
The Airlifter Volume XXIV



The Airlifter

Newsletter of the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association

Promoting and preserving the troop carrier/tactical airlift heritage

www.troopcarrier.org

May 14, 2014

Volume XXIV

Finances

Our current bank balance is \$8775. We loaned \$1,400 to a special account that was set up to handle convention funds. Jim Esbeck had just set up the account with a Bank of America branch in Tucson but needed to maintain a balance of \$1,500 to avoid a \$12.00 monthly service charge so we made the loan to supplement the \$100.00 Jim opened the account with. As of the last report, Jim had \$3,330 in that account, which includes the \$1,400 loan and \$275.00 in dues. We just received a \$1,000 contribution from Boeing which we are applying to the balance of \$1,900 owed to the Association account (the \$1,400 plus the \$500 we paid as a deposit with the hotel. Once the deposit is made, we will have \$8,750 in our primary account. With the \$3,330 in the convention account, we currently have a total of \$12,050 cash on hand as of this writing.

Convention – Less than Six Months Away!

Our convention has moved from the planning to the registration phase, and registrations are coming in. As Jim Esbeck receives the registration forms, we are putting the names on the web site (there is an asterisk by those who have paid the registration fee.) Currently, we have registrations from eight members along with four spouses, for a total of an even dozen. The numbers will increase as the date approaches. However, be aware that there is a cutoff of September 1 for the special rate at the hotel. After that date, reservations at the reunion rate will not be guaranteed. Details on the convention plus links to convention information and the registration forms are at www.troopcarrier.org/convention.html.

We are sad to learn that Dick Sell, our planned convention speaker, reports that he is unable to attend due to health issues and we are working on a replacement.

Election

The ballots are in and the officers and board members up for reelection were all elected by acclamation. George Dockery, Mike Welch, Sam McGowan, Hector Leyva, Bobby Gassiot and Jim Esbeck all continue as chairman, president, secretary and board members respectively. The names and Emails of all officers and board members are available on the Association web site.

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



Fred Horky

One of our newest members is Fred Horky, who flew C-123s and C-130s at Pope before moving on to other things, including a tour with 834th Air Division as a TALO in Vietnam. The photograph above is his crew at Pope. Standing are Ken Lightle, flight mechanic, and Warren McKnight, loadmaster. Kneeling are Jim Richards, copilot; Bill Whitaker, nav and Fred. Fred, who was recruited by Bill Kehler, sent a write-up of his experiences. Here it is, slightly edited:

My trash hauling experience started out of pilot training in April 1956. I'd gone through jet training but graduation came during a period of post-Korea drawdown, not unlike now but not nearly as severe as it is now and promises to be worse. In any event, flying assignment opportunities were curtailed and some of my classmates at out of Webb (Big Spring, Texas) didn't even get flying assignments, so I felt fortunate to get Troop Carrier since I hadn't gone career status at that time. Of course, little did I know that the first assignment out of pilot training often sets the course for everything that follows!

Anyway, my first assignment was in the 778th TCS, 464th TCW at Pope, with "G" model dollar nineteens. Not long after I arrived, we were told that Pope would be the first to convert to the then brand-new C-130A; in fact, two of our pilots, Jim Brenton and Tom Hines, were among the first to go to Marietta for the factory checkout since there was no C-130 school squadron yet. They came back singing the praises of the Herk. Then Mother Air Force lowered the boom and said that Pope would get C-123s instead. There was a near mutiny at Pope; in fact, I remember the wing commander calling ALL of the pilots into the base theater and, in no uncertain terms, told us that were to shut up, quit complaining, "love" the C-123 and most definitely "... NOT call it The Glider". Unquote.

The 776th had already converted, the 777th was working on it but I thought I'd escaped the airplane that was then the butt of all jokes when in mid-1958 my engineering degree influenced my getting an assignment to missiles. You have to remember that this was just after Sputnik and the "Space Race", when missiles were the hot button career in the USAF. The assignment was to the brand new Mace surface to surface missile. To make a long story short, I had a great tour with first a year in the States, starting (at) Lowry in Denver for tech training then Orlando in Florida for crew training followed by an extended TDY to Holloman AFB in New Mexico for live launches. Then there followed a three-year tour deploying the new missile system to Sembach in Germany where I worked hard and played harder; went over a bachelor and came back married.

At Sembach I'd flown ye old Gooney Bird and then with a detachment of specialized T-birds. That involved being "simulated missiles" to train ground missile radar controllers. Great flying but I wanted back to a real cockpit job with a pilot

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

AFSC. I got that; back to the same base, the same squadron and in the same building I'd left four years earlier, only this time I'd fly the C-123 for sure. On arrival I learned a lot of my old friends (Pete Austen, etc.) were still assigned there but on long-TDY to some place called "Vietnam". I rotated back in July 1962. Didn't get checked out in the C-123 but participated anyway in the Cuban missile crisis, where we about sank Florida under the weight of airplanes. Also helped integrate the University of Mississippi. Sure enough, it wasn't but a few months more (April '63) that I herded a C-123 across the four-engine ocean to Danang as part of Pope's last 6 month deployment.

After all that fun we left the airplanes there for a brand new PCS squadron forming in place, and I got back with Pope already starting conversion to brand-new C-130Es. Once through the school and with a new crew, we were EVERYWHERE for a very intense 1964 and 1965, which included a PACAF deployment which didn't count for credit since we weren't based-in-country, going to the Congo, coming back and going to Europe with a "rotation" squadron, flying all over Europe, and then back to the Congo with the Belgians for the Dragon Rouge operations.

At the end of 1965 I was assigned to flight test at the big depot at Robins AFB; which included going to Tinker for the C-141 school; at Robins I was flying flight test on all models of the C-130 AND the C-141. While there I was selected for AFIT graduate school (without having applied) but because my first Vietnam tour at Danang had been less than six months and the C-130 time didn't count for time in country, I had to go back to Vietnam to complete a year before going to grad school. It was supposed to be an ops slot at 834th Air Division at Tan Son Nhut but on arrival my previous -123 and -130 time "in country" earned me the booby prize of becoming a TALO...tactical airlift liaison officer...in my case with the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. Lots of fun and games in 'Nam again as I had arrived in time for Tet of '68. Meanwhile, because it had been such a short fuse on each end, a few months later my wife had to use my orders to arrange the PCS move, sell the house in Warner Robins, rent another house in Atlanta; all while I was still in a damn leaky tent with the 25th Division and getting rocketed about every day. When I rotated back in June for grad school, I arrived in Atlanta the same day I left Bien Hoa.

Going directly from Cu Chi to Georgia Tech as something of a cultural shock. While in school at Tech I talked my way out of "excused" status to fly with the Dobbins AFB Base Flight's two Gooney Birds, strictly as relief from the pressure cooker that Mother Tech was/is.

After finishing Tech and the maintenance officer course at Chanute, I went to Little Rock where I was in maintenance and flying C-130 FEFs on the side. From Little Rock I PCSed to an advisory job with the Venezuelan Air Force...fortunately much different circumstances than now in that screwed-up country. I retired out of there. Worked for awhile at Lockheed on a "black program".....they informally called it "Skunk Works - East" but after awhile I decided I really didn't need that.

That's about it; all about me in two pages.

Recruiting

Our hat goes off to our vice-president Bill Kehler for his extensive recruiting efforts. Bill sent out an Email with membership applications to a large number of his military buddies and we received several new members, including Fred Horky and Irl Franklin, as a result. He, along with Hector Leyva, Ralph Bemis and other members, set up a recruiting booth at a recent Vietnam Veterans Day at the Jackson Military Museum in Jacksonville, Arkansas where they attracted about

a dozen new members. Way to go Bill! We need to make you Membership Chairman!

Recruiting new members is the key to the health and longevity of our organization. Because we are not connected to a specific military organization, the only way to spread the word about who we are is by word-of-mouth, or by Email, letter or phone call to be specific. Let us all follow Bill's example and recruit our own airlifter buddies. Incidentally, we now have enough members in the Little Rock area to form a local chapter.

Membership Meetings, Convention or Whatever You Want to Call It

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

There has been some recent discussion among a few members as to what to call our biennial meetings. Our by-laws say only that we will hold periodic meetings of the membership as part of our goal of promoting camaraderie among airlift veterans at a time and place designated by the Board of Directors. Originally, we planned to hold a meeting once a year but at our 2008 meeting it was suggested and the members voted to meet every two years. When Andy Vaquera and Hector Leyva were putting together the 2008 meeting, they started calling it a “convention,” which is an appropriate term since a meeting is a convening of the membership, and we have been using it ever since.

However, it is important for all of us to understand that other than maintaining a business atmosphere for the handling of funds, we are basically an informal organization. We have officers whose duties are to conduct Association business and a Board of Directors to maintain fiduciary responsibility to the membership. We are a 501c (19) veterans organization with designation as a wartime veterans organization, and with this designation we are required to conduct Association business (i.e., the spending of Association funds) according to our by-laws.

With that said, one of the primary purposes of our get-togethers is just that, for the membership and those who wish to become part of our organization and guests to assemble somewhere to renew acquaintances, make new ones and generally have fun. Although we haven’t been calling our meetings “reunions,” that is essentially what they are. In fact, when we first organized, we did so with the intention of putting on a periodic function somewhere where veterans of various organizations could meet with us and have their own reunion rather than having to go to the time and expense of finding their own place and making arrangements for accommodations and food and, at the same time, allow their members to renew acquaintances with people they had known in other assignments.

In many respects, our biennial meetings really are reunions, but instead of being a reunion of say, for example, the 464th Troop Carrier Wing, they are a reunion of the tactical airlift family. For that is what we are; not a family in the sense that we are all descended from a common ancestor somewhere back in time, but a family in the sense that we have shared experiences regardless of whatever squadron or wing we happened to be assigned to at the time.

News Flash! The 815th is No More! Neither is the 345th!



As I was sitting here kicked back in my Lazy Boy working on the newsletter on my laptop, I got an Email from member Howard Worthy advising that the 815th Airlift Squadron at Kessler has inactivated. Apparently, the latest BRAC decided to shut down the Air Force Reserve squadron and its associated active-duty 345th AS and move their complement of ten C-130Js to Pope. Apparently the inactivation is taking place, with the airplanes scheduled to depart Kessler in the next few weeks. According to news articles, the active-duty 345th Airlift Squadron has already had an unofficial deactivation ceremony and its personnel are moving to other stations.

Both squadrons have a long history in the troop carrier/tactical airlift mission dating back to the Korean War when the 345th was initially activated as part of the 516th Troop Carrier Group at Memphis Municipal Airport in 1949 and the 815th activated as part of the 483rd Troop Carrier Group at Ashiya AB, Japan on January 1, 1953. The 483rd was the permanent unit for C-119s assigned to Far East Air Forces. It operated C-119s under 315th Air Division until 1958 when the wing’s squadrons transitioned to C-130As.

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



When Ashiya closed, the 483rd inactivated and the 815th moved to Tachikawa where it remained until December 1969 when the squadron inactivated. For most of its existence as a C-130A squadron, the 815th was assigned directly under 315th Air Division. When 315th AD was scheduled for inactivation, the 815th transferred to the 374th Tactical Airlift Wing. On April 25, 1973 the squadron reactivated at Keesler AFB, Mississippi as a reserve component and has been there since, most recently as part of the 403rd Operations Group.

The 345th deactivated on January 1, 1953 in Memphis, then reactivated at Sewart AFB, Tennessee in 1955 as a helicopter squadron equipped with H-19 and H-21 helicopters. (I remember seeing one of the squadron's H-21s flying low over our farm the next day after a T-33 crashed about ten miles to the west.) When the Army succeeded in its quest to keep the Air Force from developing troop carrying helicopters, the squadron inactivated again but then reactivated a few months later and equipped with C-123s. In 1961 the squadron equipped with C-130As and transferred briefly to Naha AB, Okinawa. (There is some question about this transfer. The 1961 assignment may have been a TDY. According to members of the squadron, the 345th left Sewart in 1963 and when they reached the International Date Line, it became the 35th Troop Carrier Squadron.) In 1963 the squadron activated at Dyess AFB, Texas as part of the 516th Troop Carrier Wing. In December 1965 the 345th was Dyess' contribution to a transfer of eight Tactical Air Command C-130 squadrons to PACAF. After a few months at Naha, the squadron joined the 314th TCW at Ching Chuan Kang AB, Taiwan. On December 1, 1973 the 345th transferred to Kadena AB, Okinawa where it remained until September 1975 when it transferred to Yokota AB, Japan. In 1993 the squadron was placed on the inactive rolls until August 2010 when it activated at Keesler.

It's sad to see these two squadrons go.

Note – There seems to be a lot of back and forth over where the ten C-130Js are going. Air Force plans were originally to move them to Pope, to replace the C-130Hs that have been selected for retirement. However, there seems to have been a change in plans and they are now destined to go to Little Rock. At the same time, Mississippi's Congressional delegation is fighting to keep them at Keesler.

The 64th Troop Carrier Wing



One of the few World War II troop carrier groups still active in the modern U.S. Air Force is the 64th, one of the first transport groups to see combat in the European Theater of Operations. During the years since, the unit has been bounced around by the Air Force like a basketball, but is currently active as an air expeditionary group in Saudi Arabia.

The 64th originally activated at Duncan Field, Texas in December 1940 with the 16th, 17th and 18th Transport Squadrons. The following year it moved to March Field, California where it was based when the United States entered World War II. In February 1942 it transferred to Hamilton Field, California (which may be an indication that it was planned to move to the Pacific since Hamilton was a jumping off point for westbound flights.) The group was identified for

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

assignment to the ETO and moved across the country to Westover Field, Massachusetts in preparation for its move to England where it arrived in August 1942 and was based at Ramsbury. After operating a variety of aircraft in its previous assignments, the 64th equipped with brand new Douglas C-47s after it arrived at Westover. It also received a fourth squadron, the 35th TCS.

The Allies were making plans for a new offensive in North Africa, which would include an invasion of French North Africa. About the time that the 64th arrived in the U.K., the War Department decided to establish a new air force for duty in North Africa and gave it the designation of Twelfth Air Force. The 64th and two other troop carrier groups that had been deployed to the U.K. were earmarked for it. On November 9, 1942 the group left England with British paratroopers bound for Algiers. Part of the group flew down the following day. Although the paratroops were prepared to jump in, the lack of French resistance led to landings. The 64th was involved in a handful of airborne operations in Africa but, along with the other two groups, performed primarily in logistical operations in support of Twelfth Air Force's fighter groups, which were operating from forward airfields in the North African desert, and American and British ground forces. One of the group's missions was the evacuation of wounded to rear area hospitals.

After the capture of Tunis, the 64th and the other two groups and two new groups that had arrived from the U.S. began training for airborne operations as part of Operation HUSKY, the upcoming invasion of the island of Sicily. Although the initial airborne operation over Sicily was plagued by high winds and "friendly fire" from Allied ships, the 64th completed its mission without the loss of a single airplane. Once airfields on the island had been secured, the 64th moved to Sicily where it provided air transport and trained with paratroopers. On September 14 and 15, the 64th dropped paratroopers from the 509th Regimental Combat Team at Avelino in support of the Allied invasion of Italy at Salerno. In January the 64th delivered supplies to Allied troops at Anzio and evacuated casualties.

On April 1, 1944 the group commander received an order to depart the following day for temporary duty practically on the other side of the world in India. He initially thought it was an April Fool prank but learned that it was no joke. The next morning the group's C-47s began departing for Gaya, India where they began operations in support of Allied troops in Burma and the Indian Frontier five days later. The 64th spent most of the next three months flying men and supplies into forward airfields and dropping supplies to British Commonwealth troops and the American composite force commanded by Brigadier General Frank Merrill. Not only were the Allies mounting an offensive in Burma, they were defending against a Japanese offensive in the Indian Frontier. It was during this stint that Captain Hal Scrugman of the 17th TCS was credited with a Japanese Zero (see our last issue.) The 64th was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for its service in the China-Burma-India area of operations.

In June the 64th returned to Sicily. While most of the American troop carrier groups in the Mediterranean transferred to England to form the nucleus of the new IX Troop Carrier Command, the 64th remained in Italy for the duration of the war except for a few weeks of operations in Southern France. On August 15th and 16th the 64th dropped paratroops and towed gliders in support of Operation DRAGOON, the invasion of the French Riviera. The 64th operated from airfields in France in September, but returned to Italy the following month. For the remainder of the war, the 64th supported partisans operating in the Balkans, evacuated downed aircrews and other Allied personnel from behind enemy lines. The group flew the last paratrooper operation of the war in Europe when it dropped Italian paratroopers in Italy's Po Valley in April 1945. After the German surrender, the 64th was reassigned to the Air Transport Command for the movement westbound and was stationed in Trinidad.

The group inactivated in July 1945 and remained inactive for almost two years. On May 19, 1947 the group reactivated at Langley, where it remained until September 1948, when it inactivated again. Four years later the group reactivated as the 64th Troop Carrier Wing on July 14, 1952 at Donaldson AFB, South Carolina where it equipped with Fairchild C-82s. The following year the C-82s were replaced by C-119s. Two

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

years later the wing was again inactivated and remained inactive for nine years.

In 1960 the Air Force decided to move some of the remaining C-130As from Sewart Air Force Base, Tennessee where the 314th and 463rd Troop Carrier Wings were equipping with C-130Bs, to Dyess AFB, Texas. The 64th TCW reactivated on October 24, 1960 but didn't organize until the following February when the first C-130s arrived at Dyess. The 17th TCS was equipped with the C-130Ds that had formerly been assigned to the 61st TCS at Sewart while the 18th flew conventional C-130As. (The remaining C-130As had transferred to squadrons in France and the Far East.) In 1963 Dyess started receiving C-130Es. For some reason, the 64th was once again inactivated although the two squadrons remained active. The 17th transferred to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska while the 18th returned to Sewart where it remained until the 317th TCW transferred to Lockbourne AFB, Ohio from Evreux and the 18th joined it in Ohio. Although the 35th was never at Dyess, it reactivated in January 1963 at Naha AB, Okinawa with C-130As and personnel from a squadron that had been at Sewart as the 345th TCS. (The 345th went to Dyess as part of the new 516th Troop Carrier Wing that activated there.)

The 64th was on the inactive rolls for three more years, but in early 1966 the 314th Troop Carrier Wing headquarters transferred to PACAF to become the parent unit for three squadrons of TAC C-130Es that had transferred to 315th Air Division. Two squadrons, the 61st and 62nd, remained at Sewart. A new wing activated at Sewart as the 64th Troop Carrier Wing and a third squadron activated as the 34th TCS. With the reassignment of an even dozen TAC C-130 squadrons to PACAF, there was an increased need for C-130 RTUs and the 64th became responsible for one of two RTUs dedicated to training crews for C-130Bs and Es (the B and E model are basically the same airplane) in addition to supporting Tactical Air Command overseas deployments and military training operations in the U.S. When Sewart closed in 1970, the 64th transferred to Little Rock. The following year the Air Force began downsizing the C-130 force in the Far East. Although the C-130 wing at CCK remained active while the other C-130 wings inactivated, the 314th designation transferred to Little Rock. (The CCK wing received the designation of the inactivated 374th Tactical Airlift Wing.)

Although the 64th was no longer a tactical airlift organization, the wing returned to active status a year later when the designation was given to the pilot training wing at Reese AFB, Texas. The 64th Flying Training Wing, which included the 35th Training Squadron, actually enjoyed its longest active duty stint as it remained active until September 30, 1997 when Reese closed and the wing once again inactivated. In September 2005 the 64th Air Expeditionary Group in Saudi Arabia where it provides support to Air Force combat units.

Mactan

During the Vietnam War, it was often said that Mactan Air Base, Philippines was the best-kept secret in the Air Force. Actually, the only thing secret about Mactan was that the U.S. had built a 10,000-foot concrete runway and parking ramp there in the 1950s to serve as an emergency base for SAC bombers returning from nuclear strikes in China and the Soviet Union during the "Cold War." Located just off of Cebu City, the Philippines' second-largest city, Mactan is a tiny island most famous as the place where the Spanish explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, met his doom during a battle with Filipinos led by Chief Laupaulapua, for which the town on the island is named. Magellan was involved with the chief's sister and he wasn't happy about it.

In the summer of 1965 the United States was building up air strength in the Pacific to support the escalating war in Vietnam. The Air Force decided to establish a "bare base" on Mactan to take advantage of the runway. A Philippine Air Force F-86 squadron was based on the field but the only permanent structures were the base operations building and the PAF BOQ, both of which were located on the flight line. In

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

preparation for opening the air base, the Air Force deployed a civil engineering team to the island to construct temporary facilities to serve the C-130 squadron that would be moving in to set up shop.



LAGOON NEXT TO BEACH ON MACTAN

The squadron selected for the deployment was the 779th TCS at Pope. The 779th had been selected the year before to equip with a modified version of the C-130E equipped with the Fulton Recovery System and to train for a new mission of supporting insurgents and Allied military teams operating inside hostile territory.

(There are photographs of the first C-130E(I) delivered to Pope before it was painted, but I unfortunately was unable to find one. This photograph is from the 1970s-80s.)

The crews were told during the briefing for the deployment that TAC wanted to send the squadron on one last deployment as a conventional troop carrier squadron so they could gain a little more combat experience. When they returned to Pope, they would begin

training for the new mission.*

Although I was in the 779th, I was not part of the deployment because I was DNIF. The operations crew would remain at Pope to close out the squadron, then deploy several days later. The operations loadmaster, Atwell Wiley, went over with my crew (kicking and screaming all the way because he originally wasn't supposed to deploy for some reason) and I was to come over with his crew. As I recall, Wiley jumped on an airplane bound for Clark to get a ride back to the States as soon as he found out we were inbound. Wiley would later make a name for himself in the special operations community. By the time I got there, the squadron had settled in and was heavily involved in Southeast Asia operations. Just before I got there, they went to Qui Nhon to airlift the 1st Cavalry Division to their new base at An Khe. That invoked some surprise on



C-130E (I) the part of the Army troops because we had dropped the entire division at Fort Benning just before they left to board the ship that took them over. The squadron had also started a rotation to Bangkok, and had flown a rescue mission of a sort to Dacca, Pakistan to evacuate Americans from the embassy.

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



TENT CITY

use to sleeping in tents and eating out of mess kits! A single club had been built in what had been designated as the U.S. base. I believe it was called The Breezeway. It was an all-ranks club and officers and enlisted men socialized together, although a special section for officers was added while we were there. My recollection is that most of the officers preferred to stay out front. Except for a few of the AC's who managed to get rooms in the PAF BOQ, everyone lived in Tent City in jungle hooches with canvas roofs. They really weren't tents, but were wooden structures with wire screen sides but the civil engineers used tents to cover them. Each tent had a wooden floor and some had a front porch, although I believe the porches were erected by some of the crewmembers who had carpenter skills. Our tent had a couple of Adirondack chairs on the porch and a table inside that one of the engineers (Hall) had made. Each tent held six men. We slept on metal cots with mosquito netting over them. Each tent had a houseboy who shinned our shoes, took care of our laundry, made the beds and swept out the hooch. The one in our tent was Joe. He

The guys arrived at Mactan to discover a partially setup "tent city" along with a tropical chow hall – with Bunsen burners heating water in garbage cans behind the building to wash the mess kits that everyone ate from. Since TAC flight crews were issued a mobility kit, everyone had a mess kit and utensils, canteen, an air mattress and other goodies such as a pistol belt and holster and weapons harness. We even had a steel pot. The air mattresses came in handy at the pristine beach where we spent a good deal of our time when we weren't flying. I never heard the griping about the mess kits and garbage cans at Mactan that I would hear the following year when I was flying out of Cam Ranh Bay. After all, we were TAC-trained killers and were

was sixteen and an orphan.



PONDS ON MACTAN

limits bar in Cebu and escorted back to the base. Nothing came off it. We were fair-haired boys with our CO, Col. Rodney Newbold. I think he did say something to Captain Shoupe and Sweet about setting a bad example for Airman McGowan – I was a 2-striper at the time. Col. Newbold flew with us a lot, perhaps so he could keep an eye on us. The one bar that we usually went to had a bevy of girls, but they weren't bar girls in the sense of those at Clark or Okinawa. They were not whores, and if anyone ever got one to sleep with him, I never heard anything about it. I fell in love with one

Other than the club and the beach, the only entertainment was the open air theater which showed nightly movies. It was great, unless a tropical thunderstorm passed over the island. There were only a handful of bars on Mactan and most of them were off-limits because they were on the waterfront and populated by merchant seaman, most of whom were from countries other than the U.S. Cebu City was just across the harbor; it was reached by ferry or water taxi, but I don't remember there being many bars over there that weren't off-limits. In fact, my AC, our engineer and I were caught one night in an off-

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

young woman whose name was Anselma Canales. She was Asian American; the American part of her ancestry was a Mexican-American from South Texas who had been stationed somewhere around there during the war. She had contact with him, and showed me letters he had written her.



MAGELLAN MONUMENT

impressive monument and display of a part of the world's history. Although Magellan died in the shallow waters off of Mactan, his men continued their journey and returned to Spain as the first men to circumnavigate the world. As it turned out, not only had Magellan wronged Laipualapau's sister, he had also wronged the Filipino people. He claimed the islands for Spain and it wasn't long before more Spaniards arrived to take possession. The Philippines were under foreign domination for more than four hundred years, with the United States being the last foreign nation to claim the islands. (We promised the Filipinos independence on July 4, 1946 and they got it, but in the interim they were under Japanese domination for almost three years.)

When we weren't flying, we went to the beach almost every day. We rode to and from it in an Air Force blue bus and whenever it passed through one of the little villages along the way, the children and women would run out and wave and call out "Hello, Joe!" It was a far cry from Clark, where the main goal of the Filipinos was to relieve the troops of their paychecks. The older engineers and flight mechanics said that the people on Mactan were true Filipinos, and hadn't been corrupted as those around Clark had. The beach was pristine, with the only single structure on it being a Sari-Sari kiosk where some Filipinas sold soft drinks, candy, canned food – and the ever-present San Miguel. (No, the San Miguel brewery was not owned by Douglas MacArthur; it was owned by Andres Soriano, who was closely associated with him.) We drank a lot of San Miguel, both at the beach and in the tents. We could send our house boy over to the Sari-Sari store on the base to get beer. Sometimes there would be Filipinas on the beach, usually if they had been invited there by somebody, but most of the time it was all-male except for the women in the store.

Later on before we left, some new bars were opening. One was just outside the base and was called Golden Showers as I recall. Don Sweet, our flight mechanic, and I were there the night it opened. They had yet to get any bar girls but there were some Filipinas around. A group of really good-looking girls accompanied by one Filipino came in and set down at the table next to us. We got to talking to them and we learned that the man was one of the girls' uncle. They were students at the university in Cebu and they wanted to meet Americans – and marry them. (Later, when I was at Clark, I knew an engineer who came up from Mactan and had married a girl from there. Her family was wealthy. Her father allegedly gave them one million dollars for their wedding present!) There were some Americans on the island, Peace Corps workers and missionaries. I never saw any of them.

One Saturday morning some of us went sight-seeing. There were always motorcycle taxis around so we flagged a couple of them and set out for the other side of the island and the Magellan monument. The monument was obviously several hundred years old and impressive. Inside was a painting depicting the battle. It was an

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

We all had an air mattress which we would blow up and lie on or float around in the water, and a lot



DON SWEET AT THE BEACH

looking at all of the fish swimming around below me when I suddenly saw nothing but water. I looked up and discovered that I drifted quite a ways out from shore. I started kicking and paddling back to shore but was making no progress; I had left my flippers on the beach. The beach and everyone on it was getting smaller and smaller. Then I saw Don swimming out to help me. He got behind my mattress and pushed me back to shore. I'm told that Don died in a motorcycle accident in Little Rock around 1980. I also had an adventure with a HUGE barracuda in the lagoon shown in the first picture. Some of us went there looking for conch shells. A Filipino told us there was a barracuda that lived there that was long as a canoe. We went out to where the water started getting deep and diving down for shells. Everyone turned back and I was lagging behind. All of a sudden I felt something looking at me. I turned and looked back and all I saw was teeth and eyes! I kept swimming toward shore and it followed me for awhile, then finally faded into the murk.



I BELIEVE THIS WAS THE MORNING AFTER MY PROMOTION/BIRTHDAY PARTY

Shoupe took one with Sweet on top, Carney, our copilot, took one with Eller, our nav, on top and Colonel Newbold and I shared one. When we climbed into bed, "Red" commented, "This is one for the books, a full colonel and an airman second bunking together."

As it turned out, I became an airman first class at Mactan, and it was a memorable experience. There were three promotions in the 779th that cycle; Ron Kovorick got his gold leaves, Walt Vestal put on a fourth stripe and I put on my third one. The three of us had a party at the club on November 1, which was also my 20th birthday. My crew was called out on a mission but I was at the beach and ops said there wasn't time to

of guys bought snorkel equipment at the BX whenever we were at Clark on the daily shuttle. We'd fly up to Clark in the morning and be there until mid-afternoon, then go back to Mactan. The water was crystal clear, and it teemed with sea life. One form of sea life was the sea urchin, which bristled with spines that were supposed to be full of acid. We all wore sneakers in the water, both to protect against the sea urchins and from cuts from coral. Fortunately, I was never stung but I think I was the only one who wasn't.

Don Sweet, our flight mech, saved my life one day. I was floating around on my air mattress

Mactan was fun but we were there to fly, and fly we did. We went to Kimpo and picked up the Korean Tiger Brigade and flew them to Qui Nhon. Our crew was Chalk One and we had the Korean general on board, along with his female nurse. We went to Vung Tau to move an Australian regiment inland to Bien Hoa. Col. Newbold was mission commander and flew in with our crew. TMC found quarters for us in a Special Forces R&R Center (the Army folks weren't happy about having officers staying there.) They put the whole crew in a single bay with three bunk beds in it.

Shoupe took one with Sweet on top, Carney, our copilot, took one with Eller, our nav, on top and Colonel Newbold and I shared one. When we

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

send someone to get me so they sent someone else. The three of us had our own table in the Breezeway – until I threw up all over the place!



DONG HA TAKEOFF, OCTOBER '65.

lieutenants along with two double pallets, each with a Conex container on it. The weather at Da Nang was lousy, overcast with an 800 foot ceiling. Shoupe filed an IFR flight plan to Da Nang, or to a fix somewhere to the east – and when he got in contact with Da Nang radar, he had them descend us on radar until we broke out of the overcast. Then we flew under the clouds northward until we found the river that flows past the town of Dong Ha and followed it to the town and airfield. It was real tactical flying in a combat zone, something that MATS would never do! We were met by some Green Beanies in a deuce and a half who thought we might be carrying their mail. There was no aerial port team there yet, and no K-loader. Not even a forklift. We talked the Green Berets into letting me hook their truck to my load with 10,000-pound chains to pull the pallets out. There's nothing in the book about that one! I had heard about it from some of the guys who had been on MULE TRAIN.

While we were on the ground, another C-130 came in. It was a brand new 1964 E-model from Sewart. Sewart had a rote squadron somewhere, I think at Clark, and a detachment at Tan Son Nhut. They dropped off some aerial port troops and a forklift without shutting down engines then taxied back out and took off again. I took the above picture while they were on takeoff roll. Note the figure kneeling in the foreground with a portable radio. I don't think he was there when we landed. He must have come in on that airplane.

We often ran into crews from Langley who were on rotation to Clark. The loadmaster on one crew we saw several times had been at Tan Son Nhut with Shoupe so we got to know each other well. One day we saw them and they started teasing us that the 779th wasn't going back to Pope; that we were going to PCS to Mactan. Now, we knew that we were going to start a new mission and were going back to Pope but it was classified so we couldn't tell them. There was a lot of teasing from the Langley crews – until THEY started moving into a new section of tents that had been built at Mactan! The rumors that a TAC wing was PCSing to PACAF turned out to be true, and the wing was the 463rd. In fact, eight TAC squadrons were going PCS to the Far East and one was from Pope, but it was the 776th, which was at Kadena at the time, and not the 779th. However, quite a few 779th people were part of the PCS as a result of the jockeying for position back at Pope. I was not one of them; I had been earmarked for the new mission but then TAC Headquarters decided to use me to fill a requirement for an experienced C-130 loadmaster at Naha.

I left Mactan in December 1965 but I understand that Pope crews continued rotating there until around February when the 29th TCS from Forbes arrived at Clark to make a fourth squadron in the 463rd wing. The entire 463rd transferred to the Philippines, with the wing headquarters and the 772nd and 774th

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

squadrons at Mactan and the 773rd at Clark. The 29th rounded out the wing. Mactan was an isolated tour while Clark was a normal overseas tour, which meant that the people at Mactan were unaccompanied and were there for fourteen months. Some of them had been in the Philippines TDY when they were PCSed and didn't go home. They did, however, get credit for the TDY time. Clark was an eighteen month tour for unaccompanied personnel and twenty-four months for accompanied. Clark personnel could bring their families over. A detachment from 7th Aerial Port Squadron was also assigned to Mactan. The Clark and Mactan squadrons supported the same rotation together, which was at Tan Son Nhut. For some reason – I've been told it was because the B-model was better suited for short field work than the A and the Es were still new – the 463rd only rotated to Tan Son Nhut during the time that the wing was based at Mactan except for a few months at Bangkok on the mission the 464th crews had begun the previous September. (The B-models at Bangkok were replaced by A-models.) There were more B-models than either As or Bs for the duration of the war, or at least until Nixon started troop withdrawals and the PACAF C-130 force was downsized. The 463rd was part of 315th Air Division, along with the 314th at CCK and the 6315th Operations Group at Naha, which was replaced (on paper) by the 374th TCW.

Because Mactan was a fourteen-month tour, the men who came in with the 463rd started rotating home in late 1966. Many of the replacements, particularly pilots, came from non-tactical organizations. Many were new to the troop carrier mission and to the C-130. In early 1967 the intensity of the war took a sharp turn upward, and would continue to climb for another year. The combination of operations into short fields, often under fire, and pilot inexperience naturally led to an increase in accidents. By the time those guys became proficient, it was time for them to rotate home. Sometime in 1968 the Air Force decided to move the 463rd and its two squadrons to Clark, where officers and NCOs could bring their families and serve twenty-four months instead of fourteen. By the time I arrived at Clark in February 1969 on an assignment to the 463rd, the wing was at Clark and had been for several months.

Mactan also served as a relief base for MATS transports bound for Southeast Asia that ordinarily would have gone through Clark. So many flights were crossing the Pacific from the West Coast that the Air Force decided to allow MATS, which became MAC in January 1966, to use Mactan as a crew rest and refueling stop for propeller-driven transports, i.e. C-124s, C-130s and C-133s. MAC continued using Mactan at least a year after the 463rd moved to Clark. I actually landed there for some reason one night after I arrived at Clark. The base closed shortly afterward.

**Somehow, special operations community veterans have got the idea that the modified C-130s came off of TAC flight lines. This is not true. The C-130E(I)s came directly to Pope from Lockheed with the Fulton equipment installed, as is shown on the production list. I saw the first airplane to be delivered. One author writing about the mission has stated that the airplanes were moved to Sewart due to "congestion at Pope" after they were delivered. While I was TDY to Mactan in the final months of 1965, the only thing I remember hearing about "our" airplanes was that the wing at Pope had decided to pull the winch out of the cargo compartment and use them for tactical training missions. In fact, in the fall of 1965, Pope had two squadrons on deployment from the time the 779th left for Mactan through the end of the year. The squadron at Kadena never went back to Pope – it transferred to PACAF as the 776th TCS and went first to Tachikawa, then to CCK. I left Pope in January 1966 but I heard through the grapevine that the airplanes were sent for further modifications before the first deployment to PACAF as Project STRAY GOOSE. Two C-130Es that are reported to have been taken out of the USAF inventory and assigned to "another government agency" were transferred back to the Air Force in later years as replacement for the two C-130E(I)s that were lost in Southeast Asia, one in a mortar attack on Nha Trang and the other on a mission over North Vietnam. For some reason, instead of reverting to their original tail numbers, the two airplanes were given the serial numbers of the first C-130Es lost in Southeast Asia, a troop carrier from the 345th TCS, which was reported shot down at Tuy Hoa in December 1966, and a Navy MATS airplane (MATS had just become MAC) that exploded after taking off from Cam Ranh Bay six months later.*

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

Col. Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn – America's First Combat Airlifter

Aficionados of the fixed-wing gunship may be at least vaguely familiar with the role of major, later colonel, Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn in the development of the powerful A-20/A-26 and B-25 fixed-wing gunships of World War II, but few are aware that he commanded the first American transport squadron to see combat in World War II, and although he left the transport mission to become General George Kenney's "innovator," he made some of the most daring transport flights ever flown. *Note – The troop carrier designation came about in the late spring of 1942.*



PAPPY GUNN IN THE COCKPIT OF HIS B-25

Paul Irvin Gunn, or P.I., as he was commonly known by his family, was a native of the tiny Ozarks town of Quitman, Arkansas roughly 40 miles north of present-day Little Rock Air Force Base. As a boy P.I. achieved a reputation as somewhat of a mechanical genius who had a way of looking at a piece of farm equipment and making it better. Naturally, when he was exposed to internal combustion engines he started looking for ways to improve them. His mechanical skills were so great that, according to members of his family as reported to his son Nathaniel, they came to the attention of the local bootleggers who brought their cars to him for modifications to make them faster. It wasn't long before the boy started hauling

liquor himself from Quitman to Searcy. A local sheriff set a trap and caught him. When he went before the local judge, he was given the choice of reformed school or a stint in the military. He chose the latter and enlisted in the Navy which, in typical military fashion, sent him to cook's school. Eventually his mechanical skills were discovered and he was transferred to the motor pool.

After he was assigned to the Naval air station at Pensacola, P.I. Gunn discovered airplanes. He was already intrigued by them; at Pensacola he started hanging out around a seaplane squadron. One day he observed two mechanics who were having trouble getting an engine to run properly. He convinced them to let him take a look at it and within a few minutes had the engine running like a clock. An officer had observed the episode and he immediately had the young sailor transferred to his squadron. After World War I the Navy expanded its aviation forces. To increase its pilot pool, the Navy authorized the training of sailors as enlisted pilots. P.I.'s enlistment was up but he re-upped to become a Naval enlisted aviator.

In 1937 P.I. retired from the Navy. He was based in Honolulu at the time and chose to remain there with his wife and four children. He took a job with K-T Aviation at the Honolulu airport but for some reason decided to seek his fortunes elsewhere. Somehow, he met Andres Soriano, a wealthy Filipino whose interests included the San Miguel Beverage Company and who was associated with Douglas MacArthur. Soriano had just purchased a brand new Beechcraft 18 executive transport and was looking for a pilot to fly it. Gunn went to Manila and brought his family over a few months later. A few months after his arrival in Manila, Gunn allegedly convinced Soriano to start an airline (other accounts are that the impetus for an airline came from MacArthur who saw its military potential.) At the time there was an air taxi company called Philippine Air

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

Taxi Company operating single-engine airplanes out of a grass field called Grace Park just north of Manila. Soriano bought its charter certificate and took over the airline. The company's chief pilot, one William Bradford, was an Army reserve officer and he elected to return to the Army and became engineering officer at Nichols Field in Manila. Gunn became general manager and chief pilot of a new company called Philippines Airlines.

By the fall of 1941 Gunn was operating a fleet of four (or perhaps as many as six) Beech 18s on scheduled and unscheduled flights throughout the islands. One of his customers was the United States Army, which was building up its forces in the islands in response to deteriorating relations with Japan. Squadrons flying B-17s and P-40s were being transferred to the islands along with artillery and other ground combat units. Maj. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, the senior Air Corps officer in the Philippines, decided to establish a base on the Del Monte pineapple plantation on Mindanao for part of the bomber force that was planned for the islands. The Army had no transports in the islands other than at least one Douglas C-39 (DC-2) assigned to the maintenance depot in Manila and some B-18s from a squadron that had just converted to B-17s. Gunn's small airline was an important military resource.



BEECHCRAFT 18/C-45

Far East Air Force control while the B-18s that survived the attack on Clark Field were assigned to the 19th Bombardment Group.) He immediately moved his airplanes from Neilson Field to Grace Park, which had been incorporated into the Chinese Cemetery next door; the hangars still stood. He put his men to work knocking over some tombstones so the airplane's wings would pass over them and dispersed his small squadron around the cemetery under the trees. The driveways served as taxiways. Gunn and his pilots went to work hauling personnel and cargo from Manila to airfields in the central and southern Philippines. Although the Japanese never attacked the airfield, Gunn was attacked by a Japanese fighter over Cebu. The fighter knocked out one engine before Gunn was able to evade by taking advantage of the mountainous terrain and dwindling daylight. He flew the crippled airplane back to Manila at low altitude and was almost shot down when he was forced to fly over the Philippine Air Force base south of the city, but he made it Nichols Field where he belly-landed the airplane.

According to Nat Gunn's account of his dad's life, P.I. Gunn was on a flight to the southern islands when word reached the Philippines of the Japanese attack on Oahu. By the time he returned to his base at Neilson Field, Japanese bombers and fighters had hit Clark Field. At some point shortly after the outbreak of war, Brereton sent word for Gunn to come to his office where he was informed that Philippines Airlines was now part of the Army and he was being commissioned as an Army captain, as were his two American pilots. He was ordered to form an ad hoc transport squadron consisting of his own airplanes and whatever else he could find that could be used for transport duty. (The C-39 remained under

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



Gunn and his pilots continued their flights throughout the islands in their airplanes, which the military called the C-45 Expeditor. They were supplemented by Air Corps pilots assigned to staff positions at FEAF. A couple of days before Christmas he flew a load of frozen turkeys to Del Monte for the men's Christmas dinner. When he returned to Manila, he learned that General Brereton was looking for him. Brereton had been ordered to move the headquarters of Far East Air Force to somewhere south of the Philippines and he intended for Gunn to take him out. However, a couple of seats opened up on a Navy PBY and Brereton took

them. Gunn was ordered to depart on Christmas Day with a load of FEAF staff officers. He and one of his other pilots left that afternoon for Australia. His other pilot and Captain Cecil S. McFarland, who was fuels officer for FEAF, brought the other two airplanes out with a load of pursuit pilots a few days later. All four airplanes eventually reached Australia, although McFarland, whose airplane was in bad shape, only got as far as Java with his load of pilots. He remained on Java until parts could be flown up for repairs; the pilots he was carrying were evacuated in a Navy PBY.

When he got to Darwin, Gunn was ordered to proceed to Brisbane. Brereton had decided to keep him in Australia to organize a transport unit. Gunn's flight had been preceded by the C-39 and two B-18s in mid-December with pilots from the 27th Bombardment Group, whose A-24 dive bombers had been on a ship that diverted to Brisbane when war broke out. They, along with the four C-45s, made up the initial transport unit until it was supplemented by other transports and personnel. Although he realized the importance of his assignment, Gunn was dismayed that he had been ordered to remain in Australia because his wife, Clara, and their four children were still in Manila. Before the war, the American authorities had assured him and other Americans who had their families there that there was no reason to send them out of the islands – even though military dependents were evacuated – out of fear that their departure would cause panic among the Filipinos. For Gunn, the war had become personal.

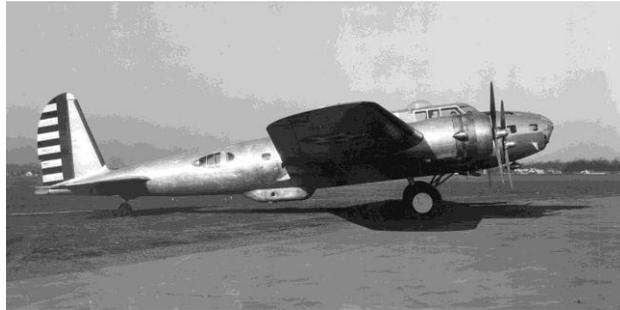
The Far East Air Force had departed the Philippines, but there were still thousands of American soldiers and airmen and a few sailors and thousands more Filipino soldiers who were still fighting the Japanese. MacArthur had ordered his units on Luzon to move to the Bataan Peninsula in accordance with a pre-war operational plan where they were to continue to fight until relieved. The problem was resupply. Although several convoys departed the United States bound for the Philippines, the Navy feared that they would be intercepted and they all diverted to Australia except for one that went to Cebu. The only means of supplying Bataan was the use of island shipping and submarines, and a handful of single-engine airplanes. Initially, Gunn's small transport force flew missions into Bataan by way of airstrips in the Netherlands East Indies and Mindanao. Gunn himself made several flights and on one occasion landed his Beechcraft on Quezon Avenue in an attempt to rescue his family. During an earlier flight, a Filipino soldier told him that he would find the Gunns and bring them to the avenue at a particular time and day. Gunn was there, but his family never appeared.

When he was not flying supplies to the Philippines, and bringing out key personnel on his return flights, Gunn was looking around the Brisbane docks for supplies that would help the war effort. Cargo from the diverted ships was basically dumped on the docks. The Australian stevedores were heavily unionized and had strong Communist leanings and they were not willing to work without numerous concessions in spite of the danger to their own country. Gunn helped the pilots from the 27th Bombardment Group assemble their

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

airplanes and ready them for combat. He had to use his own engineering talents to build new parts and components that were missing from the shipment. On one of his trips to the docks, he discovered crates filled with eighteen P-40 fighters. He rounded up a crew of mechanics who belonged to the 7th Bombardment Group and had been on their way to Manila when war broke out to assemble them, then went looking for the pilots his men had brought out of Bataan to fly them.

Once the P-40s were assembled, Gunn was assigned to provide navigation for the pilots. He flew his C-45, which was filled with parts, while the first group of P-40s flew formation with him. A second group was led by an Australian airplane. They all thought they were on their way back to the Philippines but when they reached Darwin, they learned they were going to Java instead. Gunn led the P-40s across the Java Straits to their new airfield. He also led a squadron of Australian bombers to a secluded airfield where they would be safe from air attack by the Japanese.



B-17D bomber had yet to be converted for transport duty. He rounded up a crew and loaded the airplane with bombs and went out to attack the Japanese fleet. He was nominated for a Distinguished Service Cross for the feat but it was disapproved by higher headquarters in an act of military politics. Although he was popular with the combat troops, Gunn was hated by some senior staff officers who disliked his unorthodox methods.

Java fell in February 1942 and an all-out effort was made to get supplies to the Philippines. Gunn's small transport force had been formed into the Air Transport Command and assigned to operate under the Directorate of Air Transport (DAT), a joint organization commanded by Royal Australian Air Force Group Captain Harold Gatty. The ATC was initially commanded by 1st Lt. Edgar Hampton, Brereton's former aide, because Gunn was incognito at the time. (There is a period of Gunn's life in early 1942 that is not documented. According to some accounts, he was in Rabaul when it was attacked by Japanese and was shot down in a Whirraway fighter. It might have been in Java, in a Brewster Buffalo, with which he was familiar from his Navy days. Allegedly, he spent two weeks on the ground and when he walked out, his hair had turned snow white! The other pilots started calling him Pappy because he looked like an old man until his hair returned to its normal brown.) When Gunn returned to Brisbane, he was placed in command. A new squadron, the 21st Transport Squadron, was organized using the men and aircraft then available in Australia. Three B-24s from the Army Ferrying Command that had been sent to the Far East earlier in the war joined the squadron. Two of them were lost in the evacuation of Java. A second squadron, the 22nd Transport Squadron, was organized when Dutch airline transports bought out of the Netherlands East Indies were added to Gunn's command. He was promoted to major.

Gunn flew his last flight to the Philippines as a transport pilot – the next time he went there he would be flying a B-25 – in mid-March, 1942. A few days after Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia along with Brig. Gen. Harold H. George, his senior air officer in the Philippines, Gunn and Major Cecil McFarland departed Darwin in Gunn's highly-modified C-45 for a flight to Mindanao and on to Bataan. Gunn had modified the airplane's fuel system to increase the range because the Japanese had captured airfields in the Netherlands East Indies he had been using to refuel. It is likely that their flight had been

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

ordered by Gen. George, who had promised Maj. Bill Bradford that he was going to Australia to “organize a supply train” to bring supplies to Mindanao and he would be in charge of delivering them to Bataan in his small fleet of single-engine airplanes. He probably sent Gunn to Del Monte to supplement Bradford’s small single-engine transports.



DEL MONTE FIELD, 1942

got the engine running and loaded the airplane up with aircraft mechanics and pilots and flew it to Darwin.

After he returned to his headquarters near Brisbane, Gunn, made a fortuitous discovery while on a flight to Melbourne when he spotted some strange twin-engine airplanes lined up on a parking ramp at an airfield he was passing over. He landed and learned that they were B-25s, and that they were part of a consignment that had been made to the Dutch several weeks before they were run out of Java. The Dutch had no pilots but there was a whole group of multi-engine pilots at Chartres Towers, an airfield in the outback north of Darwin. Gunn hatched up a scheme to literally steal the airplanes and went back up north to find the people to make it happen. As a result of the theft of the B-25s that Gunn engineered, he was relieved of his position as commander of the Air Transport Command and reassigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group as a maintenance officer and pilot. Less than two weeks after the impromptu “transfer” of the B-25s, Gunn was back in Mindanao on a special mission to bomb Japanese positions and bring relief to Bataan. Unfortunately, Bataan fell the day before they left.

After Gunn left the Air Transport Command, it went on to achieve one of the most meritorious records in troop carrier history in support of Allied operations in New Guinea and on to the Philippines. The two squadrons were redesignated as “troop carrier” in keeping with a reorganization of transport units back in Washington. They were later joined by two squadrons from the U.S. and became the 374th Troop Carrier Group. The Air Transport Command evolved into the 54th Troop Carrier Wing. Gunn himself also achieved a remarkable record, one of the most remarkable of the war, until he was finally wounded when MacArthur went back to the Philippines. His family was rescued by elements of the 1st Cavalry Division.

After the war, Pappy Gunn returned to the Philippines and Philippines Airlines. The airline grew under his leadership and expanded its service across the Pacific and eventually to Europe. He left the airline after it was nationalized by the Philippine government and started his own air taxi company in Manila using Twin Beeches and surplus C-47s. His biggest customer was the U.S. government. Pappy Gunn died in an accident caused by a tropical thunderstorm south of Manila in 1957.

When they are about half way to Del Monte Field, they lost an engine. Gunn elected to continue. He passed to the west of the Japanese naval facility at Davao, and was jumped by a floatplane fighter. Rather than being shot down, Gunn elected to put his airplane down on the beach on an island off of Zamboanga. Filipinos transported their cargo to Mindando by boat and on to Del Monte where Gunn found a B-17 that had been left there due to engine problems. He

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

AIRBORNE!



TAC C-130S VS IN TRAIL

In the modern Air Force, when one thinks of tactical airlift operations, images of large formations of C-17s and C-130s dropping the 82nd Airborne Division often come to mind. Such images are prompted by the half dozen or so large-scale airborne operations of World War II. However, in truth, airborne operations have been a very small part of the mission that came to be known as “tactical airlift.”

The concept of using airplanes to drop infantrymen trained as paratroops originated within the air component of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe in World War I. Brig. General William “Billy” Mitchell conceived the idea of using airplanes to drop infantry

behind German lines and gave his new chief of staff, Major Lewis H. Brereton responsibility for developing a plan. Brereton’s plan came too late for the use of paratroops in World War I but in the postwar years the Soviets began developing airborne forces who would use parachutes and gliders to assault objectives. The U.S. Army staff merely acknowledged that the use of such forces was feasible and authorized the teaching of the concept at the War College but made no plans to develop such forces – until the Germans used paratroops and glider troops with great success in their invasion of Belgium in 1940. The U.S. Army decided it should develop airborne forces of its own and gave responsibility for their transport to the Air Corps Maintenance Command, which had established several transport squadrons to deliver aircraft parts to air bases around the U.S. and in Alaska and the Panama Canal Zone. Additional transport squadrons were authorized to support the new military mission.

Billy Mitchell’s concept had been to use airborne infantry to seize objectives in an enemy’s rear, which is how the Germans used them (until the failed invasion of Crete where British control of the seas around the island led to the defeat of the Germans. After that, Hitler vowed never to use his elite paratroopers in airborne operations again.) The perceived role of the new airborne forces was the same – to jump in and seize existing airfields or level fields where they could be built to serve as a landing fields for troop carrying transports. However, in the European Theater of War, they were never used as they were intended. The first use of U.S. airborne forces was in the invasion of North Africa when troop carrier squadrons transported American and British paratroops to French North Africa with the intention of using them to capture Vichy French airfields. When the Allies learned that the French were only putting up a token resistance, the plans were changed and the paratroops were landed. Over the next few months, paratroops were used in a handful of small-scale operations including the dropping of a platoon of paratroops to blow up a bridge in German-held territory. Lt. Col. Phil Cochran, the commander of a P-40 squadron who had made several attempts to blow up the bridge, accompanied the crew of the lead airplane to show them the way but he got lost and the troops were dropped 20 miles in the wrong direction. They managed to blow up the

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

bridge but the troops were nearly all killed or captured.

Generals George C. Marshall and Henry H. Arnold were enthusiastic about the use of paratroops in the manner for which they had been conceived but the senior U.S. generals in Europe were less so. (Air Corps Lt. General Frank Andrews is believed to have been Marshall's choice for Supreme Commander in Europe but he was killed in the crash of a B-24 in Iceland and Eisenhower got the job.) Neither Generals Dwight Eisenhower or Omar Bradley were known for innovation and they were lukewarm to the idea of paratroops. Instead of using them in the manner they were intended, Eisenhower chose to use them to jump in behind invasion beachheads to disrupt communications. Airborne operations in Sicily were costly but those few paratroops and glider troops who actually reached their objectives caused considerable confusion. Nevertheless, Eisenhower was in favor of discontinuing their use and reassigning the existing airborne divisions and regiments to conventional infantry. It was only after paratroops demonstrated considerable success in maneuvers in North Carolina that Army Ground Forces commander Lt Gen. Leslie J. McNair became convinced of their capabilities and recommended that they not only be retained, but that new divisions should be sent overseas. Shortly after the invasion of Normandy, in which American and British paratroops jumped in prior to the amphibious operations, the First Allied Airborne Army was activated in the U.K. under the command of Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, the same officer who had drawn up the original plan for paratroop operations. It is a little known fact that when the Allies were planning an invasion of Western Europe, Generals Marshall and Arnold advocated that it be an airborne operation to capture the German airfields at Dreux and Evreux, France combined with an amphibious operation south of Canne to land armored forces who would drive inland to link up with the airborne and airlanded infantry. Their plan would have established an airhead some fifty miles inland into which additional troops could be flown. British Air Marshall Leigh-Mallory, who at the time was part of the invasion planning, was opposed to the plan on the basis that there wasn't enough air transport available to support such an operation. (As it turned out, by the time of the actual invasion, Allied troop carrier strength in Europe far exceeded the numbers Leigh-Mallory believed were impossible.)

Marshall ordered Eisenhower to make imaginative use of his airborne forces but even though Brereton conceived almost a dozen plans, including one to drop paratroops to block the Germans retreat from Falais, Eisenhower and Bradley nixed them all, including a plan to seize an area behind the lines to establish an airhead in the Ruhr. The only airborne operations carried out in Europe after the Normandy and Southern France invasions were those put forth by British Field Marshall Montgomery for his ill-fated movement into Holland his later crossing of the Rhine. Although U.S. airborne strength in Europe had been increased to four divisions commanded by the XVIII Airborne Corps, the highly-trained paratroopers were used primarily as infantry. The limited use of paratroops was not Marshall and Arnold's idea. They saw airborne forces as a valuable concept. In 1945 Arnold wrote Brereton a letter in which he stated that in the future airplanes would be capable of delivering even large armored vehicles into forward airfields that had been built by airborne engineers.

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



General Douglas MacArthur's forces in the Southwest Pacific were the only U.S. military force to use airborne forces in the manner for which they had been intended when the 503rd Parachute Infantry was used to jump into the Markham Valley northwest of Lae in Papua, New Guinea to seize the airfield at Nadzab. MacArthur's chief of staff for air and Fifth Air Force

NADZAB commander Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney had requested the assignment of an airborne regiment to his command during a visit to the U.S. earlier in 1943. On September 4, 1943 the men of the 503rd jumped over Nadzab while being observed from above by MacArthur and Kenney in a B-17. Kenney would report that when MacArthur realized the success of the operation – the Japanese offered little resistance – he “jumped up and down like a kid.” Once the airfield was secure, C-47s began landing with Australian infantry and began advancing toward Lae, which was under attack from Allied troops who had come in from the sea. MacArthur's forces would also carry out airborne operations at Hollandia and in the Philippines. A platoon of paratroops jumped over the Los Banos Internment Camp south of Manila as part of a raid to rescue the prisoners and the invasion of the island bastion of Corregidor was by paratroops.



There were no airborne forces in the Pacific when the Korean War broke out. At MacArthur's request, the 187th Regimental Combat Team was deployed to Japan along with the 314th Troop Carrier Group from Sewart. The paratroops arrived too late for the Inchon Invasion and were flown into Kimpo after they arrived. Only two paratroop operations were flown during the conflict, the first between the towns of Sukchon and Suwon. (The drop was observed by MacArthur and MATS DCO Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner, who had been sent TDY to Japan a few weeks before to organize an airlift organization in Tunner's command C-54. After they landed from the first (and probably only) combat mission Tunner ever flew, they

appeared before the press. Tunner had learned that MacArthur had never been presented with a DFC and pulled one out of his briefcase and pinned it on the five-star general. Not to be outdone, MacArthur turned to his aide who handed him a Distinguished Service Cross, which he pinned on Tunner.) Five months later in March 1951 C-119s and C-46s from the recently activated 315th Air Division dropped the 187th at Munsan-Ni in the second airborne operation of the war. The drop was observed by 315th AD commander Brig. Gen. John H. Henebry, who personally directed the operation and diverted one drop formation after troops were dropped on the wrong DZ. Henebry didn't get a DSC – he already had one he had earned flying combat in light attack bombers in the Pacific with the 3rd Attack Group. The Munsan-Ni drop was the last of the war.

The Airlifter Volume XXIV



The 1950s saw new developments in military thinking as ballistic missiles came into use. The Navy got into the act by proposing submarines as a missile bases, and Congress bought it. During one hearing senior Air Force officers were told that unless they developed a tactical mission, the Air Force would become “the silo-sitters of the seventies.” TAC and Army airborne advocates resurrected Arnold and Marshall’s 1944 idea to use paratroopers to establish airbases deep inside enemy territory into which heavily armed infantry could be airlifted and supported entirely by air. Some elements within the Army were pushing for the

development of a new kind of infantry unit that would use helicopters to penetrate enemy territory. They pushed for the development of troop carrying and armed helicopters to be assigned to Army aviation companies independent of the Air Force. In 1963 the Army reactivated the 11th Airborne Division with a new designation as the 11th Air Assault Division and equipped it with an assortment of aircraft ranging from light liaison airplanes to heavy-lift helicopters and DeHavillan CV2 Caribous. The unit’s ground personnel were airborne qualified.

In November 1964 crews from the 464th TCW’s rotational squadron in France transported Belgian paratroopers to the former Belgian Congo and made two drops, the first at Stanleyville where the troops seized the Sabenas Airport and the second at Paulis two days later. Both drops were to seize airfields where C-130s could land with additional troops and equipment. For the mission, the 464th was awarded the MackKay Trophy for the “most meritorious flight of the year” for 1965.

In January 1962 USAF C-123s were introduced to the Vietnam War. One of their missions was to support Vietnamese airborne operations. However, after a few drops that proved unsuccessful as the ARVN



troops were unable to close with the Viet Cong, parachute operations were discontinued. An airborne operation using USAF C-130s to drop ARVN paratroopers northwest of Saigon in 1965 was also unsuccessful. In the spring of 1965 U.S. ground combat troops were introduced to the war. The first U.S. Army organization to see duty in South Vietnam was the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which moved from its base on Okinawa to Bien Hoa. Late that summer the 11th Air Assault also moved to Vietnam, but just before it left Fort Benning it was reorganized and renamed the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The original 11th Air Assault personnel retained their airborne capability although the division had been fleshed out with conventional infantry from the 2nd Infantry Division.

In February 1967 elements of the 173rd Airborne jumped into drop zones near the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon in Operation JUNCTION CITY. Only one battalion jumped; the other two went in by helicopter from Quan Loi. The airborne operation was part of a large-scale “invasion” of the region near Katum in an attempt to find and capture the Communist headquarters called COSVN. The communists had advance notice of the operation; an agent had been placed at the very highest levels in the MACV headquarters. (COSVN was

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

never found and some think it never existed.)



Since Vietnam, airborne forces have remained part of the U.S. Army, although they have been reduced to one division, the 82nd. Other units, particularly Rangers, are also trained for airborne operations. In 1980 troops from the 75th Ranger Battalion parachuted onto the Point Salines Airfield on the island of Grenada. Nine years later elements of the 82nd jumped into Panama, this time from MAC C-141s. It was the first time in history that paratroopers had jumped into a hostile area from MAC aircraft – and the only time from C-141s.

POINT SALINES Although airborne operations have been limited in the more recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, In October 2001 four MC-130s dropped a company-size force of Rangers onto an airfield in southern Afghanistan. Two years later troops from the reactivated 173rd Airborne Brigade jumped into friendly territory in northern Iraq from C-17s to secure the Bashur Airfield. Although there was no opposition, it was considered a combat drop.

PIMA



Those of us who attend our upcoming convention in Tucson will have the privilege of seeing some Air Force history at the Pima Air Museum. Two of the airplanes in their collection are the prototype Boeing YC-14 and the Budd RB-1 Conestoga. Although neither went into production for the Air Force, they were both significant contributions to transport history. The RB-1 was a World War II development and the YC-14 was a product of the Vietnam Era.

The RB-1 was one of a number of transport aircraft designs that were put forth during World War II, most of which never got beyond the drawing board stage. The RB-1, which was given the nickname “Conestoga”, not only flew, it went into production. The RB-1 was a unique design. For one thing, it had an upswept tail with a cargo door and ramp in the rear to allow truck-bed loading. It also featured tricycle landing gear and a cockpit design that placed the two pilots in front of and above the cargo compartment with the navigator immediately behind them. It was designed and built by the Budd Company of Philadelphia, an old company famous for manufacturing railroad cars. Instead of aluminum, the Conestoga was manufactured from stainless steel. The first airplanes were ordered by the Navy, but the Army followed suit and ordered 600 and gave them the designation C-93. It could carry a load of 9,600 pounds of cargo, 24 paratroopers, 24 stretchers and 16 ambulatory patients or a 1 ½ ton truck.

The Army cancelled its order as more and more C-47s and C-46s became available and the Navy reduced its order to 25 airplanes. They never entered operational service, but 17 were used as utility aircraft for a time. In 1945 they were declared surplus and transferred to the War Assets Department to be sold. A

The Airlifter Volume XXIV

new cargo airline called National Skyway Freight Company bought an even dozen of them then immediately sold four to other operators at a profit large enough to pay for their initial purchase. The company operated them for two years hauling a variety of freight out of its Long Beach base, then after changing its name to Flying Tiger, it sold the RB-1s and replaced them with surplus C-47s. The one at Pima is the only one left.



The YC-14 was Boeing's entry in a competition for a new STOL transport that the Air Force planned to purchase as a replacement for the C-130. The requirement called for operations from a 2,000-foot runway with a 27,000 pound payload and an operational radius of 500 miles unrefueled. All three major military aircraft manufacturers submitted designs but the Air Force passed on Lockheed/North American Rockwell's design. McDonnell-Douglas' design was a four-engine airplane while the YC-14 featured two large turbofan engines mounted above the wings to allow operations into unimproved runways. Boeing used a "blown flap" to improve short field performance. The first flight was on 9 August 1976. The airplane was turned over to the Air

Force for testing. Veteran C-130 pilot Major Fredric N. Buckingham was chief of the USAF YC-14 test program.



McDonnell Douglas' YC-15 made its first flight a year before the Boeing design. Both airplanes were thoroughly tested and met the design requirements. However, by the time the two new airlifters flew, all tactical airlift had transferred to MAC where the emphasis was on strategic airlift. In March 1976 before the YC-14 made its first flight, Chief of Staff Gen. David Jones changed the requirement from a tactical transport to one that could be used for both the tactical and strategic airlift mission. Consequently, both programs were soon shelved and the prototypes for both types were sent to Davis-Monthan where one model of each

was put on display at the Pima Air Museum. However, when McDonnell Douglas got the contract to develop the C-17, the YC-17 at Pima was restored to flying condition and transferred to Edwards, where it is currently on display. We'll see the YC-14 at Pima and may be able to view the YC-15 during our tour of the boneyard.

Recruit, Recruit, Recruit!!