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## Tully recalls airlifts that saved West Germany Airport was center of operation; as memory lasts over 42 years

By Job Shepherd

Of the Carlsle Mercury Staff

When Germany was pummeled in its surrendering to the allies in World War Two, the country was divided among France, Britain, the United States, and the USSR. So too was Germany's capital, Berlin.

However, the USSR under Stalin wished to control the entire city and the method he devised to accomplish this task was to create a blockade of ground and sea transportation of food and water supplies to the devastated Western section of the capital. Stalin's intention was to starve the people in its submission.

On June 24, 1947, the blockade was put in its effect.

However, the allies refused to see West Berlin starved but the only path open to them was from the air.

Though the majority of Berlin had been dominated by the allies final onslaught prior to V.E. Day, Tempelhoff Airport had been opened and it served as the focal point of a curious time in history known as the Berlin Airlifts.

Randolph Tully is among the first pilots to fly supplies from Frankfurt to Berlin in order to help the people of the city survive the Soviet blockade and the coming winter.

On the first day of the airlifts, Tully said he did not know the purpose of his mission when he was given orders to fly the U.S. air corridor to Berlin.

All he said he was given was cargo and a hand grenade and told if he ran in to trouble, to blow up the ship. Otherwise, on landing, he was to signal the control tower that he had "New York aboard" and to take further orders from airport officials.

However, his flight went without incident. He arrived at Tempelhoff airport, gave the signal, and was escorted from the plane by air police as

western unloaded cargo.

It wasn't until some time later, he said, when he was told his cargo was Deutsches Mark.

The Reich Mark, which had been in use during the war years had experienced such inflation, its value was less than the paper it was printed on," Tully said. So, to stabilize the German economy, the government went about converting their currency to the more stable Deutsches Mark which enabled them buying power and the ability to get back on their feet."

From that time, the British and Americans began to keep a steady run of supplies in to the country.

Over shipments primarily consisted of coal. But food was also scarce so there were some shipments of foodstuffs.

Originally, we transported bottles of whole milk and loaves of bread. But carrying this cargo, especially the glass bottles, were too heavy to carry in bulk," Tully said. The C-47s were packed nearly to their weight limit and there was danger in doing that."

To ease the burden the military changed from shipping bottles of milk to powdered milk and the loaves of bread to flour.

In this way, we could ship more supplies per person than we could delivering the food all ready prepared," Tully said.

At first the Americans used the C-47, a twin engine cargo plane, to haul supplies, but as the project grew in proportion they were forced to change to a four engine cargo carrier, the C-54, which could carry more and carry it faster.

"It took approximately an hour and 15 minutes to travel from Frankfurt to Berlin with the C-47, but with the C-54, the time was cut to about 45 minutes," Tully said.

There were four main ports for planes to fly to Berlin; Frankfurt, Weissenhof, Celle, and Fassberg.

Of the 15 months the operation lasted, Tully flew for the first six months checking up well over 100 flights to Berlin and earning the Air Medal.

Yet though the Americans were airlifting these supplies against the wishes of the Soviet Union, there were few reports of harassment from Soviet planes.

"I, myself, never experienced any difficulty," Tully said. "But there were a few pilots said the USSR would fly balloons along the air corridors and planes made threatening advances to bother the pilots, but there were no serious aggressive moves against us throughout the entire airlift project."

Residents of an apartment building near the airport waved thankfully for the supplies delivered to them, he said, though he never had a chance to go in to the city. When he had to stay overnight, barracks were provided so he never had a chance to relax.

Berliners he did meet, however, were most grateful and thankful for the help, he said.

Pilots and personnel involved in the airlift celebrated a reunion just a week before the East German decision to tear down the Berlin Wall and Tully said he saw no indication of the events that were going to occur.

"Before I left for the reunion, I was aware of the in-

flux of East Germans through the Hungarian borders, but there was no indication of unrest or revolution throughout the entire city on both sides of the wall," Tully said.

It is evident, though, the vast difference in prosperity between East and West Berlin, he said.

It was remarkable the differences of the east side compared to the west, he said, the level of prosperity were clearly marked.

But security checks through Checkpoint Charlie, the only passage through the wall, were vigorous and thorough. He said it took 20-30 minutes for security personnel to check the four bus, even employing mirrors affixed to curved poles in order to check the bottom of four buses to make sure no citizens attempted to cross the border.

But as to the airlift, Tully said he did not see a sense of the historic importance of his involvement in the operation. He was given orders and he carried them out.

"Although I really didn't grasp it at the time, through our efforts we were helping nearly 25 million people to survive the winter," he said.

Several books have been written on the subject, one, *Bridge Across The Sky*, featured an interview with Tully.

On reflection, he said, the missions were like any other he had been assigned. And yet, though he wasn't aware, history was being determined.

### Burglars hit Riggs and Sparks

By Job Shepherd

Of the Carlsle Mercury Staff

Drugs were the apparent reason for a break-in at a dentist's office early Saturday morning in Carlsle, State Police officer Tim

Layne said.

Layne said he received a call from Carlsle City Police officer Lamar Mann who discovered the break-in at the Riggs and Sparks dentist's office at approximately 7 a.m. Saturday. Mann discovered the front window of the office broken and on investigation located the stolen items behind Eddie's Family Restaurant.

Layne said the perpetrators apparently tried to gain entrance to the back door and a side window before breaking the window pane on the front door and unlocking it.

They busted through a storm window on the side of the building and unlocked it, but the window had been painted shut and they could not force it open, Layne said.

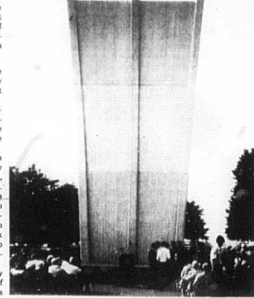
The only things taken from the office were a box of filling mix and a denture repair kit, both of which were recovered.

"Apparently they thought it was drugs," Layne said.

The break-in occurred between 2 and 7 a.m., Layne said, but, no suspects have been taken into custody.

A joint investigation of state and city police is continuing.

**Little Miss Snowflake and Snow Queen candidates pictured on page 2**



The Carlsle Mercury Photo Submitter Memorial (above) symbolizing the three air corridor pilots took to deliver supplies to West Germans stands at Tempelhoff airport (Below) Randolph Tully stands on runway where he landed his plane 43 years ago to deliver supplies.



### Celebration kicks off with Saturday events

The annual Christmas Parade, Old Fashioned Candlelight Christmas, a visit from Santa and holiday busser will be held Saturday in Carlsle.

The Old Fashioned Candlelight Christmas will feature events and booths in operation throughout the day on December 2, including a Christmas Crafts and Food Show in the old Abraham's building.

The Hospital Auxiliary will host its annual luncheon beginning at 9 a.m. in the historic Carlsle Depot.

The auxiliary will offer a variety of items and foods for sale. Proceeds go to auxiliary projects at the hospital and nursing home.

From 2-4 p.m. the Nicholas County Fire Department will play host to the children's Santa Claus event.

The Christmas parade will step off at 6 p.m. through the streets of Carlsle.

The parade, sponsored by the Carlsle Main Street Program, will also include the Mass Snowflake and Little Miss Snowflake contest.

The NCFD continues its toy and food drive for the needy. For information contact Mark Hughes, 299-7226 or 299-2209.

Zimma Johnson of Carlsle Cleaners, West Main Street, will clean, fold, change, any winter coat donated to the drive, and then deliver it out to the fire department.



### Hey kids, write Santa

In keeping with a long-standing tradition, The Carlsle Mercury will again publish letters to Santa this Christmas season.

Youngsters are invited to write Santa, in care of The Mercury, telling what they want him to bring them for Christmas. Mothers and fathers may help tiny tots send along their wishes.

Green-ups are encouraged to participate by sending us their remembrances of Christmas past, or whatever might be appropriate during the holiday season. Letters will appear in issues prior to Christmas, hopefully all at one time depending on the amount we receive.

Deadline for letters to Santa is December 16. So get busy, it's later than you think.



The Carlsle Mercury / Photo Submitted

### The fourth generation

Kathryn Gibson Conley was sworn in as a fourth generation attorney from Nicholas County on November 3, by John Scott, Kentucky Supreme Court Clerk. She was introduced to the court by her father, attorney Joseph H. Conley, with her grandfather, attorney Joseph F. Conley also by her side. He then added that her late great-grandfather, attorney William Conley, was there in spirit. Kay Conley is a Federal Judicial Clerk with Judge Eugene E. Sizer, Jr., in London, KY.