



The Airlifter

Newsletter of the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association

Issue 001

April 27, 2007

Editorial Comment

Welcome to the first issue of *The Airlifter*, the newsletter of the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association. *The Airlifter* is published four times a year to keep the membership of the Association informed. The TCTAA was established on June 26, 2006 as a non-profit corporation incorporated in the State of Texas. Membership is composed of veterans of the US Army and US Air Force troop carrier mission and its tactical airlift successors. The fourfold purpose of the association is to promote camaraderie among troop carrier and tactical airlift veterans, to preserve the troop carrier/tactical airlift heritage, to educate the public regarding the troop carrier/tactical airlift mission and to promote patriotism. For the title of our newsletter, we are borrowing the name of the 315th Air Division newspaper by the same name, although the title was originally used for the newspaper for the Berlin Airlift.

Our purpose with *The Airlifter*, which will be published four times a year, is to inform, educate and entertain the membership of the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association. Contributions – first person accounts, articles, photographs, opinions, letters – are encouraged.

Reunion Update

In some ways, the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association is an outgrowth of informal reunions held in Galveston, Texas in 2005 and 2006. The success of the reunions prompted organizers Bob Ruffin and Sam McGowan to decide to form a non-profit corporation to sponsor future reunions and preserve and promote the troop carrier heritage. At this point, plans for the 2007 meeting are indefinite, other than that President Jim Lopez has decided that it will be at the Casa Del Mar hotel on Galveston Island, Texas over Veterans Day Weekend. We hope to have further details and registration forms in the June newsletter.

Officers and Board Members

President – Jim Lopez
Vice President – Bob Ruffin
Secretary – Sam McGowan
Treasurer – Ralph Bemis
Tony Girtman
Ace Bowman
Billie B. Mills
Bobby Gassiott
Chick Anderson
Craig Clifton
Sherman Pyle
Tony Kelley
Jim Esbeck

Legal Advisor – Ernie Gassiott

Financial Report

Funds on Hand as of April 26, 2007

Funds in checking acct - \$5,963.00

All funds are from membership fees.
No expenditures to this date

Report of Board of Directors Meeting

The first Board of Directors meeting was held in Galveston, Texas on November 10, 2006. Founding board members Tony Girtman, Ralph Bemis and Sam McGowan were present, along with Ernie Gassoitt, the association legal advisor. Board member Robert Ruffin was not present due to ill health. Filing of IRS Form 1024 was discussed – Sam McGowan agreed to file the form. The members decided to choose and present a slate of nominees for the positions of officers and board members to the members present for the reunion.

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The Association

The Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association came about as a result of a series of events. In 2005 troop carrier veterans Bob Ruffin and Sam McGowan hosted what was intended to be the first annual Troop Carrier Homecoming at the Victorian Condo Hotel on Galveston Island, Texas, with 97 veterans and their guests present. At a meeting Ace Bowman suggested the formation of a troop carrier association, thus giving birth to the idea. A few months later Bill Cannon, a veteran loadmaster and founder of the Professional Loadmaster Association, suggested in a private Email to Sam McGowan that we form a non-profit corporation to provide accountability for funds and to allow contributions from corporate sponsors. Through the efforts of Ernie Gassiott, a former C-130 pilot who is now an attorney in Woodville, Texas, we gained incorporation as a Texas corporation on June 26, 2006. The stated purpose of the Association is to promote camaraderie among troop carrier and tactical airlift veterans, to preserve and promote the troop carrier/tactical airlift heritage, to educate the public regarding the role played by troop carriers and tactical airlifters in America's wars and military conflicts and to promote patriotism. Membership applications began coming in and as of this writing, we have 74 dues paying members, of which about a third have been present at one or both of the two Galveston reunions. Officers and board members were elected at the Galveston meeting. At present, members of the board are working on a set of by-laws and other issues and planning the upcoming 2007 members meeting and reunion.

The Association affords troop carrier/tactical airlift veterans an unprecedented opportunity to establish and maintain contact with each other and to let the world know about our accomplishments. Until the Air Force consolidated all airlift into the Military Airlift Command after the Vietnam War, troop carrier and tactical airlift were distinct missions that were considered part of the combat mission of the United States Air Force, as the troop carrier mission had been in the Army Air Forces during World War II. Troop carriers have a distinct heritage entirely apart from that of the Army Air Transport Command-Military Air Transport Service-Military Airlift Command-Air Mobility Command lineage of the present-day military airlift mission. The formation of the TCTAA provides an opportunity to educate ourselves and others of that heritage. A copy of the registration form is included. Feel free to make copies to give to other troop carrier/tactical airlift vets.

The Troop Carrier Mission

Although some US Army Air Service personnel envisioned the use of airplanes to move troops into battle, it wasn't until World War II that the US Army realized the true potential of the transport airplane in the combat role. Experiments with airdropped and air-landed troops by the Soviets in the 1920s went practically unnoticed in the United States, and when the Germans used paratroopers, gliders and airlifted combat troops in their lightning advances through Europe in 1940, the US military was caught completely by surprise. The War Department immediately began developing a paratroop capability in the US Army and the Army Air Corps was ordered to provide transportation.

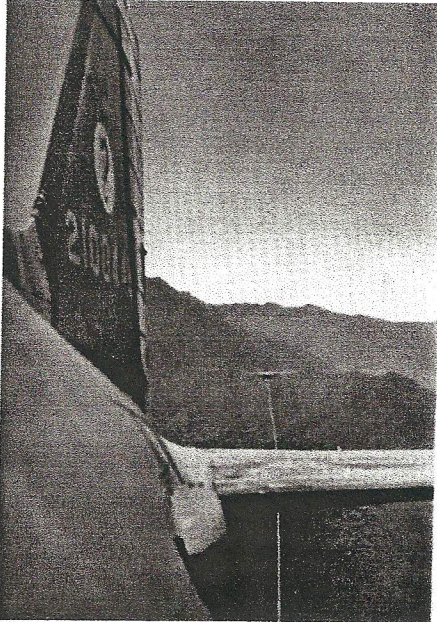


The US Army Air Corps had established its first air transport squadrons in the late 1920s as part of the 10th Air Transport Group at Wright Field, Ohio. The air transport mission was intended primarily to transport aircraft parts from Wright Field to operational bases, particularly in Panama. The Army naturally turned to the existing air transport organizations to provide the necessary aircraft to support the new paratrooper regiments, and in early 1941 Congress authorized the activation of a number of air transport groups. The War Department began purchasing Douglas DC-3s that had been modified for military use and designated either as C-47s, which were designed for troop and cargo transport, or as C-53s, which were a special version designed for paratroop use.

All of the air transport groups were still in training when the US entered the war, so it fell to newly organized squadrons in the Far East to pave the way for what developed into the troop carrier mission as we know it. The first air transport squadron was established in the Philippines during the first few days of the war, and when the Far East Air Forces was ordered to Australia, many of the pilots and their airplanes took them there. In February 1942

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the 21st and 22nd Air Transport Squadrons were organized with pilots who had made their way out of the Philippines and mechanics who had been intended for a bombardment group that had yet to arrive. A variety of airplanes were assigned to the two squadrons, including Lockheed Lodestars, Douglas DC-2s, a trio of converted B-24s and several war-weary B-17s that had come out of the Philippines. They performed truly heroic efforts delivering supplies to Java and Mindanao, and evacuating US military personnel who managed to make their way south from Luzon.



In April 1942 the Army Air Forces reorganized the air transportation mission and the former air transport units were redesignated as troop carrier. Troop carriers in the Southwest Pacific quickly established their importance as they transported ground combat troops into forward airfields and resupplied Australian troops operating in the rugged Owen-Stanley Mountains. When a third troop carrier squadron was established to operate a logistical route between Australia and Port Moresby in New Guinea, the 374th Troop Carrier Group was activated. With the arrival of a second troop carrier group from the United States, Fifth Air Force activated the 54th Troop Carrier Wing.

It wasn't until November 1942 that troop carriers went into action in the European Theater of Operations when C-47s and C-53s transported paratroopers from England to North Africa. The first troop carrier squadrons in the China-Burma-India theater were activated at the same time to provide air transportation for British and Chinese troops operating in eastern India and the mountains of northern Burma.

The troop carrier mission developed with the war. Although little thought had been given to using airplanes to support ground and air combat operations, by the end of 1942 troop carriers were dropping paratroopers, transporting ground troops into forward airfields, resupplying forward units and evacuating casualties from the battlefield to rear area hospitals.

As the importance of the troop carrier mission was realized, troop carrier commands were organized within the various numbered air forces. Prior to the invasion of Normandy, the IX Troop Carrier Command was organized as part of Ninth Air Force and grew to more than 1,000 transports, mostly C-47s. After the invasion and the creation of the First Allied Airborne Army, which included IX Troop Carrier Command, air transport groups that had formerly belonged to Eighth Air Force to support combat units were assigned the task of transporting supplies to ground forces in France.

World War II firmly established the troop carrier mission as part of the Army Air Forces, and when plans were made for the creation of the new United States Air Force, the troop carrier mission was designated to be part of the new Tactical Air Command, with troop carrier commands within the overseas air forces.

The troop carrier mission also became part of a military political effort. In June 1942 the Army had established the Air Transport Command as a command element to coordinate air transport routes operated primarily by civilian airlines under contract to the Army. As the war continued and it became apparent that fewer aircrew personnel would be needed for combat operations than expected, the excess pilots and other aircrew were made available to the ATC. By the end of the war, the ATC had become the largest airline in the world, and the professional military officers who served in staff positions saw an opportunity to create a new military mission. ATC officers began lobbying for the merging of the ATC and troop carrier missions, advocating that both were air transportation. They seized on testimony by General Paul Williams, a troop carrier commander, that the Army needed a long-range troop carrier aircraft to press for the assignment of the ATC to transport combat troops. Although no plans were made for the ATC to become part of the new Air Force, the ATC staff managed to convince Congress that they should be part of the Department of Defense, and although the War Department had not called for it, the writers of the mission statement for the

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new Military Air Transport Service included "deployment of troops" in the mission statement and the Secretary of the Air Force let it stand.

Less than a year after the Air Force became a separate service, the Berlin Airlift commenced. The Airlift was a troop carrier operation from start to finish, although the staff of the Airlift Task Force that was set up at Weisbaden was made up mostly of officers who had served with Lt. General William H. Tunner in India during the final year of World War II and who were TDY to USAFE from MATS. Started initially with C-47s assigned to the 60th Troop Carrier Wing in Europe, the C-47s were replaced with C-54s from troop carrier units in TAC and overseas, supplemented by MATS personnel on TDY status.

Troop carriers assumed another vastly important role in the Korean Conflict, which broke out in June 1950. Far East Air Forces C-47s and C-54s airlifted troops of the Eighth Army from Japan to Korea and operated routes into Korea for the duration of the conflict. A few weeks after the outbreak of fighting, TAC C-119s were deployed to Japan to supplement the C-47s and C-54s and to support the 187th Regimental Combat Team, an airborne unit that was sent to Japan. Other airlift capability was provided by C-46s that were called up from the reserves and sent to Japan. During the last year of the war, 315th Air Division, the unit established to control troop carrier operations in the Western Pacific, was operating huge four-engine C-124s.

In 1953 troop carrier operations were reorganized. Eighteenth Air Force was activated at Donaldson AFB, SC to control TAC's troop carrier wings. The military aerial port mission, which had formerly belonged to the Army, transferred to the Air Force and aerial port groups were set up at troop carrier bases in the United States and overseas. The aerial port units included cargo riggers, air freight and passenger service personnel and combat controllers, who had formerly been part of the Army airborne mission and called "pathfinders". The reorganization also saw the establishment of the aircrew loadmaster AFSC.

The military politicking continued, with the assignment of the C-124s as a focal point. Although the airplane had been developed to meet the TAC requirement for a long-range troop carrier transport, MATS commanders and staff officers, particularly General Tunner, insisted that the airplanes "belonged in MATS". Tunner found a new avenue for continuing his fight for air transportation consolidation when he became commander of United States Air Forces, Europe. During his tour in Europe, he devoted much of his time to laying the groundwork to have the 322nd Air Division, which had been designated as "combat cargo" along with the 315th Air Division in the Pacific, transferred to MATS. When he returned to the US, Tunner caught the ear of the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, South Carolina Congressman L. Mendel Rivers, and convinced him to hold a series of hearings on air transportation – which Tunner now referred to as "airlift". Tunner pressed for the development of new turbine powered long-range transports while continuing to press for consolidation of the air transport mission. He also saw to it that MATS staff officers were assigned to 322nd Air Division.

Tunner and the MATS staff were not the only military politicians with an eye on the troop carrier mission. Several aviation officers in the US Army were also pressing for the mission, and a special board of army officers chaired by the senior Army aviator, General Howze, concluded that the Army should be responsible for its own air transportation. The National Defense Act of 1947 that established the Air Force as a separate service stripped the Army of most of its aviation assets, including its troop carrier units. Howze and his staff wanted the mission back, and proposed to carry it out with helicopters and light transports, particularly the twin-engine Dehavilland CV-2 Caribou. They actually wanted their own C-130s but the Air Force insisted that the troop carrier mission was its sole responsibility. The Vietnam War would quickly prove that the Howze Board's recommendations regarding air transportation lacked merit.

The wars in Korea and Indochina led the US to adopt a new policy of intervention in conflicts in Third World countries before they escalated and spilled over into other countries within a region. DOD authorized the Composite Air Strike Force, an Army and Air Force team made up of TAC fighters and reconnaissance aircraft teamed with Army paratroops and light infantry with TAC troop carrier transports to deploy them to a region, then provide air transportation during the deployment. MATS was tasked with supplementing TAC transports by carrying larger items of cargo. The first CASF was deployed to Lebanon in 1958 after the assassination of the king of Iraq; a second went to the Far East barely a month later.

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The C-124 controversy was settled in 1958 when the TAC C-124 wings as well as C-124 squadrons in the Air Force Logistics Command were transferred to MATS. The former TAC units retained their troop carrier identity and the transfer was under the condition that they would return to TAC in the event of war and would support TAC requirements for outsize cargo. The loss of the C-124s was lessened by the delivery of new transports to TAC troop carrier squadrons as Fairchild C-123s and Lockheed C-130s entered the inventory.

In the early 1960s Tunner's dreams were realized as Congress authorized the establishment of a new command in the Air Force, with MATS being elevated to command status as the Military Airlift Command, which activated on January 1, 1966. The creation of MAC was designed to press for the eventual consolidation of all USAF air transportation. TAC and PACAF troop carrier units remained in their respective commands, but USAFE's 322nd Air Division transferred to MATS control several months before MAC activated. MAC also adopted the lineage of several of the World War II troop carrier groups that were no longer active and gave them to MATS air transport wings.

The introduction of American ground combat troops to the escalating war in South Vietnam once again saw troop carriers in combat. TAC C-123s had moved to South Vietnam in early 1962, and transferred to PACAF a year later while 315th Air Division C-130s were active both into and within the combat zone and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. President Lyndon Johnson elected to escalate the conflict in 1965 and eight TAC troop carrier squadrons were transferred to PACAF to beef-up 315th Air Division. A year later 834th Air Division was established in South Vietnam to control all air transportation within the country.

Shortly after the introduction of US ground combat troops the Army learned that its "air mobile" concept was ill-founded, that Army units were incapable of providing the kind of air transportation necessary to maintain a large combat force in the field. Air Force C-123s and C-130s could carry much larger loads into forward airfields as short as 2,500 feet in the case of the C-130s and 1,800 for the C-123s. The Army decided to give up its Caribous in exchange for guarantees from the Air Force that it would relinquish claims for battlefield helicopter operations. In August 1966 the Caribous transferred to the Air Force and became C-7s, thus giving troop carriers the ability to operate into airstrips as short as 1,200 feet.

With the establishment of MAC and the identification of the former MATS air transport units with former troop carrier wings, the command had paved the way for an eventual takeover of all military air transportation, which was now termed as "airlift." MAC referred to its fleet of transports, which was rapidly equipping with turbine powered transports, as "strategic airlifters." In mid-1967 the Air Force staff agreed to MAC suggestions that the troop carrier designation be done away with, and that the units responsible for the mission would be termed "tactical airlift." The change in designation coincided with an assumption of a larger role in intertheater transport for MAC, as MAC transports began transporting cargo from Japan, Okinawa and the Philippines into Southeast Asia, a mission that had formerly belonged to 315th Air Division. The division's C-130s, which included twelve squadrons in three wings, turned toward tactical transportation in Southeast Asia.

Tactical airlift operations in Southeast Asia, particularly in South Vietnam, proved its value, and convinced the senior officers running the war that it was a distinct mission that should remain separate from the logistical mission performed by MAC. Seventh Air Force commander General William Momyer wrote in his end-of-tour report that the necessity of tactical airlift remaining separate from the single-manager concept espoused by MAC was a major lesson of the conflict. MAC continued pressing for consolidation, and attempted to strengthen its case by assigning a handful of C-141s to in-country airlift operations to supplement the decreased C-130 force during the 1973 Communist Eastertide Offensive.

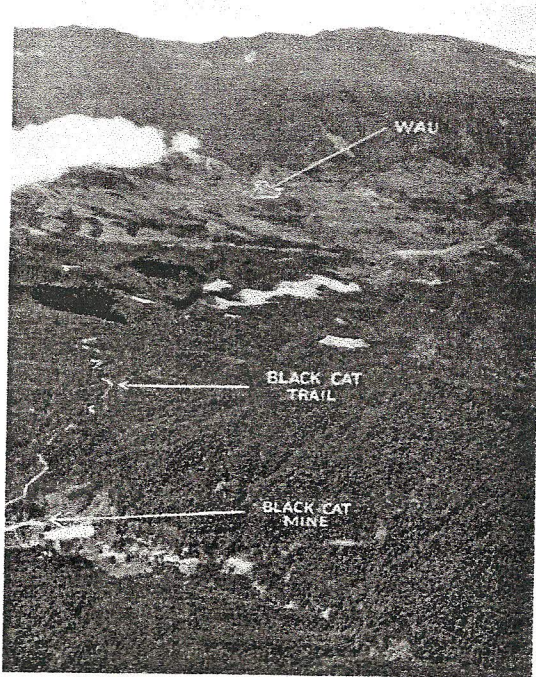
In the end it wasn't the claims of the MAC staff that led to the demise of the troop carrier mission, but rather financial concerns. An Air Force study concluded that the policy of maintaining separate aerial port facilities and equipment was a costly practice and that combining of the two missions would save money.

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Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Heritage

The troop carrier mission has a rich, but vastly unpublicized heritage. Few outside of the mission are aware of the roles played by troop carrier and tactical airlift flight crews in the various conflicts in which they have served. This is even true within the military community – several well-known aviation authors, including retired USAF officers, have attributed actions performed by troop carriers and tactical airlifters to the Air Transport Command, Military Air Service and Military Airlift Command. One of the Association purposes is to promote the troop carrier/tactical airlift heritage, and one way we will accomplish this is by publishing articles about specific missions such as the one about the reinforcement of Wau in 1942 and early 1943.

WAU



Since the troop carrier mission was first established in 1942, troop carrier and tactical airlift crews have been involved in a number of important missions of historical proportions. But only one troop carrier operation was credited with not only deciding the outcome of a battle, but with determining the direction of an entire campaign. That operation was the reinforcement of Wau during the Papuan Campaign in the battle for New Guinea in World War II.

The airstrip at Wau was located on the side of a ridge on the north side of the Owen-Stanleys, at the former location of the Black Cat Mine. It was an important location as it provided a base for Australian troops patrolling in Japanese territory south of Buna. The outpost was established in mid-1942 as part of an effort to reinforce Buna, but Japanese forces landed and occupied the town before Australian troops traveling overland over the rugged Kokoda Track could reach it. The troops at Wau had been airlifted in aboard troop carrier transports from the 21st and 22nd Troop Carrier Squadrons, which had been activated in Australia several months previously with an ad-hoc mixture of

airplanes ranging from Douglas C-47s and C-53s to converted B-17s and B-24s.

Throughout the fall of 1942 the force at Wau remained free of attack, but in early 1943 as the battle for Buna was drawing to an end, a large Japanese force was dispatched to capture the airstrip and rid the Japanese forces of a thorn in their side. General Douglas MacArthur, the senior Allied officer in the theater, responded by ordering an airlift of reinforcements to the camp. Over a four-day period in late January Fifth Air Force transports – including crews from the newly arrived 317th Troop Carrier Group as well as veterans from the 374th TCW, which had been established a few weeks previously – airlifted more than 2,000 Australian infantrymen into the airstrip at Wau. The fighting was intense. Japanese troops had reached the airfield and fighting was right on the perimeter. Aussie grenades drove the Japanese back long enough for the transports to land, and the fresh troops literally ran off of the airplanes with their guns blazing and went right into positions around the field.

The reinforcement of Wau was complicated by severe tropical weather characterized by strong thunderstorms that built up over the mountains and dumped several inches of rain on the airstrip. Yet, in spite of the presence of enemy troops on the perimeter and thunderstorms all around, the troop carrier crews continued landing on the soggy strip, bringing in reinforcements who eventually prevailed and drove the Japanese back into the jungle. Wau was the first time in history that US troop carriers played the crucial role in deciding the outcome of a battle, but it was also much more. The defeat of the Japanese at Wau brought the Papuan Campaign to an end as Buna fell to American and Australian troops a few days later.

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The official history of the United States Army credited the troop carrier squadrons of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing with deciding the campaign.

General George C. Kenney

All military missions have their personalities, individuals who made major contributions that formulated the mission as a whole. No doubt the dominant personality of the troop carrier/tactical airlift mission is General George C. Kenney, General Douglas MacArthur's chief of staff for air and the commander of Fifth Air Force and Far East Air Forces in World War II. No other individual made as important a contribution.



A native of Massachusetts, George Churchill Kenney was born in Nova Scotia. Educated at MIT, the future general entered the US Army Air Service in 1917, and served as a Scout pilot over the trenches in France. After the war Captain Kenney remained in the Army, spending most of his career in research and development. In 1940 he went to Europe as a military observer to gain first-hand experience and suggest changes to the US military. In July 1942 he was ordered to Australia to take his place on General Douglas MacArthur's staff.

Kenney's experience led him to develop ideas apart from those of the typical Army aviator of the day when the four-engine bomber was the favorite weapon. Among his ideas was the concept of using airplanes to move troops into combat and support them on the battlefield, and to provide mobility to combat air forces. He arrived in Australia where two troop carrier squadrons, the 21st and 22nd, had been established and were engaged in aerial resupply missions supporting Australian troops fighting on the Kokoda Track in the rugged Owen-Stanley Mountains. Kenney recognized that the rugged terrain of New Guinea presented an excellent opportunity to use airplanes to overcome natural obstacles, and he also realized that they could be used to gain time.

Shortly after Kenney's arrival in Australia, MacArthur decided to move the US Army 32nd Division forward from Australia to New Guinea. The move was more for morale purposes than anything else – the Aussie soldiers fighting the war were upset that the Americans were safe in Australia and entertaining their wives and girlfriends. Kenney saw an opportunity, and convinced MacArthur to allow him to move a regiment of troops by air. He gathered up every transport he could find, even pressing newly arrived ferry crews in brand-new B-17s into service for the move. The move exceeded expectations as the regiment was in place at Port Moresby before the ship carrying the first regiment to be deployed had left port. MacArthur was excited, and allowed Kenney to also move the third regiment by air.

With the 32nd Division in New Guinea, Kenney developed Operation HATRACK, an invasion of contested territory on the north side of the Owen Stanleys entirely by air. He was opposed by the rest of the staff, in part because they believed transports needed to support the outpost at Wau would be diverted. MacArthur listened, and authorized the move. A former missionary located a level spot of ground at Wanigela Mission and recruited natives to cut out a landing strip with machetes long enough to accommodate a C-47 or Lockheed C-60. It was not the first troop lift in American history – the 21st TCS had moved an antiaircraft battery from Brisbane to Darwin earlier in the year – but it was the first time US transports had moved combat troops into a forward landing strip and the first US military campaign launched with the idea of using airplanes to provide mobility to combat forces. Once the American and Australian troops were in position, they were kept supplied almost entirely by air, in part because the Japanese navy still controlled the waters offshore.

In November 1942 Kenney activated the 374th Troop Carrier Group, with four troop carrier squadrons assigned. The third squadron, the 6th TCS, had been established to provide logistical support for combat squadrons operating from a forward operating location at Port Moresby. The squadron airlifted rations and supplies from Australia to Port Moresby, and the men soon adopted the name "Bully Beef Express." When the 317th Troop Carrier Group arrived from the United States, Kenney activated the 54th Troop Carrier Wing.

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One of the highlights of the war in New Guinea was the airborne capture of the Japanese airfield at Nadzab in the Markham Valley. Kenney laid the groundwork for the attack by using his troop carrier squadrons to establish a forward airfield in the upper reaches of the valley near the village of Marlinan. Troop carriers brought in supplies which were transported by Jeeps and trailers from an existing airstrip to the construction site a couple of miles away. To improve the ground transportation, Kenney's troop carriers proved their resourcefulness by cutting Army trucks in half so they could be loaded into a C-47, then reassembling the two parts when they arrived. The idea quickly spread and all of the trucks in the theater were modified so could be split for air transport then bolted together at their destination. The concept was adopted in other theaters, particularly the China-Burma-India theater where a massive "air ferry" was underway moving supplies from India to China.

Once the airstrip at Marlinan was completed, the troop carriers brought in Australian ground troops to position them for rapid airlift into the airfield at Nadzab after it was captured by paratroopers. The airborne assault took place on September 5, 1942 with Kenney and MacArthur observing the entire "show" from overhead in a circling B-17. Just before the drop, a large formation of modified B-25 gunships came in at tree-top level and strafed the startled defenders. They were followed by a flight of A-20s laying a smoke screen for the drop. The entire operation unfolded like clockwork, and the Japanese were so overwhelmed that the airfield was in American hands in minutes. After dropping the troops, the C-47s departed for Marlinan to pick up a load of Australian infantry to exploit the airhead and attack southeastward toward Lae, which was under attack by American and Allied troops moving on the city from the south.

Kenney quickly realized that troop carriers were an integral part of modern air warfare and considered them as important to his plans as the fighter and bomber squadrons under his command. He developed tactics that used troop carriers to support ground forces fighting to secure terrain for airfields, then moved in the air units and kept them supplied until land and sea lines of supply could be established. The makeup of the Far East Air Forces set the pattern for the organization of the post-war US Air Forces through the Vietnam War.

Personalities

We are blessed with many personalities within our own organization, people who have had distinguished military careers or who have achieved notoriety in civilian life. Two such people are Colonel Don Strobaugh and Lt. Colonel Richard "Dick" Herman.

Don Strobaugh's military career reads like a history of the troop carrier mission of the 1960s. A combat control officer who served with several aerial port units in the US and overseas, Don was with the 5th Aerial Port at Evreux, France in 1964 when the US and Belgium launched Operations DRAGON ROUGE and DRAGON NOIR in the Congo. Accompanied by an enlisted radio repairman, then-Captain Strobaugh went into Stanleyville with the Belgians – they were forbidden from jumping due to possible propaganda value – and remained on the ground until the operation was concluded. Then they repeated the operation at Paulis.

In 1968 Major Strobaugh went to Vietnam where he was chief of the combat control section of the 8th Aerial Port Group. Although his tour was cut short by the death of his wife, he was in Vietnam during the most volatile days of the war for American forces. He supervised the installation of the Ground Proximity Extraction System equipment at Khe Sanh and recorded in his diary how that not a single egg in a crate on the first pallet to be dropped was broken. He helicoptered into A Loi airfield in the A Chau Valley to control drops in Operation DELAWARE, and risked his life to search for survivors of a crashed C-130, an act that earned him the prestigious Airman's Medal. In 1973, now a colonel, Don commanded the MAC ALCE team at Lod Airport in Israel during the 1973 October War and the massive US airlift that enabled the Israelis to turn the war around. Don is retired in Arizona.

Dick Herman is also a retired USAF officer, and while he had his own distinguished career as a navigator in C-124s in MATS and C-130s at Naha, Okinawa before going into fighters, his notoriety is as a successful military novelist. Dick's first novel, WAR BIRDS, foretells the realities of the early Twenty-first Century, as he describes a USAF operation in an unspecified country in the Middle East. His original novel

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has been followed by several others. Look in the paperback section of most bookstores and you will find them. Dick is now retired in Sacramento, California.

Address List

The membership year of the Association begins on January 1 and continues through December 31, with membership dues becoming delinquent on March 31. The first newsletter of each calendar year will include a current membership list. Please do not use this list for anything other than personal purposes. The names of new members will appear in future issues as they are added.

Contributions

Contributions to this newsletter are encouraged and needed. If you have a story you would like to tell, an anecdote, a picture, anything that would be of interest to our readers, send it to us either by mail at the address shown on the cover page or by Email to SEMCGowanJr@aol.com.

Editor

The position of newsletter editor and webmasters are expected to be permanent positions that will be filled by appointment by the board of directors from volunteers. At present, the newsletter is published, edited and bottle-washed by Sam McGowan, who has also been handling the non-official web site at www.airlifthomecoming.com. While I am willing to continue these duties, I am also more than willing to relinquish responsibility for either or both to anyone who would be interested.

Web Site

At the present time, the TCTAA does not have an official web site of our own. Temporarily, we are using the site previously set up by Bob Ruffin to promote the Troop Carrier Homecoming reunions held in Galveston in 2005 and 2006. The airlifthomecoming.com domain is paid for through 2008 at least, but it is probably in our best interest to purchase our own domain in the not too distant future. A possible domain might be www.tctaa.org or something similar.

By-Laws

The TCTAA was organized under a set of temporary by-laws until permanent by-laws can be written and adopted by the membership at the 2008 Members Meeting. A draft of proposed by-laws is available on the [airlifthomecoming](http://airlifthomecoming.com) website. Board member and troop carrier veteran Ace Bowman is in charge of writing the permanent by-laws. Send any comments to him by Email at aceplace@clearwire.net.

Annual Members Meeting

The Association will be having annual members meetings, starting with our first meeting in November at the Casa Del Mar hotel in Galveston. In addition to conducting Association business, the annual meetings will provide an opportunity for members to get together. Future meeting places will be decided upon based on proposals submitted by the membership. Considering the purpose and membership of our organization, reunion sites should have some connection to the military and/or the troop carrier mission, which might include access to a nearby military base or the presence of a military aviation oriented museum. In order to insure the success of the meeting, it is important that it be held at a location where there are local Association members available to be responsible for or assist with event planning, etc. The Little Rock area has been suggested as the location for the 2008 meeting, due to the proximity to Little Rock Air Force Base, which is now the only active military installation with a direct connection to the troop carrier/tactical airlift mission due to recent base closures and realignments. If you would like to sponsor a future meeting in your location, be prepared to make a presentation at the 2007 meeting.

Non-Profit Status

All members should be reminded that the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association is organized as a 501C(19) veterans organization, which means that we have no political purpose. It is VERY important that members not use the membership list, any Email groups of Association members, newsletters or any other avenue of the Association for any form of political purpose. This includes but is not limited to the forwarding of Emails, etc. with a distinctly political purpose, no matter how it may be disguised.