal, the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force’s magazine; this followed an earlier article in the Friends Journal about a 1958 Dover C-133 accident. Jeff’s article in the Oct-Dec 2020 Hangar Digest about World War II pilot Lt. Barney Welton was praised by Welton’s grandnephew, U.S. Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Rabbi Levi Welton. “Aside from writing an excellent piece for the Digest, he performed a service for my family,” Welton wrote in an email forwarded to the AMCMF board of directors. “Members of my family who hadn’t spoken in years . . . reconnected because of Mr. Brown. Through his work, Mr. Brown honored history and impacted the present.”

Jeff’s a busy man these days. Although nominally retired, in addition to producing the Digest, he also serves as secretary to the AMCMF board of directors, is the Foundation’s membership manager, and oversees our annual fundraising campaign.

This issue marks 10 years since Jeff Brown took over the helm of the Hangar Digest. Over that decade, Jeff has used his expertise as an Air Force personnel superintendent and an award-winning news editor at the local Dover Post newspaper to upgrade and expand this newsletter. His 2018 article about Women in the Air Force at Dover in the 1970s was republished this year in the Friends Journal, the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force’s magazine; this followed an earlier article in the Friends Journal about a 1958 Dover C-133 accident. Jeff’s article in the Oct-Dec 2020 Hangar Digest about World War II pilot Lt. Barney Welton was praised by Welton’s grandnephew, U.S. Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Rabbi Levi Welton. “Aside from writing an excellent piece for the Digest, he performed a service for my family,” Welton wrote in an email forwarded to the AMCMF board of directors. “Members of my family who hadn’t spoken in years . . . reconnected because of Mr. Brown. Through his work, Mr. Brown honored history and impacted the present.”

Jeff’s a busy man these days. Although nominally retired, in addition to producing the Digest, he also serves as secretary to the AMCMF board of directors, is the Foundation’s membership manager, and oversees our annual fundraising campaign.

C-47 Turf and Sport Special veteran Joe Morettini passes

The AMC Museum Foundation joins the rest of the AMC staff to mourn the passing of World War II veteran Joseph Morettini, 96, of Erie, Pa.

Morettini died Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, in Erie.

A 19-year-old member of the 82nd Airborne’s E Company, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Morettini jumped out of the Douglas C-47 Skytrain, “Turf and Sport Special,” on June 6, 1944, over Normandy, France.

That aircraft now is part of the AMCM’s collection.

Drafted into the US Army at age 18, he said the first thing he wanted to do was to qualify for the Airborne.

As he jumped over Normandy with German anti-aircraft trackers and fire filling the air, Morettini thought he’d be killed before reaching the ground.

Morettini landed safely and took part in the Allied breakout from the beaches. He was wounded by artillery fire and hospitalized in July 1944, just before his 20th birthday. Once recovered, he took part in almost every major European campaign involving the 82nd Airborne, including the Battle of the Bulge.

About our center painting . . .

Aircraft mechanics are used to working hard under very austere conditions, and those tasked with keeping the aging KC-97 Stratofreighters in working order during the 1960s were no exception.

In painting “Operation Creek Party,” artist Gil Cohen said he wanted to portray a group of airmen working in a “dark, gloomy twilight during a cold rainstorm” while taking part in a National Guard deployment to Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany.

Such scenes were – and still are – typical throughout the Air Force, including at the 11th Air Refueling Squadron, assigned to Dover Air Force Base from 1960 to 1965.

Although the 11th flew the KC-97G model instead of the KC-97L shown here, their work was no less difficult or stressful. Aircrews assigned to the 11th could expect regular 90-day deployments to areas as diverse as Labrador and Bermuda and often found themselves flying support duty alongside Air National Guard units deployed to Europe.

Image used for the Hangar Digest with permission of the artist.
The Mole Hole
It could have been the end of the world

Some people likened spending a week on alert in a Strategic Air Command (SAC) Readiness Crew Building (RCB) as akin to waiting for the world to end.

For others, like former Airman 2nd Class Linuel Hedspeth, a tour in an RCB, otherwise known as the Mole Hole, was just another day in the Air Force of the 1960s.

“I wasn’t in there very often,” recalled Hedspeth, whose regular job was repairing aircraft engines. “The only times was when I pulled KP.”

Hedspeth was one of about 550 airmen and officers assigned to SAC’s 11th Air Refueling Squadron at Dover Air Force Base, Del. From 1960 to 1965, the unit flew the KC-97G Stratofreighter, tasked with conducting routine aerial refueling missions along the East Coast.

But a rotating group of the 11th ARS’s aircrews had a more critical role to play: waiting for an emergency alert message from SAC headquarters.

Each time a message came down, crews would bolt from Dover’s RCB and head for their waiting aircraft. If the message was just a practice run, the crews would stand down and return to the Mole Hole.

But if the alert was real, their Stratofighters were tasked to rendezvous with SAC bombers and supply them with enough fuel to overfly the Soviet Union. Once over the Russian mainland, the B-52s or B-47s would drop their atomic weapons, and World War III would begin.

The Williamsville, Mo., native vividly recalls what happened when a SAC alert came down, calling crewmen to their aircraft.

“They would go running out of the building,” Hedspeth said. “It was kind of scary. Those guys all had a really funny look on their faces.”

Perhaps that was because none of the men knew if they were practicing for nuclear war or heading into the real thing, he said.

An idea in search of a solution
As the Cold War with the Soviet Union ramped up, SAC deployed its bomber forces across the world, turning many installations into launch centers for aircraft capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

These aircraft were expected to be in the air within minutes of an alert notification, a goal that early SAC planners sometimes failed to meet. The key was figuring out a way to park and launch the planes as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It took several years and several tries, but SAC eventually developed a herringbone parking pattern for these bombers that made this short reaction time a reality.

Parked tail-in at a 45-degree angle to the taxiway, this pattern allowed the bombers, always primed and ready for launch, to pull out almost directly onto a main runway for a quick takeoff. Because of its appearance, the parking aprons became familiarly known as the Christmas Tree.

SAC mimicked the same pattern for its KC-97s at bases assigned to other commands, including Dover.

But just having a place to park its airplanes wasn’t enough. SAC needed accommodations for the men who would be flying the aircraft.

SAC tried different ideas, from renovating existing barracks near the RCB to buying commercial house trailers. These trailers could be repositioned as needed or even shipped to other bases. But it became apparent a dedicated, permanent crew readiness facility, located at the Christmas Tree, was the best solution.

This led to the development of specialized readiness crew buildings attached to the alert apron; on Dover AFB, this facility was officially known as Building 1303.

But everyone simply called it the Mole Hole.

Designing the Mole Hole
Dover’s Mole Hole was a concrete structure with 16-inch thick exterior walls. Designed to hold 70 men, it was the smallest example of an RCB in SAC’s inventory. The facility, as well as RCBs that could accommodate 100 and 150 men, was designed in April 1958 by the Leo A. Daly architectural firm of Omaha, Nebraska, and built by Charles B. Hemline & Sons of Red Bank, New Jersey.

The cost of the building and Christmas Tree alert apron was just over $1.89 million, or about $17 million, adjusted for inflation.

Construction on Dover’s RCB started in early 1959 and was complete by the end of that year. SAC’s minimum 15-minute window for launching bombers also extended to its refueling aircraft. Underground tunnels helped meet that requirement, allowing crews to go from Building 1303 directly out to the Christmas Tree and their waiting KC-97s.

The underground first floor of Building 1303 included two corridors running the length of the building, each leading to a corrugated tunnel and exit door. There was an intersecting corridor halfway through the building, which also led to two exits. Alert crews bunked in 27 two- and three-person bedrooms on the floor, which included two latrines with showers, and a mechanical equipment room.

The windowless second floor featured meeting rooms, offices, an officer’s lounge, security office, more latrines, kitchen, and storage. It was centered around a single, building-long main corridor that intersected a shorter passage, both leading to the outside.

Flight suits and zippered boots
Former Lt. William Grapperhaus, 85, of Selbyville, Del., served as a navigator in the 11th, and remembers what it was like getting the alert message and prepping his KC-97G for takeoff.

“If we were pulling an alert, we all were in flight suits,” he recalled. “If an alert sounded, we’d run out and crank up the auxiliary power units. We’d look for a classified message and then authenticate it. Then we’d either shut down the engines or maybe taxi to the end of the runway.”

The small bedrooms afforded a modicum of privacy. Flight suits and boots with zippers
instead of laces usually were kept next to beds and could be donned with almost no effort.

“We were well trained,” retired navigator Maj. Charles Caldwell said. “It was a scramble, but an orderly one. There was no confusion. We had a certain amount of time to get out there and start engines, and we did it.”

Occasionally SAC would order the Stratofreighters into the air but most of the time the planes would taxi back to their spots on the Christmas Tree alert apron, Grappenhaus said.

Six of the 11th’s fleet of 22 Stratofreighters would be on alert at a time, with the rest either flying routine refueling missions or undergoing maintenance on the north end of the base.

Except for the rush sparked by an alert, life inside the Mole Hole could be pretty routine, Caldwell revealed.

“We had a regular program the week we were on alert,” he recalled. “We’d study the emergency war plan orders, and we’d have briefings about what was going on in the world. The day was taken up with lectures and that kind of thing.”

The area around the Mole Hole had perhaps the highest security posture on Dover AFB. The compound had one gate and was fenced off from the rest of the base. Armed security personnel patrolled near the aircraft.

“We pulled interior perimeter guard duty after being issued M1 carbines with live ammunition,” he said. Each shift lasted 12 hours, Pearson added.

Then, as now, the Christmas Tree was located close to US Route 113, and travelers had an easy time spotting the Stratofreighters parked there. This caused a lot of concern for Dover’s security personnel, Pearson said.

“We were within rifle range of Route 113, and if anyone had pulled over and taken a few shots, they would have destroyed the entire alert force,” he said. “Those planes were packed in like sardines.”

Several times, however, civilian motorists could not resist the temptation to take a few snapshots, Pearson said.

“Before they got back into their cars, the Air Police trucks would be there,” he said. “They were a little antsy about all of that.”

The area around the Mole Hole had perhaps the highest security posture on Dover AFB. The compound had one gate and was fenced off from the rest of the base. Armed security personnel patrolled near the aircraft.

“The alert facility had a dedicated kitchen and military cooks. 11th ARS airmen not on alert status would be detailed for KP to help with food preparation and other activities.

“They were a little antsy about all of that.”

A little antsy

When the 11th often practiced for the eventuality of war, it was the Cuban Missile Crisis where it almost became a reality.

In October 1962, President John F. Kennedy ordered an embargo around Cuba to force the Soviet Union into removing newly-built missile installations.

“As I recall, we were ordered to get on the plane, and we’d be given our orders once in flight,” Burns said. “We weren’t sure where we were going, north or south, but we ended up in Goose Bay. We stayed there on alert status until the crisis abated.”

Former Airman 1st Class Jon Pearson of Bremerton, Wash., had just completed training as a boom operator when he reported to Dover in August 1962.

“They parked all of our aircraft on the Christmas Tree, except those that were up at Goose Bay,” he recalled. “All of the aircrews were sent to the Mole Hole, so it was pretty crowded.”

As he and about 10 other new arrivals hadn’t been assigned to an aircrew, Pearson was ordered to guard the Mole Hole alongside Dover’s Air Police.

“We pulled interior perimeter guard duty after being issued M1 carbines with live ammunition,” he said. Each shift lasted 12 hours, Pearson added.

Then, as now, the Christmas Tree was located close to US Route 113, and travelers had an easy time spotting the Stratofreighters parked there. This caused a lot of concern for Dover’s security personnel, Pearson said.

“We were within rifle range of Route 113, and if anyone had pulled over and taken a few shots, they would have destroyed the entire alert force,” he said. “Those planes were packed in like sardines.”

Several times, however, civilian motorists could not resist the temptation to take a few snapshots, Pearson said.

“Before they got back into their cars, the Air Police trucks would be there,” he said. “They were a little antsy about all of that.”

The end of an era

In the years following SAC’s decision to realign its bomber and tanker forces, many of the more than 70 crew readiness buildings throughout the world either were abandoned or repurposed...

Like some of those facilities, Building 1303 at Dover also found several other uses. Although its exterior remained mostly unchanged, the interior underwent significant renovations. During part of its post-SAC life the old RCB served as headquarters for the 20th Military Airlift Squadron.

“All of the old bedrooms were used as offices for the different flight sections,” recalled former 20th MAS aircrew member retired Master Sgt. Charles Grant, 90, of Dover. The kitchen facilities also had been gutted and removed, he added.

“There were no windows downstairs where we were, but there was air conditioning and it was heated, so it was very comfortable,” Grant said.

When the 20th left in 1973, Building 1303 was turned into administrative offices for Dover AFB’s Aeroclub pilot training and flight school.

By the early 2000s, however, the old RCB was showing its age. A study showed its climate control systems were in poor condition, and it was subject to sewer backups. New environmental regulations meant the asbestos floor tiles were considered hazardous, and the electrical system could not handle new computer systems.

Its placement at the end of an active runway also presented problems. Although well-sited in 1960, changes to Air Force safety requirements for runway clearance zones had turned the building into a significant aircraft safety hazard.

The AMC Museum turned down an offer to take over the building, citing its proximity to the runway and other problems.

These factors, including the cost of renovating the former RCB led instead to a decision to demolish the building. Because it was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the building was photographed and measured, inside and out before demolition.

With almost 45 years of service to its credit, Building 1303 finally fell to the wrecking ball in 2005.

The former Christmas Tree alert apron remained and continues to serve the flight school.
AMC Museum Foundation members:
We couldn’t do what we do without you

The Air Mobility Command Museum Foundation could not function without the support of the airmen, former airmen, members of the Air Force’s sister services and civilians who make up its membership. Foundation members hail from 35 of the 50 states and from four nations other than the United States: Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Scotland. They truly represent everyone whose spirits fly with those who guarded and still guard our nation’s skies.

Here’s our annual listing of AMCM Foundation members. Thanks for all you do!

**Crew Member**

**Flight Crew Member**

**Squadron Commander**

**Group Commander**
John L. McClure, Robert C. Monroe, Robert J. Penny, and Keith D. Wentzel

**Life Member**
New names added to AMCM’s Commemorative Garden

An additional seven names on memorial bricks were added to the walkway at the Air Mobility Command Museum’s Commemorative Garden in conjunction with Veterans Day 2020. The bricks, inscribed with names, organizations and other tributes, are added to the garden each Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Ronald Corwell, Korean War, 1937 – 2020
Ronald Corwell, 1937 – 2020, Proud Volunteer, AMC Museum, USAF
CMSgt. Bryan Ford, Top 3, Dover AFB, SNC01 25 Sept. 20
Kelly Hurlburt, AMC Museum Volunteer, 1,000-plus hours

Col. J. Safranek, 436 AW/CC, 30 May 18 – 7 Jan 20
Bob Wikso, AMC Museum, Library Pioneer, Jan 1999 – Nov 2019
Mike Wysong, CMSgt, USAF, 1967 – 2005
Patty Wysong, MSG, USAF, 1974 – 2005

Because of formatting requirements, the information presented in this listing may not exactly match the inscription on the bricks.
Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, Air Mobility Command Commander, left, and Chief Master Sgt. Brian Kruzelick, AMC Command Chief, right, toured the AMC Museum Dec. 8, 2020. They met re-enactors Emily Malone, Patrick O’Neill and Nick Saborio, portraying a WASP pilot, a glider pilot and a test pilot with the 4146th Base Unit during World War II. The re-enactors volunteer their time as part of the Museum’s community education program.

Maintaining the correct social distancing, Museum volunteer Emily Malone briefs the Cabla family about the C-5’s capabilities. Rhonda and Don Cabla had journeyed from their small hometown of Edna, Texas, to visit son Jordan, over the Thanksgiving holiday. Jordan is a C-5 flight engineer stationed at Dover AFB. Asked his thoughts about the AMCM, Don said, “I like it. I like it a lot.”

Dave and Debra Chapman brought their family from Cape May, N.J., to spend the Saturday after Thanksgiving at the AMC Museum. From left are Alison, Alex and Erik Chapman, Sammy Mwaniki of Nairobi, Kenya, Parker, Debra and David Chapman. Grandson Miles, far left, didn’t feel like having his picture taken. Mwaniki is in the United States studying aerospace engineering.

Eric Metz brought son Peter, 6, from their home in Washington, D.C., to spend the day at the AMCM. Peter showed a remarkable knowledge of World War II aircraft, explaining the purpose of the black and white invasion stripes found on the miniature C-47 model his father purchased at the Foundation’s mobile trailer store.

The background cloud photograph on this page was taken at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France.
Bring your group to Dover for exclusive Military Reunion benefits

Military Reunion Groups planning a trip to enjoy the sights and sounds in and around the Dover Air Force Base can enjoy exclusive access and perks like never before, including:

- Dover Air Force Base Tours
- Private Tours of Museum Aircraft
- Paver Bricks installed in honor of your reunion and much more

Call the team at Kent County Tourism and let them help you plan your next reunion utilizing their FREE reunion planning services. We will help you source hotels, tours, places to eat, ceremony needs, and anything else to help make your next reunion special.

For more information on this tour and other area offerings, John Doerfler, Sales & Event Manager, at jdoerfler@visitdelawarevillages.com or 302-734-4888 x103

www.VisitDelawareVillages.com

Continued on Page 6
Become a member!
SUPPORT THE AMC MUSEUM
Prefer to sign up online? Visit: store.amcmuseum.org/memberships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</th>
<th>ANNUAL DUES</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CREW MEMBER</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>Membership certificate, member card good for 10% off purchases in the Museum Store, quarterly Hangar Digest newsletter and an AMC Museum Member pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLIGHT CREW MEMBER</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>Crew member benefits plus two AMC Museum Challenge Coins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQUADRON COMMANDER</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Flight Crew member benefits and one free Crew Member membership for a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP COMMANDER</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Squadron Commander benefits and a $25 gift certificate for our Museum or Online Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WING COMMANDER</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Group Commander benefits plus a personalized golf shirt and an AMC Museum Foundation aviation art giclee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONOR CATEGORY</th>
<th>DONATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIFE MEMBER</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Wing Commander benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAGLE DONOR</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Wing Commander benefits plus a special engraved plaque for your home or office along with special benefits and recognition. To become an Eagle Donor, please contact the AMC Museum Foundation directly at <a href="mailto:members@amcmf.com">members@amcmf.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRONZE EAGLE DONOR</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILVER EAGLE DONOR</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLD EAGLE DONOR</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLATINUM EAGLE DONOR</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WING COMMANDERS & ABOVE, SHIRT SIZE:

| SIZE | S | M | L | XL | XXL |

NAME (MR, MRS, MS, RANK)

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP PHONE (if credit card purchase)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

SIGNATURE (please sign for credit card payment)

E-MAIL

I do not wish to receive any benefits

PAYMENT METHOD

- [ ] VISA
- [ ] MASTERCARD
- [ ] AMERICAN EXPRESS
- [ ] DISCOVER
- [ ] CHECK (PAYABLE TO THE AMC Museum Foundation)

Submit in the box to the right.

E-MAIL QUESTIONS TO: members@amcmf.com

Donations are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

MAIL APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO: Membership Manager
AMC Museum Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 2024
Dover AFB, DE 19902-9998
Pave a Path to History
IN OUR COMMENRATION PARK!

With one brick you can accomplish two things: become a permanent part of history in the museum’s Commemoration Park and join the AMC Museum Foundation in supporting the museum. Engraved bricks laid in Commemoration Park are a permanent path to history!

There are many ways to use your brick:
★ offer tribute to or memorialize a loved one
★ as a holiday or birthday gift
★ to commemorate a special date
★ as recognition for a special group
★ to show your personal or business support for the museum!

Visit amcmuseum.org/brick to order your brick today!

Is your name on the bench?
AIRCRAFT BENCH PROGRAM

Donate $100 to the AMC Museum Foundation Bench Program and have your name printed on a plaque on the bench of your choice. We’ll also recognize you in the museum’s quarterly newsletter, Hangar Digest, and on our website.

The benches are already on our ramp near their respective aircraft to complement the static displays. These 8-foot-long benches are high-quality plastic-coated rolled steel with cast aluminum legs.

Add your inscription to one of our benches for just $100
C-5 GALAXY
C-141A STARLIFTER
C-141B STARLIFTER
C-130 HERCULES
C-124 GLOBEMASTER II
C-9 NIGHTINGALE
VC-9C AIR FORCE TWO
C-54 SKYMASTER
C-119B FLYING BOXCAR
C-119G FLYING BOXCAR
A-26 INVADER
C-133 CARGOMASTER
C-47 SKYTRAIN
B-17 FLYING FORTRESS
KC-97 STRATOFREIGHTER
KC-135 STRATOTANKER
KB-50 SUPERFORTRESS

Visit store.amcmuseum.org/bench to learn more and order online! A print and mail version is available as well.
TO BE INCLUDED ON OUR MAILING LIST FOR UPDATES ON NEW ITEMS IN OUR ONLINE STORE, SEND AN EMAIL TO ESTORE@AMCMF.COM