



315TH NEWSLETTER

WORLD WAR II 315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP ASSOCIATION

MAY 1992

IN THIS ISSUE.....

- * President's letter
- * I REMEMBER.....
Richard Hatch
Ziggy Zartman
- * Recording Secretary's
Report
- * 1992 REUNION NEWS
- * 25 Years of C-47s:
Bob Cloer's career
- * More stories about the plane
that helped win the war
- * Excerpt from Lindbergh's
book "WE;
- * Glenn Miller story follow-up
- * Letters we receive

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Betty and I are looking forward to Albuquerque with a great deal of anticipation. After investigating AMTRAK and other modes of travel, we purchased airline coupons from Delta (a book of four coupons). This proved to be the most economical and convenient way to travel to Albuquerque because Delta has a "direct" flight from Boston.

As you know, other airlines offer these books of coupons to senior citizens and it would be a good idea to investigate their deals. After checking it out, I found that using the coupons gave us the lowest cost travel to the reunion. AMTRAK, normally an economical way to travel (if you like trains) didn't offer much economy because, traveling from the east coast to New Mexico put us into all three zones AMTRAK uses to establish fares.

We sincerely hope as many of you as possible can make it to the reunion. I know that the committee is doing a lot of work to make our stay enjoyable. And, that part of our country is an absolute "must" to see.

SEE YOU IN ALBUQUERQUE !

Jack Alexander

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Group Association

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Readers are invited to submit
material for the NEWSLETTER

(over, please)

COME TO THE REUNION IN SEPTEMBER !!!!!

Enclosed with this issue is the 315th TCG Registration form plus a Sheraton room reservation form. WE URGE YOU TO USE THESE TWO FORMS; FILL THEM IN WITH THE REQUIRED INFORMATION AND MAIL THEM (YOU MUST PROVIDE AND ADDRESS THE ENVELOPES TO THE ADDRESSES INDICATED.)

Doing this will prepare a place for you at the Albuquerque Reunion which begins Wednesday, September 9 and runs through Sunday, September 13. Bernard Brown, our "man on the spot" has prepared an outstanding program with many interesting features we know will please each one of our readers.

Checking with Bernard a few weeks ago, we learned that 18 Registration forms had been received----this a full 3 1/2 months before the reunion is to begin! That encouraging number signals a good turn-out in September and we wish all our readers who haven't done so yet, would use the enclosed forms and finalize plans to get to Albuquerque.

ABOUT AIR FARES:

We don't have any real good news about air fare deals because most of the airlines have joined in a spate of fare "reductions" and have eliminated the special convention fares most used to offer. However, if you've done any traveling recently, you know that the lowest fares currently available are those for reservations made 14 days in advance and require a stay over Saturday night. Some of the smaller airlines (aside from United, American and Delta) are offering some attractive fares, so if your home base is served by one of them, you may do very well. Best advice: SHOP ALL POSSIBLE AIR CARRIERS FOR THE BEST DEAL.

ARE YOU A GOLFER?

Our reunion host advises that if you would like to play golf while you're in Albuquerque, he will assist in making arrangements for you to get on a course in the area.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE REUNION

TRANSPORTATION

If you are driving, take Rio Grande Exit off I-40 on western edge of Albuquerque, turn south; Sheraton is only 3 blocks. Parking is free in large hotel lot. Those who drive RVs, but who stay at the Sheraton, are welcome to park them free in the northwest corner of the hotel lot.

There is one RV park with full hookups, \$15.00 per day, about 8 miles from the Sheraton: 505 -345-3716. A Coast-to-Coast park with full hookups is 12 miles away (505)831-6317. A Good Sam park with full hookups @ \$19.86 per day is also about 12 miles away: (505)831-3545.

When arriving at the airport, train or bus stations, call the Sheraton at 843-6300 for complimentary pickup ONLY after you've retrieved your luggage. The van can stop only to pick up, not stop and wait.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES

SANTA FE TRIP: The coach ride to Santa Fe will be about 2 hours due to stopping at the pueblo. We will have a map for you as you walk around Santa Fe to see the Oldest Church in America, Oldest House in America, N.M. State Capitol Building, Miraculous Staircase at the Chapel of Loretto, Historic LaFonda (the Inn at the End of the Trail), Territorial Palace of the Governors complete with Indians selling their handicrafts on the sidewalk, Museum of Fine Arts and restaurants, restaurants, RESTAURANTS!!!! After lunch on your own, our coach will take us to drive through the world-renowned Santa Fe Opera grounds, then the 1 1/2 hour drive back to the hotel.

MARIA TERESA: Those interested in Thursday's free tour of this lovely old, antique-filled restaurant will need to sign up at the Registration Desk by 8:00 AM that day.

ALBUQUERQUE CITY TOUR: We will see such things as the University of N.M. campus, the 2 largest shopping malls in N.M., Kirtland Air Force Base and Lovelace Clinic famed for astronaut physicals and its cancer and heart research programs.

INDIAN CULTURAL CENTER: Ladies will need to sign up for Saturday's free tour by 4:00 PM on Friday at the Registration Desk.

GENERAL INFORMATION: You can expect daytime temperatures in the mid-70s, 80s, with evenings in the mid 50s-60s. Our elevation is just a mile high and our humidity is very low. Rain is unlikely but possible.

Plan mostly casual clothing and some western gear would be fun for Friday's barbecue which will be partly outside.

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**DON'T MISS THE ALBUQUERQUE
REUNION IN SEPTEMBER!
COME AND SPEND SOME TIME
WITH YOUR OLD COMRADES.
MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM
AND RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM**

Here follows another "I REMEMBER" from Ziggy Zartman. Enjoy.

DOUBLE HERITAGE.....DOUBLE TOW.....SINGLE PROBLEM

This war story has a slow start, beginning in 1728 in the hamlet of Ittlingen on the Neckar River....then part of the Holy Roman Empire. My Great (plus five "greats") Grandparents, Alexander and Katharina Zartman with son Hans Jacob, abandoned the Rheinland Palatinate that spring (early June).....with another family, taking a dory down the Neckar into the Rhein river, then northward to Rotterdam. Arriving in late June, they haggled passage on the sailing vessel "Albany" for the westward journey to the land of promise: the Colonies. Two months on the stormy Atlantic, then, bedraggled, they finally tacked up the Bay of Delaware to the Port of Philadelphia. Several days later they took the requisite oath-of-allegiance to King George II. Within months Alex purchased a parcel of land (197 acres) for 27 Pounds 14 Shillings & 10 Pence, located near what is now Brickerville within the Province of Pennsylvania. Alex and the proprietors of the Province, Thomas and Richard Penn (William's boys), signed the sheepskin deed using a goose quill. Thus, for the next 48 years, my Kraut ancestors were subjects of the Crown of England....until that tea party in the Boston Harbor got the blokes excited....later resulting in an important "Declaration."

I forgot to mention that the family old-timers who gave me my first set of "genes" were stone masons and vineyard growers, not sailors; thus, it is safe to assume that they stood, sea-sick at the bow of the "Albany" while heading down the English Channel. Imagine...216 years later I would look down at the same waters from about the same height in a machine that, maybe, the Montgolfier brothers of Grandpa's century could envision. "Ain't that somethin'?! The English and German languages both originated among the Teutonic tribes of ancient Europe; thus, my genealogy is a mixed-bag and I'm one of the results. (Not meant to be an apology.)

Picking up the pace, the most exciting and gratifying part of our WWII flying experiences were those pre-D-Day training missions out of Spanhoe. Young and eager, we got to know ourselves, our British hosts, our planes, our aircrews and the "troops" (like Doc Hatton, John Edney, John Conquest, John Rowland (the roster is long) who made the base "tick". I recall one morning flight, a double-tow, when the pre-mission briefing and split-second teamwork dumped the jackpot! The two members of the crew I'm certain were aboard----me and Fred Drysdale, maybe Ralph Kornrumpf was in the right seat----and probably Oakey McKim was the RO. To back up....Ralph and I, two glider pilots must have been aboard because just before ENGINE START, two guys on the crew kept asking "What's that noise? What's that noise?"

After the crews-briefing by the mission (Group) OIC and his experts, we headed for the "goons and gliders" already assembled on runway 26. Double glider tows were always interesting, so we had been extra attentive and even rehashed our roles for the critical TAKEOFF sequence. Emergencies do happen! Before boarding, we again briefed the CG-4A crews.....tactfully and gently reminding them that: AT ANYTIME DURING THE TAKEOFF THAT YOU SEE A RED ALDIS LAMP SIGNAL IN THE TUG DOME, YOU HAVE THREE SECONDS TO RELEASE; OTHERWISE, A HEAVY STEEL RING WITH 300 FT. OF STRETCHED NYLON ROPE ATTACHED WILL BE COMING THRU YOUR WINDSCREEN TO EMBED IN SOMEONE'S SKULL.....Have a nice day. Cheerio chaps."

Our turn came for TAKEOFF. We eased out the tow-ropes slack...pushed the middle levers on the console to MAXPOWER....synchronized the PROPS and rolled in elevator trim as the tail came up. Fred, his head in the dome, Aldis lamp in hand, yelled "both gliders are airborne." Everything seemed copacetic...the IAS crept into the 80's and "622" decided it too would fly! GEAR-UP....starting our climb, we were maybe 300 ft. above the terrain when SUDDENLY, one of those rare moments of fly-boy terror, the left engine sputtered and began windmilling. Hollering to Fred, he triggered the REDLIGHT....held it for about four seconds, leaped down, sprang forward and yanked the overhead "T" RELEASE. Low, slow and busy looking for a crash site, I waited for my brain to process "heavy foot...good engine," then cried FEATHER LEFT! Fred hit the correct big-red-button and the windmilling propeller jerked to a halt....fully feathered. SLOWLY.....we gained altitude, reporting the situation to the Spanhoe tower...both gliders on the ground, intact.....crews waving. Thankfully, our rope release had occurred simultaneously. Below, a Nannie and two youngsters peered skyward...their promenade interrupted by those "bloody" YANKS dropping ropes and landing on their estate."

With some altitude and time to think...all other systems appearing normal, we elected to RESTART the left engine...applying carburetor heat. Sure enough, the problem had been carburetor icing: the engine coughed (not unlike aircrew members when Doc Hatton placed his finger properly).....it shook slightly and began to purr. We circled away from the field until the runway was clear, then landed, Ralph making the touchdown from the right seat, leaving long black rubber marks on the concrete...a "grease job." I knew exactly how good he felt. I had done the same thing once the previous year.

I thanked the crew for being on the ball, touched base with OPS and disappeared in the direction of my Nissen hut. Washing up, I noticed it was just after noon and I didn't seem to be hungry. Needing fresh air and some quiet time, I jumped on my bicycle and pedaled into Corby for a "spot of tea and a cookie"....reacting more like a bloke than a YANK.

Around 1630 hrs, beat and gasping for air after that uphill cycle trek from the Corby tea house....now hungry, I parked my bike outside the mess hall. first in line for the daily dinner ration from the food-service NCOIC. I had deciphered the graffiti on the menu board: tonight's treat was everyone's English favorite---fish and chips! I had just loosened my belt a notch when I felt a tap on the shoulder. It was Colonel Hamby wanting my opinion on the feasibility of a "snatch" mission to retrieve the gliders. I thought it was possible, and volunteered to fly the "snatch" plane ("622" was not fitted with a reel). The next day, the gliders came in, partially disassembled, on flat-beds. We had agreed tho, that the food was great...both of us pretty skinny back then

I flew with many skilled crew chiefs while with the 310th Squadron, but you can see why Fred Drysdale was my number-one pick. During local flights (mostly test hops after scheduled maintenance), I occasionally gave Fred the left-seat, teaching him how to land...then, when his touchdowns were getting better than mine, I'd move him back onto the jump-seat, or send him back to make coffee (his special brew would more curl in my hair). Though

he did get me into a lot of trouble with his favorite question: "Lieutenant, are we going to buzz the tower today?

Ralph was so excited after the single engine episode that he volunteered for "fighters" and, was in fact, transferred. I was perplexed; earlier, I had even falsified three pages of "P-40 time" in my Form 5 trying to do the same thing. But the "brass" must have wanted me to stay put, and of course, they really loved me in the 310th!

Gotta go. Gloria volunteered me for a "Keep The Earth Green" project. It's time to water the weeds that keep absorbing pollutants in the yard. God Save The King!

.....Ziggy

+ +

This "I Remember" from Richard Hatch brings back gently, happy memories of the old days.

"I remember...with the timely arrival of the 315th November NEWSLETTER, my memory brought me back to the crossing of the Atlantic aboard the *QUEEN ELIZABETH* in 1942 mentioned by George Doll in that issue. I recall dining facilities down in the bowels of the ship in the ballroom. We carried our messkits (double pan, cup, knife, fork & spoon) which we doused in a metal barrel full of warm water, leaving the floor wet and dirty. It was a long walk from topside. The luxurious cabin was stripped and two racks of three bunks installed. I rated the top bunk with my head inches from the air vent but several of my mates preferred the open deck. The crossing was cloudy and wet and I will never forget the beauty of the green hills of Greenock, Scotland, our disembarkation point. The train ride to Aldermaston was all that Doll wrote with the screaming whistle of the engine. We were six to a compartment under strict blackout restrictions. The airdrome was manned by RAF personnel and we were introduced to the English language. The various dialects from all parts of England needed an interpreter. I, coming from Boston, was accused by my buddies of being at home.

We met the British socially at a NAAFI center off base in the village of Heath End. The local women's Guild served coffee, tea and various goodies and promoted entertainment with everyone joining in. We found a local bicycle shop where we could buy a bike for traveling the countryside. These were transported from base to base and we sold them to the French in Amiens after D-Day.

I made several close friendships with British people and was a guest in their homes. One association in Reading resulted in having Christmas dinner with them for three years. Since then, I have made one two week visit with them and have had them as guests. They came over in the *QUEEN ELIZABETH*. One of them made the final trip on the *QUEEN* in 1969.

When I was stationed in Florence SC, I was scheduled to fly to Ft. Bragg by the supply officer and I gave him my name as R.B.Hatch. He made such an issue of the initials R.B. that, for the rest of my service career, most people called me by that nickname. And still do.

(over, please)

**REPORT FROM YOUR RECORDING
SECRETARY:**

During the past year and a half, since our last reunion, I have received quite a few letters and phone calls wanting to know if we had any type of associate membership open to others. These inquiries have come from sons or daughters of some of our deceased members - members of the 82nd and 17th Airborne - and British and Canadian troops that we worked with during the war. Maybe this is something that we ought to talk about at our business meeting in September. In the meantime - maybe we could get a couple of our good legal minds to look into the matter and see what it would do to our tax free status if we changed the by-laws. Joseph Krysakowski and Ray Schwartz, could we twist your arms a bit??

At our business meeting in Norfolk, Bill Brinson read a letter that he had received from LENORE V. BROW, 7622 FITCH ROAD, OLMSTED FALLS, OH 44138. We also had a notice on the bulletin board in the hospitality room. Ms. Brow was trying to gather information about her father, Capt. William C. Gedecke, who was killed during the war. He had flown with the 34th Sqdn. at Blida. I think that I remember that there were one or two men at the meeting who said they remember flying with Gedecke. If you have not written Ms. Brow, please do. All of her fathers service records were destroyed in the fire at the Personnel Record Center and she is trying to learn more about her father. I received a letter from another T.C. pilot who has been trying to help her.

Lets all make a great effort to make the reunion in Albuquerque this year. It is a sad fact, that it will be the last one for some. You and I are still just young fellows, (I keep telling myself) but health problems of either husband or wife will be keeping more and more from being able to travel. There are still many of our old buddies from the 315th who have never made one of the reunions. They are being a bit selfish, as many of their old buddies would give a lot to see them after all of these years.

As you all know, we lost a great friend and worker with the passing of Harry Black. Bernie and Bette Brown have jumped right in and have been working like mad to make this a great reunion. From the sounds of every thing that they have programed - it sounds like it will be one of the best !! They have done far more than their part - - NOW DO YOURS - SHOW UP !!!

At Norfolk we had a few sons and daughters that came to check out ol dads war story on how he won the war. They also wanted to see if his buddies of yesteryear were as crazy as some of his stories. A few of our widows came and enjoyed meeting old friends again. I hope more will come in the future - you are all part of the 315th family!!

SEE YA AT THE SHERATON IN OLD TOWN,

*Doc
R. F. Brown*

25 YEARS OF C-47s

For a couple of years now, Ed Papp has been bugging me to write a story about my military "Career". I guess that he thinks that I did not progress much over the years - started flying C-47s the first of 1944 and 25 years later - still flying C-47s. This will be a long and dull story - so go get a cold beer - a bowl full of chips - and pull up a comfortable ol chair. The story will start way back - when men were men - and we flew those airplanes with the round engines that had a prop in front!

The "GREEN PROJECT" was what caused all of my problem. The war was over and all of us 315th men were still down in Trinidad and Puerto Rico and we thought that we would never get home. I guess it was some time in late November of 1945 that I finally got to the states, I think that it was Camp Blanding, or something like that, in Florida. My plans were to get my processing done, pick up all of my records, and then head for the nearest air base and hitch a ride to California. It didn't work like that!

After all of the Army red tape, I picked up my records - along with about 23 other Officers and about 200 NCO and EM records. I had just been put in charge of a troop train going to Camp Beale, Calif. What a Trip!! By the second day I had lost everyone of the Officers. They kept hooking us on to different passenger trains across the country and at one time we were way up in Montana and Wyoming about to freeze our, you know what off. About 8 or 10 days later we got to Beale. This is where my real trouble started.

They had let too many pilots out of the service and were not going to let me out. Now you know, as a 1st Lt. hot pilot, who had just won the war, I was getting pretty hot under the collar with these stateside warriors. Some Bird Colonel came out of the office next door and chewed me a new one. They gave me a 45 day leave so I could go home for X-mas and then report in to Santa Ana. At Santa Ana they tried to talk me into staying in the service but said that if I would sign up for the reserve, I could get out. Sounded good to me!

In (I think it was 1948) I received a letter from the Air Force wanting to know if I would not like to go to Great Falls Montana for winter flight training and then participate in the Berlin airlift. I declined their invitation! In 1952 I did not get the choice - it was greetings! As I had a British Motorcycle and Car dealership in Visalia, Calif. that I had to sell, I just stayed in the service until retiring at Beale AF Base in 1970.

When they called me back I was sent to San Antonio for all of the briefings, physical, security clearance, and etc.. From there to Marana, AZ to advanced flying school in T-6s to get your instrument card and all of the ground school again. From there it was to SAC (dirty word), at Castle AFB, CA and the 93rd Refueling Sqdn. to fly KB-29s. These were the old worn out B-29s

(over, please)

that they had made into tankers. These old leaking jobs were pretty sad and did not fly much. Later we went into KC-97s, which were great airplanes. SAC did not fly much, we spent most of our time sitting on alert. As they had called my back to fly, I wanted to fly. They had three of four C-47c on the base that they flew ECM (electronic counter measure) missions up and down the coast to jam radar sites. I got check out in the old Gooney Bird again and flew it when I was not scheduled to fly tankers.

SAC was not for me and I volunteered for every assignment that came in. Finally they needed some one for the atomic test out in the Pacific. They transferred us to Albuquerque for me to get my "Q" clearance and the training that I would need. Col. Henry Hamby was the Base Commander there at Kirkland and I went to work for him as Assistant Base Operation Officer while waiting my "Q" clearance. Flew C-47s, C-45s and B-25s while there and enjoyed Kirkland AFB. Col. Hamby was a good Base Commander.

The tests out in the Pacific were called off when one of them "got away from them" and burnt a bunch of Japanese fishermen. I was sent to an AC&W outfit up above Thule, Greenland. For the next year I flew C-47s on skis all over the ice cap. Was a very interesting year to say the least. Most of my trips were out to our two radar sites that were built in big sewer pipes under the ice cap. Met a few interesting people while up there. Col. Bernt Balchen (Byrd's pilot and navigator) came up for a visit and they wanted me to check him out on skis. After a couple of landings, he scared us both so bad that we decided, this was something that he really didn't need to do. Took Sir Hubert Wilkins out on the ice cap and left him, where he was doing tests on survival gear and equipment of the U.S. Air Force. Lost two C-47s the year I was up there, one in a white out and one in the dark season, but both crews were rescued.

Came back to the states in 1955 and for the next four and a half years flew the Atlantic run for MATS in C-54s and C-124s out of Kelly and Dover. AACS was part of the MATS family at that time and they were looking for some pilots to be air traffic control officers. As I had lived out of a B-4 bag for over four years, an 8 to 5 job sounded pretty good to me! Nobody told me about the AACS Mobile Units.

When I finished air traffic controllers school I received my orders to the 1st Mobile AACS Sqdn. in Japan. What in the heck was this. When I arrived at Johnson Air Base in Japan I found that our area of work was all of the Pacific and Southeast Asia. My first job was to install a temporary control tower at Guam and get my facility rating as a controller there, got home for X-mas. Was assigned to Base Flight there at Johnson. We had C-47s, C-54s and C-119s. I had more time in C-54s than anyone on the base but when you are an assigned pilot, you fly what they give you - besides, the C-54s got the good trips to Hong Kong and other good places. As I had more time in C-47s, they made me an I P (instructor pilot) and flight examiner in the C-47. The

pay is the same, so who cares. Soon we lost our C-119s and not long after we could no longer justify keeping the C-54s, so the C-47s started getting the good trips. Shortly after this they told me that I should get jet qualified and fly the T-33 or I probably would be taken off of flying status in a year or two. I told them that I had a fan out there in front keeping me cool all of these years and I could not see lighting a fire under my butt at this late date. Everywhere I went for the next ten years they had C-47s, and not many pilots qualified to fly them. All of the young pilots had never been in a plane with a tail wheel and most had never started a radial engine in their life.

The stay of the 1st Mob in Japan was only 18 months after we were assigned. In that time I worked from Australia to all over Southeast Asia installing Control Towers, GCAs, Navigation Aids, Communication Systems, and etc. My most enjoyable TDY was the 48 days that I spent in Victoria, Australia in support of the U-2 program. The people in Australia were just great and it is the only country that I have ever been in that I might consider living in other than the good old U S of A.

In about June of 1961, the 1st Mob was moved to the Philippines, to be nearer our work in Southeast Asia. Over the past 7 or 8 years my poor wife, Peggy, had been both father, mother, mechanic, yard lady, bill payer, and etc. as I was gone a good share of the time. This move was no different as I was working in Thailand at the time. Peg had to drive the car to Yokahama for shipment and get all of the household goods packed and shipped. They got me home in time to fly with my wife a daughter to Clark Air Base, as dependents can not fly without their sponsor.

After the move of the 1st Mob to Clark, we went from being a Squadron to a Group, with many more teams deployed all over Southeast Asia. My flying again was C-47s with base flight on supply runs to detachments in Tiawan and to the big southern island of Mindanao, in the Philippines. The flight to Mindanao was always interesting. Going down we would take supplies for a detachment there. We would land on a grass strip on the side of a mountain, that was cut out of a pineapple field on the Del Monte plantation. They had about 23,000 acres there with about 18,000 or so in pineapple. You would land up-hill and take off down-hill. The load back would be fresh corn, tomatoes and pineapple for the base.

We returned to the states in the summer of 1962 and I could not believe that no one knew that there was anything going on in Southeast Asia. My little outfit had over 900 men deployed in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand at that time. My new assignment was an AFCS Flight Check Sqdn. at Westover AFB, MA. flying C-47s. Our job was to check navigation aids and air traffic controllers in the northeastern US, Canada and the North Atlantic. Lasted only 6 months, as FAA took over the job. Am sure it cost the tax payers three or four times more to do the same job.

(over, please)

They had to transfer all of us to new duty stations and being that I had not been there a year, they could not PCS me - so they sent me TDY to Eglin AFB, FL to be the operation officer for an AFCS test force. Moved the family down after the first of the year. The next two and a half years were very interesting and Peggy could not get used to me being home most every night. I had the pick of the command for the next few years to test new mobile equipment for Southeast Asia. These Air Traffic Controllers and Maintenance men were some of the best NCO and Airmen I have ever worked with. Had 44 civilian technicians that got paid two or three times as much as my airmen and most of the airmen were far better technicians. Again my flying was C-47s with base flight. Flying photo missions for tests, trying to check out B-52 pilots in C-47s so they could go fly the C-47 gun ships in Nam. Many week end trips to Andrews AFB in the DC area and some to the Boston area.

In the summer of 1965, my test force and all of the equipment that we had been testing for the Air Force, were transferred to the 4th Mobile Com. Group at Hunter AFB, Savannah, GA. Our job was to train them to operate and maintain the equipment during the next year. Again, the Group had a C-47 to use as support. At the end of that year, I was transferred to Lajes Air Base in the Portuguese Azores as the Air Traffic Control Officer.

For you that do not know, Lajes is on the Island of Terceira, out in the Atlantic about 800 miles off the coast of Portugal. If I remember right, it was about 37 miles around the Island. Gets kind of small after a couple of years. While flying the Atlantic for MATS I had spent many crew rests there, sometimes weathered in a week at a time because of high winds and bad weather. Always said that it was a good place to crew rest but would sure hate to be stationed there. In some ways, it turned out to be our best assignment. The bad part was the schooling and restrictions placed on the dependents. Our daughter had a drivers license in the states but was not allowed to drive over there. Her Junior and Senior years of High School were very limited, graduating in a class of 22. She did get to travel in Europe a couple of times, which did give her a little break.

Before going to Lajes I was sent up to Atlantic City to fly with FAA and take a couple of weeks refresher course in Flight Checking, so I could be their representative in the Azores. Again, we had two C-47s to fly in base flight. Most of the flying was up and down the Islands. The richest and most important Island is San Miguel, about 90 miles south of Lajes. Our U.S. Consul is in the town of Ponta Delgada there and we flew supplies and personnel into the local cow pasture to support them. The cows had a rear leg tied to a stake during the day so we could land in the clear area, when it was not too muddy, that is. This U.S. Consulate was one of our first, established many years ago.

About 50 miles farther south is the Island of Santa Maria where the big commercial airport for the Azores is located. Most of my flying was up and down this run, flying Portugese military and civilians, along with their, chickens, pigs, corn, and you name it. Also got to do a little legal buzzing with the people-to-people program. We rigged up one of the old gooney birds as a spray plane to help them with the fruit fly problem. The air was real rough down just over the tree tops and the poor Airmen in the back working the pumps would get pretty sick.

The Portugese Air Force had quite a few schools at Lajes. Multi-engine pilot training, (using C-47s & C-54s) Navigators and Loadmasters, Weather Observers and Air traffic Controllers. Our Squadron ran the Air Traffic Control School for them and just about the time where we would get them trained so they were real good in the Rapcon or Control Tower, and spoke pretty good English, they would send them off to their war. This was a Portugese Air Base and we were just there because our Air Force and their Military got along good together. The two governments were not getting along too good and we did not have a statis in force agreement to be there at that time.

I had made a few training tapes to help their schools with English phrases used by the controllers and etc. as well as helping with some pilot training manuals for the C-47s. As a result, I knew most of the Portugese Officers. One day I picked up Maj. Souza, the Group Commander at the Airport on Santa Maria to fly him back to Lajes. During the flight he came up front and we talked on the way home. I told him some day I would like to go on one of their training flights in the C-54 as a crew member. To get their crew training, they would fly to Lisbon, pick up a load, and then fly it down to Africa some where.

One day, about a month later, Maj. Souza and the Portugese Base Commander came up to my office and presented me with a letter from their Air Force inviting my wife, daughter, and myself to visit their WAR in Angola and Mozambique. Well there was no way that my family wanted to go, but I thought it would be great! To make a long story short - much paper work - disapproved by the State Department - I took leave - put on a civilian suit - Maj. Souza flew me to Lisbon to their Air Force Hqs. - and away I went !

Visited, Portugese Guinea, San Tome, Angola and Mozambique. Everywhere we landed, I was met by a Officer or NCO who I had help train at Lajes. They treated me like I was a General. It looked like WW II with the old equipment they were using. In some case it was T-6s with bomb racks and 30 cal. guns in the wings. It was a very interesting two weeks

Served as Squadron Commander the last few months of my tour there at Lajes and then came to Beale AFB as Commander of the AFCS Sqdn. Yes- they had 2 more C-47s. I flew one to Miami in late 1969 to go to one of our Embassies in South American. I retired in May of 1970 - they retired the other C-47 !.

Robert L. Doc Cloer

(over, please)

It seems that somewhere, someplace in the world, one can find an article about "the best airplane in the world" and, sure enough, Marty Dean found the following story in the *DAILY HERALD* issue of 4-17-92. A 4-column wide picture of no less than 9 C-47s flying in formation ran above the story which follows.

50 years after heyday, DC-3s still flying high

By Arieh O'Sullivan
Associated Press

AIR BASE IN CENTRAL ISRAEL

-----It's a sight from the heyday of the propeller plane, a dozen Douglas DC-3s lined up on a tarmac like old gray geese, ready to barnstorm their way into the next century.

These grandfathers of aviation belong to the Israeli air force, which owns ---and still operates -- one of the world's largest collections of DC-3s. the twin-engine workhorses of World War II nicknamed "gooney birds" by American pilots.

Why would a modern air force maintain a fleet of 57-year-old planes when it has F-15s and Apache helicopters?

Because this is an air force proud of its ability to improvise and defy the rules. Also, the DC-3, or Dakota as Israelis know it, is cheap to run, does the job without a hitch and keeps pilots in touch with the simple, uncomplicated joy of flight.

Anyway, their pilots say, the only replacement for a DC-3 is another DC-3.

They stand wingtip to wingtip on the tarmac at this air base in central Israel, their gentle, reassuring contours etched against a blue Mediterranean sky. They are fueled and as ready to go as they were 50 years ago

Once airborne for a recent training flight, the DC-3 bucked along at 135 mph, its piston engines sobbing and hearing. A young lieutenant pilot held tightly to the wheel of the plane --- circa 1942 --- as it bounced and jiggled.

"You need a lot of knuckle power to fly this one" he says.

Yawi ROM laughed out loud. "It's a different generation, what can I tell you," she shouts over the roar of the engines.

ROM, now a matronly, white-haired 58, was a legend in her time. She was the Israeli air force's first and only woman pilot, and she flew the lead plane in the paratroop drop that was crucial to the 1956 Sinai Campaign.

"It is not true that I flew because there were not enough pilots," Rom says. "They chose me because I was trained for it."

Rom graduated No. 2 from flight school and continued to fly as a reservist until 1967. Now she had come along for the ride, along with another DC-3 veteran, Lt. Col. (ret.) Uri Biham.

Israel has 20 operational DC-3s today, according to the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

"This is not a museum. It's not a junkyard," says the DC-3 squadron commander, a lieutenant colonel whose name is classified.

The DC-3 first flew in 1935, and 10,629 were built, so that by the time production ended in 1945, it was one of the most-produced aircraft of all time.

The C-47, as the military version is called, saw its prime as the Allied transport plane of the World War II, then made a smooth transition to commercial traffic where it dominated in the 1960s.

DC-3s have flown more miles, hauled more freight, carried more passengers than any other aircraft.

Israel obtained some surplus-47s in the late 1940s and early 1950s and they have participated in every Arab-Israeli war.

The Haaretz newspaper, quoting foreign sources, recently reported they were flying over southern Lebanon using electronics to detonate guerrilla bombs on the ground. The military refused to comment.

Today, they are used to transport troops and material, train pilots and drop paratroopers.

The anonymous squadron commander said its operating are about one-tenth that of modern planes.

One crewman remarked how the DC-3 was a true "fly-by-wire" operation. He opened the back hatch to reveal the cables and pulleys that control the fin and stabilizer.

"It's just like a car," he says. "You fill it with gas, check the oil and that's it."

In 1984, the U.S. Air Force finally mothballed the C-47/ But most Third World air forces still use a DC-3 or two, as do small airlines and freight haulers.

Don Hanson, spokesman for the Douglas Aircraft Co. in Long Beach, Calif., estimated 1,500 are still flying somewhere in the world.

"We have never tried to put an end date on the DC-3s," Hanson says. "The FAA has said that their air-

worthiness depends on the actual condition of each individual plane. And the fact is that a lot of them are restored, and in good enough condition, that even today they're being re-engined with new turboprop engines, and they're coming back as essentially new airplanes."

The Israelis say their own aircraft industry supplies the spare parts they need. The squadron commander says crews from Holland and elsewhere have come to Israel to learn maintenance methods.

"Even a C-47 needs parts once in a while," says Israel Aircraft Industries spokesman Phil Herman. "As long as the Air Force wants to fly them, we'll supply the parts. If we can't make them, we'll procure them."

The squadron commander says the DC-3, unlike jets, forsakes pressurized cabins and supersonic speed and engages with nature, which is why jet pilots will fly the lumbering planes for the sheer joy of it.

DC-3 missions differ somewhat from Rom's flying days, when she rigged her plane to carry a Jeep strapped to its belly. "Stupid me, I flew with it," she says.

"Each of those planes were something else," Rom says, shaking her head. "Each with its own quirks."

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From Bill Brinson comes this piece about the best airplane in the world. It came in the form of a yellowed, carefully preserved newspaper clipping which appeared sometime in 1947. We reproduce it below.

They Put The Cushions Back In And Took The Glory Out Of Her

By Hal Boyle

ABOARD AN AIRPLANE NEARING DENVER (AP)

Peace has turned the old workhorse of the Army Air Corps back into a flying clothes horse.

They've gone and tidied up the C-47 again, and put her back in commercial harness--- just like a doughboy buck sergeant returned to his former job in a shoe store. She no longer wears a painted robe of tattered olive drab. Her sides are sleek silver, and inside she is cushioned and soft and clean. Each seat has a separate reading light, and there is a rack stocked with leather-covered copies of the latest magazines.

Every few moments a neat smiling stewardess comes through to ask:
"May I bring you some coffee or a cup of hot chocolate? Will you have some gum?"

Outside in the darkness the two sturdy props whirl the ship through the charted air to the certainty of a velvet landing where warmth and light and porters wait. And the sleek soft customers stretch out in comfortable seats, boredly passing the time until journey's end.

ENVOY WITH WINGS

Where is the old mystery and adventure? They shouldn't have done this to the C-47, the once raffish sky queen of the battle zones, the American ambassador with wings. What a gal she was! She carried a thousand things to Army troops all over the world. Plasma and food for "Vinegar Joe" in Burma and China, paratroopers to help Mark Clark turn back the German tide at Salerno, gasoline to keep "Old Blood and Guts" roaring across France after the battered Nazi legions.

She brought up tank parts and truck tires, sad-eyed battle replacements and visiting dignitaries, mail and Christmas turkeys, bullets and canned beef. And she carried no guns.

She brought back tired wounded, who wept in gratitude for the sanctuary of her thin sides and marked her with blood and mud.

(over, please)

She left her wheel marks in fields of new American romance---Karachi and Kunming, Bizerte and Bari, Thelepte and Palermo, Cairo and Hong-Kong.

It was something to ride her in those days. Now she is piloted by trained men dressed pretty as chauffeurs. Then she was squired by slouchy leather jacketed young gypsies who cheerfully overloaded her in a way that would make a safety expert at home squirm in his swivel chair. But the danger meant less to her crews than the fact the boys up front needed the supplies.

You sat on an aluminum bucket seat until your rump gave out. Then you unrolled a blanket on the vibrating floor and napped with a steel helmet for a pillow. Sometimes the pilot came back and sat in on the poker games. If the passengers ran out of food, the crew usually had an extra few packages of K-rations. And they had all the gossip from the different fields.

Your passport was a "hello" and the need for a ride. You didn't have to have tickets---- not until they "organized" the war anyway. When the trip was over, you waded a quarter of a mile through mud or sand to the operations shack carrying your kit on your own shoulder.

It all seemed miserable then, but everybody was in the same fix. And now looking back it was wonderful in a way that will never return.

FABULOUS DAY

They say the old C-47 soon will give way to faster, more efficient planes. Well she had a fabulous day. But they never should have brought the old girl back. They took out the fun when they put the cushions back in.

They should have taken the old girl out when the war was over and shot her through both engines and left her there on the forgotten fields of her glory.

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**WITH REGRET, WE RECORD THE DEATH
OF THESE COMRADES:**

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| John A. Golden | March 13, 1991 |
| Calvin E. Harris | December 28, 1991 |
| Lloyd Talich | May 15, 1992 |
| Robert E. Tynan | September 18, 1991 |

Here follows an interesting excerpt from a book called "WE" by Charles Lindbergh, one of the heroic figures in American aviation history. Sent to us by Bill Brinson who found it in a publication of the "Order of Daedalians".

"WE" BY CHARLES LINDBERGH: (Excerpts)

Born in Detroit, 4 Feb 1902. His father came here from Stockholm, Sweden where he had been a member of the Swedish Parliament. His dad's name was Ola Manson and he changed his name to Lindbergh when he reached the U.S.

Young Charles was 20 when he had his first ride in an airplane, 9 Apr 1922. He received his first instructional ride a few days later. He purchased a Gov't surplus "Jenny" for \$500. and made his first solo flight in that Jenny in Apr of 1923. About a year later in Mar 1924, he entered the Army Air Service Training School at Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX. He was one of 104 cadets, only 18 would graduate from Kelly AAF a year later.

Lindbergh was commissioned a 2Lt, Air Service, Reserve Corps. He did some barn-storming before joining the 110th Observation Sq of the 35th Div Missouri National Guard. He also picked up a commission as a 1Lt about Nov 1925. In April of 1926, he flew his first air mail flight from St. Louis. He would later have to make two emergency bail-outs due to bases closed for weather. In this case, he would fly to an unpopulated area and wait till he ran out of gas, he would parachute down and recover the mail from the wreckage which didn't burn because there was no fuel to start a fire.

As you remember, in 1919 there was a challenge issued to the fledgling aviation community ---fly New York to Paris, Prize \$25,000. Lindbergh first thought about it in 1926 while flying the mail. On 28 Feb '27 he placed an order with Ryan Airlines of San Diego for a plane equipped with a Wright Whirlwind J-5 C 200 HP radial, air-cooled engine and Pioneer navigation instruments. Sixty days after placing the order, Lindbergh, himself, test flew the airplane.

At 0740 on 20 May 1927 the engine was started and at 0752 he took off for Paris, 3610 miles away, 1850 miles of over-water flight. At times during the trip he dropped down to 10 feet because of weather and seldom was he higher than 200 feet. He was less than 200 feet when he sighted the coast of Ireland. The sun set after passing Cherbourg, France and he spotted Paris lights about 10:00 PM that night.

He was overwhelmed with people when he landed and had to cut the engine early to keep from killing someone. Interestingly, Lindbergh was 20 years old as a wing-walker and parachutist, 21 when he purchased his own plane and soloed same. He was 22 when he entered cadet training, 23 when he completed training and was commissioned a 2Lt. He was 25 when he flew the Atlantic. I guess life kinda slowed down a bit after that.

Concerning the item in the August, 1991 NEWSLETTER submitted by Dick Kucklick, this is a follow-up concerning the late Glenn Miller:

Recently, a member of the 315th Troop Carrier Group Association met Miller's son, Steven Miller at an Air Force "get-together", and the subject of his father's disappearance came up. Steven Miller said that he was familiar with the fact that a C-47-equipped Group had airlifted the band to an airfield near Paris, but he wasn't certain that he had been told which Group it was. He seemed to be interested in any information pertaining to his father's disappearance.

Steven Miller, who lives in California, went on to state that he had spent a considerable amount of time trying to find some substance for, or laying to rest, many of the stories that have arisen in recent years concerning what happened to his father. Among stories mentioned was the one published in a British newspaper in which a Royal Air Force bomber pilot stated that he believed that one of his bombs which was dropped in the English Channel after an aborted daylight mission had either hit the plane Miller was in, or the concussion of the bomb which detonated in the water near the low flying aircraft caused it to crash. Another story reported that Miller was seen a few days after his disappearance in a Paris bar; and a third was that Miller had never left England at all, but was involved in some secret business whose revelation would cause problems "higher up". Another was that he was mysteriously killed and his body buried at sea.

Miller's son said that he had heard all of the above stories, personally investigated them as far as possible, and had determined that all were unreliable or figments of the writer's imagination. Miller believes that what happened is this: the pilot of the Norseman, he has learned, was not a qualified weather pilot; he might have been pressured to make the flight in marginal weather by a more senior officer who was also on the plane, and the pilot probably lost control of the aircraft over the Channel, either because of disorientation in clouds, accumulation of wing ice, or the plane experienced carburetor ice and lost power. Whatever the cause, Steven Miller seemed convinced that the Norseman went into the water between the U.K. and France as a result of either weather or engine trouble.

Whatever happened, the generation who enjoyed the music of Glenn Miller regretted his loss and wished that he could have been present to celebrate VE Day in Europe and to provide his dance music for many more years than he did.

(over, please)

Some time ago, we received the following letters from a man in England who is undertaking an interesting project which requires some assistance from 315th people. The letters spell out the project and it would be great if any of our readers can provide the photos Mr. Penistan is seeking. If any reader has photos he can send, please send them to: N.J.Penistan PEGASUS MAIN STREET NOCTON LINCOLN LN4 2 BH. ENGLAND. We're sure he will return them after they've served their purpose. Thanks, in advance for your help.

The first letter:

"A few years ago I made some attempt to locate photographs and artifacts relating to the 315th TCG with a view of marking a restored WWII Jeep in the Group's codes and also put up a display board illustrating the Group's involvement in Normandy and Arnhem. I had very limited success at the time and I suppose I was somewhat put off making further inquiries. Since that time I have displayed both Jeeps and Dodge Ambulances as 315th vehicles and at present I am restoring a 1942 Dodge WC53 'Carry All' to take to Normandy in 1944. I felt it was time I tried again to obtain information and initially would like to join the 315th Association if that is possible, to obtain the newsletter. If you could advise how I may proceed I would be extremely grateful and you may even be able to help with copies of photographs which of course I will be only too happy to pay for." (Signed) N.J.Penistan.

Your editor replied to this letter and sent Mr. Penistan a copy of the current NEWSLETTER. Mr. Penistan answered that letter with the following letter:

Dear Mr. Papp: Many thanks for your letter of 30/3/92 enclosing a copy of the 315th NEWSLETTER. I enjoyed reading it and wonder what the possibility would be of obtaining any available backcopies? I hope my project is not as formidable as you indicate as I am confident that with your assistance some photographs, etc. will be forthcoming. Since I last wrote I have managed to purchase another 1943 Ford Jeep which is about to receive markings for the 310th Squadron including the "Soap Box" cartoon on the grill. When it is completed I will forward a photograph which you may wish to show the members in June. Thank you also for putting me on the mailing list for the June NEWSLETTER. Kind regards," (Signed) N.J. Penistan

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DUES PAYMENT.....DUES PAYMENT.....DUES PAYMENT.....DUES PAYMENT

Robert M. Davis, Treasurer
WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association
7025 Wind Run Way
Stone Mountain GA 30087

Dear Bob: Here's my check for \$10.00.....1 year's dues to the Association

20.00.....2 year's dues.

NAME.....SQUADRON

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....

THANK YOU.....THANK YOU.....THANK YOU.....THANK YOU.....THANK YOU

Y'all come!

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Live
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"WILD WEST SHOOT-OUT"

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BEGINNING AT 5:30pm

