

Newsletter Cold War Museum Newsletter- February 2009

By Baerbel Simon
Berlin Chapter

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Cold War Museum, Berlin Chapter

The Berlin Chapter wishes all the friends and supporters a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Thank you all very much for the many Christmas and New Year's greetings.

I am glad to offer the following report on the activities and development of the Berlin Chapter of the Cold War Museum.

The year 2008 was very successful for the Berlin Chapter. We made significant progress, the new exhibition of the Berlin Chapter – The first battle of the Cold War – The Berlin Airlift - has been open since May 24th 2008. Many guests were there from near and far, including 15 British Berlin Airlift Veterans. The Berlin Chapter has had a very positive feedback in the media and also we have had a number of invitations.

In June 2008 the British Berlin Airlift Association remembered the start of the Berlin Airlift in June 1948.

The Association invited as honored guests the representatives of the Berlin Chapter
The Cold War Museum Berlin Chapter was one of the co-sponsors.
Many thanks go to the Committee of the British Berlin Airlift Association.

From 20 August to 18 September, we visited the USA

We had many invitations and meetings and we have to thank again all the people who made our time enjoyable and successful.

History of the Airport Tempelhof

By David Greer

End of a legend. Tempelhof closed.

1720 The Tempelhof Field is used for Parades and Exercises.

1883 On the western part of the Tempelhof field the German army establishes an

Army Airship Detachment.

12 June 1897 the Airship designed by Dr.Hermann Woelfert, explodes during a test flight above the Tempelhofer Field. It's the first fatal accident in Tempelhof.



September 1909. Orville Wright starts a two week long demonstration of flights at Tempelhof
1914 The last military parade by Imperial German Forces is held at Tempelhof
1922 The first two Hangars are built at Tempelhof.
8 October 1923 The Tempelhof Airfield is officially opened. Services are opened by Junkers Luftverkehr and Deutsche Aero Lloyd.
6 January 1926 The Deutsche Lufthansa is founded at Tempelhof.
1 May 1933 The Nazis celebrated their "Mai Feier" at Tempelhof for the first time.
16 July 1933 Willie Post lands at Tempelhof during his around the world flight in his Lockheed Vega.
1934 Beginning of design studies for a new terminal building in Tempelhof under the leadership of Dr. Ernst Sagebiel by order of A.Hitler. The project is part of Hitler's vision for a new German capitol called "Germania".
1936 start of construction works for the new Terminal Building.
1937 Hanna Reitsch demonstrates the Focke Wulf FW61 Helicopter at Tempelhof.
September 1939 due to the outbreak of war in Europe all flights are directed to Rangsdorf "South of Berlin"
March 1940 flights to Tempelhof resum.
21 April 1945 the last Lufthansa Aircraft, a FW200 Condor, leaves Berlin
28/29 April 1945 Soviet forces capture Tempelhof Airport.
8 May 1945 Allied delegation arrive at Tempelhof for the signing of surrender.
4 July 1945 US Forces take over Tempelhof from the Soviets
18 May 1946 American Overseas Airlines (AOA) inaugurates a weekly scheduled service from New York via Amsterdam and Frankfurt to Berlin Tempelhof. An attempt to extend the route in the future via Warsaw to Moscow fails.
26 June 1948 Start of the Berlin Airlift. American Overseas Airlines joins in from Day 1 with a load of potatoes by request of the Occupational Government US Zone (OMGUS)
25 July 1948 Fatal crash of a C-47 west of Tempelhof. 2 casualties.
18 May 1948 lifting of the Berlin Blockade.
20 May 1950 first Armed Forces Day is held at Tempelhof
14 July 1950 Agreement between the US Air Force and the City of Berlin for civil use of Tempelhof Airport.
September 1950 Pan American World Airways takes over American Overseas Airlines and their rights to fly to Berlin.
9 July 1951 General Mathewson turns over parts of Tempelhof to civil aviation.
British European Airways moves it's Berlin operation from Gatow to Tempelhof.
The Airlift Memorial is dedicated at what is now known as the "Platz der Luftbruecke".
April 1952 The US Army established an Aviation Detachment with 3 Hiller OH-23A Raven Helicopters at Tempelhof.
29 April 1952 The Air France DC-4 F-BELI is attacked by Soviet Mig15 Jet Fighters en route Frankfurt/Main-Berlin Tempelhof. After landing 89 bullet holes are counted.
6 June 1954 Pan Am starts to replace the DC-4 on its "Internal German Service"(IGS) with the bigger and faster DC-6
7 October 1957 Air France uses the Lockheed L1049 Super Constellation on it's Paris Berlin flight for the first time.

1 November 1958 British European Airways starts flights to Berlin with the turbo prop powered Vickers Viscount for the first time.

2 January 1960 Air France leaves Tempelhof for Tegel Airport in the French Sector of Berlin.

2 July 1962 Opening of the huge main hall at Tempelhof.

4 July 1964 The USAF celebrates "Independence Day" with an "Open House". All Berliners are invited.

2 December 1964 Boeing demonstrates the all new Boeing 727 Jet at Tempelhof.

22 January 1966 Hawker Siddeley demonstrates the HS 121 Trident at Tempelhof marking the first visit of a British built jet aircraft to Tempelhof.

29 January 1966 the British Aircraft Corporation demonstrates the Bac 1-11 at Tempelhof. Cited as relatively quiet by German newspapers the Bac 1-11 turns out to be the noisiest aircraft in the history of Tempelhof.

1 April 1966 Pan American introduces the Boeing 727-100 to its Internal German Service.

16 September 1966 marks the completed transition from piston engined DC-6 to jet powered Boeing 727.

1 July 1966 first landing of a jet powered military transport aircraft Lockheed C-141A Starlifter at Tempelhof

1 April 1968 British European Airways introduces the Bac 1-11 500, dubbed the "Super One Eleven" at Tempelhof

17 September 1971 The worlds largest aircraft, the Lockheed C-5A Galaxy from the 436 MAW USAF from Dover Delaware, lands at Tempelhof.

1 November 1971. British Airways withdraws the Vickers Viscount from Berlin.

1 September 1975 Pan Am and British Airways move their Berlin Service from Tempelhof to Tegel.

18 September 1976 First landing of a Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet at Tempelhof, Boeing 747SP N534PA Clipper Great Republic arrives from Amsterdam for the annual Tempelhof Open House.

1 October 1985 Tempelhof Airways inaugurates service from Berlin to Paderborn/Lippstadt with a Nord 262. The flights were operated previously exclusively for German computer manufacturer Nixdorf as a corporate shuttle.

9 November 1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall.

3 October 1990 German Reunification

28 October 1990 Swiss Airline Crossair inaugurates first scheduled service by non allied air carrier to Tempelhof from Basel/Mulhouse.

6 June 1992 Last Open House of the USAF at Tempelhof . Among the attendees is a Russian Mil Mi 6 Helicopter from the Mobile Brigade at Oranienburg as well as aircrafts and helicopters of the Federal German Armed Forces.

June 1993 the 7350 Air Base Group USAF stands down.

13 July 1994 the last flight of a Lockheed C-5 Galaxy to Tempelhof to pick up the helicopter of US President William Clinton, who attended the formal withdrawal of the US Army Berlin Brigade 12 July 1994.

August 1994. The US Army Berlin Brigade Aviation Detachment leaves Tempelhof with its last helicopter being donated to the newly formed Allied Museum Berlin.

14 July 1998 Boeing C-17A 96-0006 is christened "Spirit of Berlin" by US President William Clinton, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Airlift Veteran Gail S. Halvorsen.
25/26 June 1998 Berlin celebrates the 50 anniversary of the Berlin Airlift at Tempelhof.
30 October 2008 End of a legend. Tempelhof closed by 23:59h Local time.

The Berlin Airlift and the Allies

Most people later believed that all who had worked on the airlift were troops from the United States of America and the United Kingdom. This is, of course, not the case; troops from the British Commonwealth supported the Berlin airlift actively.

Therefore, we should remember all of them who struggled during the Berlin Airlift with courage for freedom and democracy in West Berlin.

I am pleased to present the written experiences by a South African Air Force Major General. Many thanks go to SAAF Major General ret. Duncan Ralston.

SA AIR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

By SAAF Major General ret. Duncan Ralston Chairman
SA Berlin Airlift Reunion Committee

SA Air Force participation in the Berlin Airlift was limited to two contingents of ten air crews each. Each individual crew comprised a pilot, navigator and wireless operator. There was also a special aircrew in each contingent for Gen Poole the South African Ambassador in West Germany. The two contingents were flown to England and returned in SA Air Force Dakotas via East Africa, Egypt and Malta; the trip taking five days. The South African crews were given intensive training by the RAF at Bassingbourn in England before flying to Lubeck in West Germany. RAF aircraft were flown on the Airlift but each SA Air Force contingent acted as an individual entity under its own OC. In all other aspects full use was made of the various facilities provided by the RAF. The two separate contingents flew a total of 2 500 sorties into Berlin and delivered 8 333 tons of supplies into the beleaguered city. Other South African Air Force aircrew were attached to 24 Commonwealth Squadron, RAF, and also flew some sorties on the Airlift. A total of 81 members of the South African Air Force flew on the Airlift. Sadly only some 14 of them still survive today.

It is interesting to note that all the SA Air Force navigators who flew on the Airlift were also pilots and had been trained as navigators by Duncan Ralston. He served first as a navigator for a year with 27 Squadron, SA Air Force, in 1942/43 before qualifying as a pilot and returning to the same squadron in late 1944. Only Joe Joubert and Gardner-Atkinson did not have WW11 experience.

The route to England was from Pretoria via N'Dola, Tabora, Nairobi, Juba, Khartoum, Luxor, Fayid, El Adem, Luqa, Istres and then to Bassingbourne via Oakington. SA Air Force

Dakotas were used for these flights being returned to South Africa by separate crews. The total flying time to England was about 41 hours.

All the missions flown by the SA Air Force crews were without a major incident except one. At four o'clock in the morning in a thunderstorm as it approached Fronhau Beacon the aircraft flown by Lt Tom Condon suffered an engine failure. Unfortunately the radar lost contact with the aircraft in the heavy rain during the final approach to landing at Gatow. When Tom broke cloud at about fifty feet above the ground he found he was at an angle to the runway and in no position to attempt a landing. He immediately applied full power to the live engine and, struggling to maintain control of the aircraft and gain height, he shouted to the navigator, Lt Joe Joubert, and the wireless operator, F/Sgt Ted Bengston, to jettison the load which comprised 6 500 lbs of coal in 100lb sacks. This they did in record time. Ted recalled throwing the bags out of the door and watching the sacks bursting in the trees below the aircraft. One of the bags broke through the roof of the kitchen of the house of Sir Brian Robertson, the commander of the British forces in Berlin – the only direct delivery of coal to a house during the whole Airlift. As the aircraft was relieved of its load, Tom was able to gain height and eventually make a safe landing at Gatow. For this display of flying skill and airmanship Tom was awarded the Air Force Cross by the RAF.

The only other incidents were when on two separate occasions one of our own aircraft passed others in the same stream at night and in cloud and arrived at Fronhau Beacon ahead of schedule much to the consternation of aircrew of the other aircraft who had been passed on the way. On another occasion our stream of aircraft ended up in a severe electrical storm on the return leg to Lubeck, the St Elmo's fire made all the aircraft glow an eerie green. The one aircraft was hit by a peculiar ball of lightning about the size of a football that exploded with a huge bang when it hit the nose cone removing most of the paint on it and rendering the compass, intercom and other electrical circuits unserviceable. It was a terrifying experience for the crew but the poor refugee passengers were in a very bad way, several of them having had accidents and soiling themselves.

The SA Air Force aircrews were privileged to have been given the opportunity to fly on the Airlift and gained a lot valuable flying experience. Flying on the Airlift was demanding requiring skill, concentration on the task at hand and, at times, involving some considerable degree of tension. But it was also rewarding in giving all those who participated a sense of achievement and of having done a good job. It was a never to be forgotten experience.

We are aware of the significant role that the Airlift played in foiling Russian expansionism in Western Europe and proud of the contribution that we were able to make. The attempted Russian blockade of Berlin was a direct challenge to those who wish to preserve freedom throughout the world. It was a challenge met and defeated by the unique Berlin Airlift. To quote a more profound acknowledgement "The Berlin Airlift was born in peace, lived in peace and today died in peace". For perhaps the only time in history a major threat to world peace was averted by peaceful means.

Finally, it was a privilege to fly with the Royal Air Force and to continue our close association with them that goes back to WW1 and to General Smuts' recommendation to the Imperial War Cabinet that the wartime Royal Flying Corps should be made an independent Arm of the Service. This led to the RAF becoming the first independent Air Force in the world to be closely followed by the SA Air Force as the second.



Fig.2 SA Air Force Officers of the second contingent

SAAF officers who were part of the second group. At the back are Jannie Blaauw (OC), Albie Gotze, Willem Steyler, Vic de Villiers, Mike Pretorius, Duncan Ralston, Bill Nicholas, Jack Davis, and Dormie Barlow. In the front are Jenks Jenkins {RAF instructor}, Pat Clulow, Tom Condon, Johnnie Eloff, Micky Lamb, "Shadow" Gardner- Atkinson and Joe Joubert (at the far right).

More information you find
The South African Military History Society
<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol112ts.html>

Literature: The Unheralded: Men and Women of the Berlin Blockade and Airlift
by Edwin Gere

In Memoriam
Patricia M. Goss

By Baerbel E. Simon

Our beloved friend Miss Patricia M. Goss passed away on the October 5th, 2008. Miss Goss and her friend Betty Stern served in the Women's Voluntary Service and both served on the Berlin Airlift in 1948 too.

Patricia M. Goss and Betty Stern arrived at Wunstorf in the pouring rain and found that the tented camp to which they had been posted was in a sea of mud!! So much rain had fallen that the paths between the tents were made up with duckboards. They were shown to a 10x 10 foot tent with two tables and a few folding wooden chair - and this was supposed to be a 'Clubroom for 100's.' They protested that they must have somewhere better than that. Her friend, ever resourceful, found the lid of a packing case, wrote on it 'WVS Kosy Korner' and



they stuck it up outside the tent!

(Betty used lipstick for this).

Their complaints were noted and by the end of two weeks, they were installed in a large marquee next door to the NAAFI tent. Equipped with comfortable chairs, tables, two dartboards on backing boards against the wall of the marquee, a table tennis table and a pool table and ample space for their collection of magazines and papers, board games, cards, gramophone and records.

They were dealing with the RASC, who were responsible for loading the aircraft - they were divided into three sections, working 8-hour shifts on a rotational basis, so there was always one section 'off-duty' and eager to relax. "Their Kosy Korner" was open from 10am to 10pm. -long hours but they enjoyed it and were on good terms with the boys and organized inter-section matches of darts, table tennis, draughts, dominoes etc. to help make their off-duty periods more enjoyable.

While the Air Force personnel, quite rightly, got most of the credit for flying the planes, tribute must be paid to the Army, who ensured that the supplies were available, and helped to load the aircraft properly and securely.

The RAF had their club for use in their off-duty times. Betty's job was to provide the same facilities for the troops and in doing so, the WVS had a small but important part to play in ensuring the success of the Airlift.

Paddy and Betty were life long friends and they still remember their time at Wunstorf with affection, and they were proud to know they played a part in such an eventful time.

Patricia and her sister Pru lived at last in Tharpston, England

Betty Stern is living in Lincoln, England.

Women's Voluntary Service

WVS was initially formed to help civilians during the Second World War - in evacuation, emergency feeding and providing general care and support. Since then, our services have evolved and we are now a major service provider giving practical help, particularly for older people, to enable choice, independence and dignity so people can enjoy an improved quality of life - all with the help of nearly 55,000 volunteers.

During the Berlin Airlift the Women's Royal Voluntary Service supported the British Troops in Germany.

www.wrvs.org.uk

Further information about the Cold War Museum is available on the internet:

www.coldwar.org/BerlinChapter

www.atombunker-16-102.de

Photos: Airfield Tempelhof - National Air Force Museum of the USA, Dayton, Ohio; USA

Archive: The Cold War Museum / Berlin Chapter, Horst Simon Berlin Chapter

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National Air Force Museum of the

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