



TRAVIS AIR MUSEUM NEWS

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Troops dropping over the Korean hills from C-119.

The Korean War

Korea emerged from World War II a divided country, a communist North and a pro-Western South. The North and the South both hoped for unification, but on their own terms. By early 1949, North Korea seemed to be on a war footing. Its leader, Kim Il Sung, gave a bellicose New Year's speech in which he excoriated South Korea as a puppet state. His army expanded rapidly. Soldiers drilled in war maneuvers and bond drives began to amass the necessary funds to purchase Soviet weapons. The thirty-eighth parallel dividing North and South Korea was fortified and border incidents began to occur. Neither P'yongyang nor Seoul recognized the parallel as a permanent legitimate boundary.

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*Korean War
Exhibit:
"In The
Field"*

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Comments and questions about the NEWS may be addressed to Editor, Travis Air Force Museum NEWS, PO Box 1565, Travis AFB, CA 94535

TRAVIS AIR MUSEUM Mission Statement

The purpose of the Museum is to portray the history of Travis Air Force Base's contribution to the development of airlift in the Pacific.

It's primary objectives are:

- To provide and maintain an aviation and aerospace, educational, scientific, cultural, historical and inspirational facility for the general public.
- To provide to youth, students and scholars historical research facilities and inspirational exhibits.
- To serve as a meeting place and forum for aerospace oriented organizations and individuals for the benefit of all Northern California.

* In accordance with AFPD 64-1,
Air Force History and Museum Program.

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Walter Kane and Eric Schmidt, Docents



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*The Museum Gift Shop
 is now offering **collectors coins**
 for the Travis Air Museum,
 the 60th AW Director Staff
 and the Solano County 150th year
 anniversary. The Solano county
 coins are available in bronze,
 silver, or gold.*

Volunteers needed.

CURATORS CORNER



By Gary Leiser

After several years of much work and many unforeseen delays, I am

pleased to say that our History of Travis exhibit is finished. Thanks above all to the perseverance and hard work of **Heinz Eggers** and **Denell Burks**, we now have an exhibit that provides a fairly detailed overview, decade by decade from the 40s through the 90s, of the history of the base. Displayed in handsome cabinets, the exhibit is composed of dozens of photos, summary texts, and representative objects. We invite all members to drop by to see it.

WAR IN VIETNAM EXHIBIT

Meanwhile, we have begun work on another exhibit that is long overdue—the War in Vietnam. During February we were fortunate to benefit from the talents of **Major Diana Newlin**, a Reservist who had been assigned to Public Affairs. She designed and then began collecting materials for this exhibit, which will focus on the role of Travis in that conflict. She will return during the month of April to complete her work. We hope to have the exhibit finished by the early summer.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXHIBIT

With regard to exhibits, I should add that **James Warren**, one of

the original Tuskegee Airmen, who was instrumental in building our Tuskegee Airmen exhibit some six years ago, has significantly expanded and upgraded that exhibit.

CHINA BURMA INDIA DISPLAY

Another “vintage” exhibit that is in the process of being remodeled is our China Burma India (CBI) display. It will be almost completely rearranged, given new back panels, and fresh and more readable text.

VOLUNTEER CREW

Among the many projects of the volunteers, **Don Austin**, **Ryan Sobeck**, **Eric Schmidt**, and **Ben Reed** worked on the C-123 (not to mention tying it down in the face of strong winds); **Eric** also cleaned parts of the B-52; and **Fred Collman** began painting, single handedly, the A-26. **Fred** has had to refrain from this project temporarily because of illness, but we hope he will be back soon. **Don**, **Eric**, **Ben** and **Joe Tattersall** also put in some time on the Albatross. **Joe** worked on the engine of the BT-19; **Ryan** and **Jim Martin** cleaned and installed engine screens on the H-21; **Ben Reed** patched a few holes in, and added touch-up paint to, the T-39 in front of the Base Conference Center; **Mark O’Conner** cleaned the F-104. **Bill Lancaster** did preliminary work in planning for the construction of an office in the museum for the

wing historian.

MUSEUM STAFF

MSgt Omler and **TSgt Hoover** have been busy disposing of items from the 200 Area, including the large old Bank of America kiosk, as well as other flotsam from around the museum.

DOCENTS

Eric Schmidt and **Walter Kane** continue to give excellent tours to a wide range of groups. In addition Walter was interviewed for a documentary on airlift in the Korean War being produced by the History Office at AMC.

NEW MUSEUM BROCHURE

I note too, that **Denell Burks** has produced a new “slip-in” brochure for the museum.

NEW MUSEUM UPDATE

We continue to make progress toward a new museum. The legal package that will allow the museum to use Jimmy Doolittle’s name has been finished. The environmental assessment for the site SE of the hospital should be completed in April. The “master plan,” which I have been working on, will soon receive its finishing touches. On March 19 this plan will be presented to the AMC Museum Oversight Committee, which must approve it before the project and go forward. Following AMC approval, the plan goes to the Air Staff at the Pentagon for final approval. Meanwhile,

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CURATOR CONT.

the new Museum Working Group plans to hear presentations from several more professional fundraisers. It hopes to have a professional fundraiser lined up by the time final approval is received. **Koerner Rombauer**, the Chair of the Museum Working Group, flew a small group to Seattle to meet with the leadership of the Seattle Museum of Flight, which is also embarking on an ambitious fundraising campaign. The group received some valuable advice and a copy of the Seattle master plan. Among the group was **Peter Buffington** of Studios Architecture in San Francisco who has been doing some *pro bono* work for us. Much to everyone's great interest, he recently presented a design concept for the new museum. More on that in coming issues of the newsletter.

BUILDING FUND THANK YOU

Finally, it is with great pleasure that I thank those who have, since January, made generous contributions to the new building fund: **Walter Karkut, John King, Terry LaMaida, Paul Myers, Jack Sells, Larry Smith, William Welch, Robert Worcester, Thomas Jasskela, Paul Bergerot, Stephen Carbonaro, Norman Ebel, John Everette, William Finlinson, Ralph Hays, John Hindman, Ronald Michaels, Lloyd Tincher, Margaret Urbino, Iver Vollmer, and Steven Yeghoian.**

RESTORATION OF A PB4Y-2 BOW TURRET

(Model Number 250SH-3)



Restoration Crew:

AMH1(AW) VOIGHT	AT1 SAPP
AD2 KIRKPATRICK	AT2 HUGHES
AE2 HUNTER	AT3 BARRON
AMS3 VALLEJO	IS3 LOEWENSTEIN
AME3 DWORSCHAK	AT3 POPOWSKI
AMEAN CAMPBELL	AMSAN WHITE

Thank you
for a job
well done.

By Mat Voight

This turret was originally designed by Boeing Aircraft corporation in 1940 for use on the Boeing XPBB-1 Sea Ranger. It was built by the ERCO Company of Riverdale, MD and holds the distinction of being the first powered turret carrying twin .50-caliber guns to be specified for an American Naval plane. In the XPBB-1, it was carried in three positions (nose, upper fuselage, and tail), but due to the changing strategic situation in the Pacific during WW II the contract for full-scale production of the XPBB-1 in Renton, Washington was cancelled in favor of the B-29 Superfortress. However, the design of the 250SH turret proved satisfactory to the U. S. Navy and was soon adopted as a modification to the nose section of some PB4Y-1 Liberators. These Liberators were essentially B-24D in every respect, but the addition of the new bow turret carrying 600 rounds of ammunition was

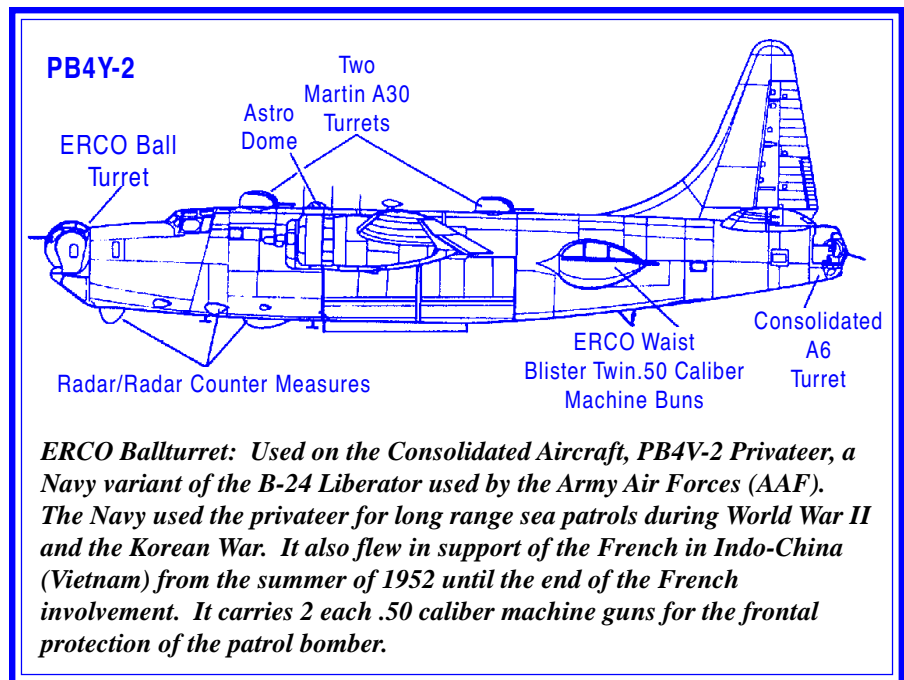
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PB4Y-2 Bow TURRET CONTINUED

credited with diminishing combat losses of the PB4Y-1's. Beginning in early 1944, the U. S. Navy accepted a highly modified and improved version of the Liberator known as the PB4Y-2 Privateer.

This particular turret, a model 250SH-3, was built for the Privateer nose section. It carried a total of 1300 hundred rounds of ammunition in three cases. A total of 3000 ERCO 250SH turrets were manufactured. Indications from particular equipment installed in this specific example show that it is in the serial number range of **982** to **1351**. A specific serial number cannot be determined as all data plates were removed after its service, probably while in the possession of the Aberdeen Proving Grounds where it may have been stripped of much of its equipment and modified with a makeshift sight.

The turret is a self-contained unit capable of operating independent of aircraft power if necessary. Arc of fire was from 70 degrees below horizontal to 85 degrees above and 80 degrees to either side. Empty weight is 561 pounds and fully loaded weight is 1131 pounds. The turret diameter is 54 inches and is hydraulically driven on an internally mounted 1000 p.s.i. system. As the rounds were fired, spent shell casings dropped into the chute below the guns and collected in



the front of the turret where they could be removed after flight through the access panel on the front. Belt clips were ejected sideways through chutes to leather bags that were also emptied after flight. Armor plating included (two) 1/4 inch foot plates, a 1/2 inch plate covering the entire forward ammo box and a 1-1/2 inch armored glass gun sight. It should be noted that, despite the appearance of cramped conditions, more equipment was installed in this turret than what is presently displayed. That equipment included a MK-9 gunsight, a turret control panel, belt collection bags, a hydraulic pump/motor under the seat, all hydraulic lines, arm rests installed on the side ammo boxes, a gun camera, the Plexiglas cover and of course, the gunner with his

oxygen and communication gear.

Restoration was carried out by U. S. Navy personnel from VQ-3 Detachment Travis and entailed over 250 man-hours. This turret is historically significant because it was installed on the PB4Y-2; the only 4-engine heavy bomber designed specifically for the U. S. Navy. VQ-3 now flies the E-6 Mercury, the only 4-engine heavy jet aircraft designed specifically for the U. S. Navy. A total of 736 PB4Y-2 Privateers were produced with 61 being lost to all causes during WW II. A Privateer crew is also credited with being the first casualty of the Cold War having been shot down on a reconnaissance mission over Russia in 1948.

A REAL LIVE M*A*S*H STORY

By Greg Haran

The Travis Air Museum has on display the modern Air Force equivalent of a “M*A*S*H” field station. In World War II, the situation was a bit different. When I catch an old rerun of the M*A*S*H series on TV, I get to thinking of Norman Ebel, a resident of the Veterans’ Home in Yountville for the past 10 years in Section G Ward 16. Norman has slight mobility problems, but he seldom fails to take his meals in the dining room.

During World War II, Norman served in the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (M*A*S*H) units of that conflict. After spending his first three and one half months in the service with the Coast Artillery, he requested a transfer and got one to the Medical Corps at Fort Lewis, Washington. He was trained as a general corpsman there and then was shipped to Scofield Barracks in Hawaii for Medical Corps training in jungle warfare.

When his training was completed, he was assigned to the 321st General Hospital. He continued training with his unit until it was assigned to Ft. Lawton near Seattle and then he went aboard the USS McLaughlin, a Naval Assault Transport Vessel. It was to participate in the assault of Okinawa, near the city of Naha, in April 1945. After the initial assault, the McLaughlin stood by as the evacuation hospital for the units that landed. The fight for Naha was pretty intense and the casualties were treated onboard the McLaughlin within minutes of their occurrence.

The Army captured a Japanese airfield that was right on the shoreline near where the McLaughlin was anchored. So the second day after the invasion, DC-

3s were flown into a strip that was set up to evacuate the wounded, somewhat like flying mobile aid stations. The wounded from the McLaughlin were transferred to a plane within hours, and after a one and a half hour flight they reached a first-class facility on Saipan or Guam. Just like in the M*A*S*H series.

Norman acted as a male nurse and litter bearer and saw at first hand the suffering that always accompanies heavy fighting. He also observed the first attempts at treating battlefield casualties promptly to lessen medical problems. Many of the lessons learned in World War II were later applied to the Korean War when helicopters were used to evacuate the wounded very quickly.

The McLaughlin stayed off shore near Naha until August 1945. After Japan surrendered on September 3, 1945, the ship, with Norman still

aboard, moved to Tokyo Bay. In Tokyo the medical teams on board were organized into the 317th General Hospital Unit. Norman worked as a surgical technician in this unit and cared for 22 men at a time in two wards, just like a registered nurse.

In March 1946, Norman was transferred back to the United States. He was last stationed at Camp Beale near Marysville, CA. There he was discharged and returned home to his parents’ farm near Bakersfield.

Today, Norman can always be seen enjoying the varied activities such as the symphony and band concerts, the travel series in the theater, and tries to take trips to visit Naval vessels or air bases or take advantage of other activities offered by the Veterans’ Home. Norman says he cannot imagine how he would get along without it.

*When I catch an old rerun of the M*A*S*H series on TV, I get to thinking of Norman Ebel, a resident of the Veterans’ Home in Yountville for the past 10 years in Section G Ward 16. Norman has slight mobility problems, but he seldom fails to take his meals in the dining room.*

THE KOREAN WAR EXHIBIT: "IN THE FIELD" CONTINUED



B-29 on a bombing mission over North Korea.

Although many aspects of the Korean War remain obscure, it seems that the beginning of conventional war in June 1950 was mainly Kim's decision and that the key enabling factor was the existence of as many as 100,000 troops with battle experience in China. After the regime of Syngman Rhee in the South severely reduced the guerrilla threat from the North, with help from US military advisors, in the winter of 1949-50, Kim attacked. He immediately sought Stalin's backing for this invasion, but documents from Soviet and Chinese sources suggest that he got much more support from China.

Beginning on June 25, 1950, spearheaded by tanks supplied by the Soviet Union, North Korean forces fought their way to Seoul. South Korean resistance collapsed and refugees fleeing North Korean columns clogged the roads south of Seoul. Task Force Smith, the first US troops to enter the war, made a futile stand at Suwon, a town some thirty miles south of Seoul. Within a month of their invasion, North Korean forces had seized all but a small corner of southeastern Korea that was anchored by the port city of Pusan. Repeated North Korean efforts, blunted by heavy US Air Force bombing and stubborn resistance by the combined

forces of the US and South Korea on the Pusan perimeter, denied Kim forceful unification of the peninsula. Shortly thereafter, in early September, the fortunes of war reversed abruptly when General Douglas MacArthur boldly landed his forces at Inchon, the port city for Seoul in west central Korea. This action severed the lines of communication and supply between the North Korean army and its base in the North. The North Korean army quickly disintegrated and combined American and South Korean forces, now part of a United Nations operation, drove Kim's units northward and into complete defeat.

The American thrust deep into North Korea in the fall of 1950 subsequently spurred China to enter the war. Within a month, an army of Chinese "volunteers" and the remnants of the North Korean army then pushed US and South Korean forces out of North Korea. The war lasted another two years, until the summer of 1953, but the outcome of early 1951 was definitive: both stalemate and a US commitment to containment that accepted the de facto reality of two Koreas.

By the time an armistice was signed in 1953, North Korea had been devastated by three years of bombing attacks that had left almost no modern buildings standing. Both Koreas had watched as their country was ravaged and the expectations of 1945 for a united country turned into a nightmare.

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THE KOREAN WAR EXHIBIT: "IN THE FIELD" CONTINUED



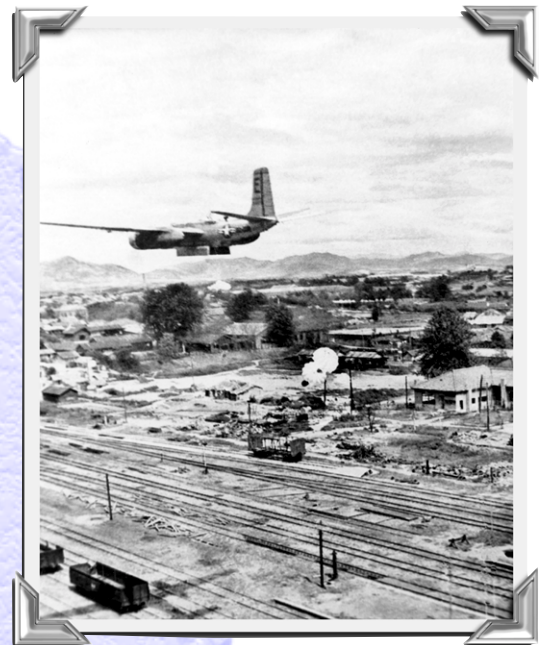
F-84s over San Pablo Bay.



B-26s returning to Pusan after a mission over North Korea.

Ferry Missions

From the beginning of the Korean War, the Far East Air Forces had a continual need for additional combat aircraft. The transport of aircraft from the United States by ship was slow, so long-range ferry flights were organized. In order to avoid aircraft losses over the Pacific, B-29 aircraft from Travis were used for weather reconnaissance, and as escort and navigation aircraft for the movement of smaller aircraft, such as B-26s and F-84Gs, en route to combat zones in Korea.



B-26 of the 452nd Bomb Wing dropping 500 lb parachute bomb on rail yards in North Korea.



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THE KOREAN WAR EXHIBIT: "IN THE FIELD" CONTINUED



On the ramp in Korea, Far East Air Forces C-54 Skymasters of the 374th and 61st Troop Carrier Wings.



A C-124 carrying 25 tons of grenades in one load.

Air Cargo

Strategic Air Command (SAC) took control of Fairfield-Suisun AFB (later Travis) from Military Air Transport Service (MATS) shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War. Despite this change of command, the desperate need for air cargo in the Korean Theater soon made the base the primary air cargo center on the West Coast. Using both regularly scheduled and emergency flights, aircraft from Travis rushed high priority cargo, critical spare parts, blood, mail and secret documents to the war zone.



A C-124 offloading supplies.



Preparing for the air assault on Sunchon-Sukchon north of Pyongyang on 20 October 1950. C-47s of the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron.

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THE KOREAN WAR EXHIBIT: "IN THE FIELD" CONTINUED



Patient is carried to a nearby rice field to meet the helicopter.



Medics cheer a wounded victim while a radioman calls a rear camp for a helicopter ambulance.



A helicopter brings a wounded patient to a rear hospital base for medical treatment.



The helicopter ambulance arrives.



Wounded soldier is strapped in the Litter Basket.

The Casualties

American casualties rose rapidly during the early stages of the Korean War. Evacuation by air became the preferred method of returning wounded soldiers to hospitals in the United States. The large new hospital at Fairfield-Suisun AFB became the central receiving point for these casualties. By early 1951, many of the wounded were arriving at the base within 48 hours of receiving combat injuries. Their average stay there was about 18 hours before being transferred to a hospital near the home of their family.



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THE KOREAN WAR EXHIBIT: "IN THE FIELD" CONTINUED



Capt. Cox's Crew. Standing, L-R, Cox, Strait, Swanson, Radick, Eberle, Istre. Kneeling, Mckendrick, Kaiserlik, Korpi, Drake, Smith. They flew 29 combat missions over North Korea.



Capt. Cox's RB-29 crew. Pre-Flight inspection at Fairfield-Suisun AFB before departure to Japan.

Four to the Front

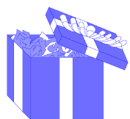
When the United States entered the Korean War, it had a special need for aerial reconnaissance in order to conduct pre-strike bomber missions and prepare accurate maps. Even the best maps of Korea, which were essential to UN forces, were very inaccurate. The Far East Air Forces (FEAF) had a shortage of aerial reconnaissance teams and aircraft. Consequently, on July 30, 1950, four experienced RB-29 crews and aircraft were dispatched from the 5th Recon Group, Fairfield-Suisun AFB (later Travis) to Johnson AB, Japan on temporary duty to support the 31st Strategic Recon Squadron in taking the required photographs. Altogether, they flew 81 combat sorties over North Korea. Colonel William Cox, who lives in Vacaville, was the aircraft commander of one of these crews.



Capt. Cox's RB-29 in Japan. Each camera signified one combat sortie over North Korea.



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